



The Relationship Between Job Stress and Job Satisfaction: A Cross-Sectional Study in One Local Authority, Kota Samarahan, Sarawak

Rowena Lenson¹, Agatha Lamentan Muda^{2*}, Farida Abdul Halim³, Nur Fatimah Abdullah Bandar⁴ and Mohamad Azhari Abu Bakar⁵

^{1,2,3,4,5} Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, 94300 Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

The present study was aimed to examine the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction among employees in one local authority's organization at Kota Samarahan, Sarawak. A cross-sectional survey research was employed to conduct the study and the data for the study was collected using a self-administered survey questionnaire from a total of 61 employees. The data of the study was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics, and a correlational analysis was used to test the research hypotheses. The results of the study indicated that the sub-components of the job stress that consist of role conflict and physical environment had significant relationships with job satisfaction. In overall, the findings of the study assist to provide a better understanding on specific job stress's factors that affects employee's job satisfaction particularly for the organizations under the local government or local authority in Malaysia.

Keywords: Job Stress; Role Conflict; Physical Environment; Job Satisfaction

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Job satisfaction has great influences on the performance of the employees and their organization. A high level of employee's job satisfaction lead to a high level of

productivity of their work, and this in overall increases the satisfaction level in their life (Abdullah, Bilau, Enebuma, Ajagbe and Ali, 2011). Nevertheless, the unsatisfied employees often cause low or bad productivity and performance that affect the attainment of the organizational goals. Most of the time, employee's satisfaction in job determines their behaviour such as absenteeism and intention to leave the organization (Venkataraman and Ganapathi, 2013), low performance and the intention to leave the job (Applebaum, Fowler, Fiedler, Osinubi and Robson, 2010). One of the factors

ARTICLE INFO

E-mail address:

malamentan@unimas.my (Agatha Lamentan Muda)

*Corresponding author

e-ISSN: 2550-1623

Manuscript received: 7 August 2018; Accepted: 2 October 2018; Date of publication: 30 March 2019.

that affect the job satisfaction of employees in organization is job stress (Riaz, Ahmad, Riaz, Murtaza, Khan and Firdaus, 2016).

Stress, is one of the major issues experienced, and is often considered as a problem by people nowadays. This issue often occurs among employees in the workplace as they are exposed to the demands in the working environment that need to be fulfilled (Tan, 2016). Job stress which is described as a harmful physical and emotional response, occurs when the job requirement does not fit the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker (NIOSH,2014). Although job stress is a common issue in the workplace, nevertheless it should be managed well considering the undesirable effects of job stress towards employees especially in terms of their mental and physical health (Ismail, 2016). Furthermore, the other adverse impacts of job stress are absenteeism, high medical costs and employees' turnover, recruiting and training new workers and reduced the productivity and efficiency of staff (Bilal, Ali, Naim, Ali and Ashmat, 2014), and most importantly, the higher the stress level experienced by employees, the higher will be the level of dissatisfaction among employees which cause them to work unhappily in the organization (Bemana, Moradi and Ghasemi, 2013). Therefore, in relation to the above, the present study is focusing on the relationship between job stress on job satisfaction.

In relation to the earlier mentioned issues, Berita Harian, published in July, 2017, has reported that the difficulties in handling the work pressure among the public servants or employees has caused a number of 20, 000 early retirement for each year which is al-

most equal to the estimated number of compulsory retired civil servants that is between 30,000 and 35,000 per year. This issue is one of the central concerns of the Congress of Unions of Employees in the Public and Civil Services (CUEPACS). In a related matter it was revealed by the JobStreet.com survey (2015), that 74 percent of Malaysian employees admitted to be unsatisfied with their current job. Momin (2016) supported this fact and indicated that the inadequate salaries, overworking, unfriendly colleagues, unskilled head and non-conducive working environment was attributed to dissatisfaction among employees. With regards to the point raised above, the present study was motivated by issues related to job stress and its significant influences on the job satisfaction among employees. Therefore, the aim of this study is to identify the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction among the public servants in Malaysia.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Though there were numerous past researches on the relationship between job stress and employee's job satisfaction, however very few empirical research was conducted in Asia, particularly in Malaysian working environment (Manshoor, Fontaine and Choy, 2003). Furthermore, most of the past research and theories associated with job stress and job satisfaction were found mainly in the western and middle east context (Ratnawat and Jha, 2014) leaving the generalizability and boundary conditions of the findings an open issue for the other settings such as in a developing country like Malaysia. In addition, most of the previous studies on job stress and job satisfaction were done in the hospital are health care sector (Trivel-

las, Reklitis and Platis, 2013; Rita, Atindabila, Portia and Abepuoring, 2013 and Riaz et. al., 2016), academic sector (Hans, Mubeen, Khan and Saadi, 2014), and some were done in private sector (Venkataraman and Ganapathi, 2013). Therefore, it is the purpose of the present study to determine the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction among employees in one local authority's organization in Kota Samarahan, Sarawak. To date, no empirical study has been done on the relationship between the two variables, in particular on the two factors of job stress in the organization under study, and this becoming one of major motives for the researchers to conduct the study.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

To determine the relationship between job stress (role conflict and physical environment) and job satisfaction.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

H01: There is no significant relationship between role conflict and job satisfaction.

H02: There is no significant relationship between physical environment and job satisfaction.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The present study is a quantitative research that focuses on identifying the relationship between two variables that is job stress (role conflict and physical environment) and job satisfaction. Although there are many others factor of job stress, nevertheless the present study studied only on role conflict and working environment. Furthermore, the

respondents of the study were employees of one local authority's organization in Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, and the data were sought from the respondents using survey questionnaires. Thus, the findings of the study cannot be generalized to other settings of organization especially the private company.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Job Stress

Job stress arises from the damaging of physical and emotional aspects in an individual due to the incompatibility between the job and the person's abilities or what they desire (Riaz et al, 2016). This problem is caused by numerous conditions such as excessive workload, lack of role clarity or conflicting with their role, job insecurity, poor organization management, support deficiency from higher management and ineffective communication (Tan, 2016). In general, the sources of stress are classified into four groups; 'working condition' (shift problems, weekend duty, insufficient pay, long working hours, discrimination and safety issues), 'the relationship in workplace at horizontal and vertical levels', 'authority and responsibility ambiguity' (ill-defined role, functions, expectations, and duties) and lastly the 'structure and climate in organization' in terms of communication policy and practice, major changes in the workplace, culture of the organization, and lack of participation in decision-making (Shah, Jaffari, Aziz, Ejaz, Ul-Haq and Raza, 2011). A high level of stress leads to several adverse responses related to psychology, physiology and behaviour. Other than employees' avoidance and abandonment of job, it may lead to dissatisfaction (Ali, 2011).

Role Conflict

Role conflict is the occurrence which involves two or more sets of pressure happening at the same time that make the compliance with the other compliance difficult. There are four types of conflicts, which are the conflict between internal standards of focal person or intra-role, conflict with time, resources and inadequate capabilities of focal person or view as intra-sender. There is also a conflict between several roles for the same person which mostly happens in a person with multiple roles and lastly conflict in expectation and organization demand and policies (Rizzo, House and Lirtzman, 1970). In addition, role conflict may occur when the demands is too tough for the employees (Omar, Mohd and Ariffin, 2015). Nevertheless, the amount of role conflict faced by employees depends on the amount of pressure that they have to deal with. Plus, to attain each demand is impossible without ignoring the demands from other roles (Is-mail and Tan, 2011). Hence, it causes employees to suffer from frustration and job dissatisfaction which then affects their performance.

Physical Environment

Working environment is one of the most crucial factor that influences the level of satisfaction among employees and one of the form is physical environment (Agbozo, Owusu, Hoedoafia and Atokorah, 2017). Lighting, noise, temperature, humidity, clean air, air circulation and exposure to dangerous substances are included in physical environment criteria in the workplace (Venkataraman and Ganapathi, 2013). Improvement in the physical design of the

office (Barry, 2008 and Agbozo et al, 2017) and the type and quality of the lighting and ventilation system also may increase employees' productivity. (Chandrasekar, 2011). Several past studies revealed that the physical environment in the workplace influences the employees and organization. Employees' concentration and productivity are affected by the effect of the workplace design, lighting and ventilation, indoor temperature, colour, noise and interior plants. The air and water quality inside the building also should be considered as they influence a of person's health (Kamarulzaman, Saleh, Hashim, Hashim and Abdul-Ghani, 2011). Poor air quality in the workplace can be harmful to a person as it can cause breathing disease (Riaz et al, 2016). Therefore, a good and healthy indoor working condition is essential as it has great influence towards employees' attitudes, behaviour, satisfaction and job performance.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is formally defined as the degree to which individuals feel positively or negatively about their jobs (Locke, 1976). Some people might like their job and perceive it as their central of life, but some might dislike their job and only doing their job because they must. Job satisfaction is also the reflection of the good treatment of the organization and how the organization is functioning. The major assessed factor of job satisfaction is rewards such as pay or benefit. The factor also involves the co-workers and supervisor, the work essence itself and the factor of the organization itself. Moreover, every employee would have different view on different factor. For instance, some employees like their co-workers but dislike their salary (Spector,

1997). Some other factors that develop employees' job satisfaction is the achievement, advancement, authority, company policies and practices, compensation, co-workers, creativity, independence, moral values, recognition, responsibility, security, social sciences, social status, supervision, human relative, supervision technical, variety and working condition (Weiss et al, 1967). Apart from that, there are four other essential factors that determine job satisfaction which is the challenging work, fair remuneration, working environment and colleagues (Bemana et al, 2013). There are many common dimensions in job satisfaction which include the work itself, wages and recognition, rapport with supervisors and co-worker and the chance of advancement (Sweta, 2015).

Related Theories

The first theory chosen to describe the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction is the 'person-environment fit theory'. This theory describes that stress appears when there is a misfit between the person and the environment (Edward and Cooper, 1990). According to Caplan and Copper (1990), there are two types of person-environment fit's versions. The first one is the environmental supplies and personal motives, goals and values (S-V fit), while the second one is the environment demands and personal skills and abilities (D-A fit). Supplies-values fit (S-V fit) refers to a compatibility of supply available from the environment and person's values in order to satisfying those values which implies that employees obtain their skills and abilities through their surroundings (Edwards, 1996). On the other hand, demands-abilities (D-A fit) approach refers to a compatibility of

persons' abilities with work role demands which implies the demands needed in the job will fit the employees' abilities (Caplan, 1987). In this study, this theory may explain the relationship between role conflict which is a factor of job stress and job satisfaction.

The second theory chosen to describe the relationship between variables under the study is the 'Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory'. Herzberg (1959) constructed a two-dimensional paradigm of factors that affects people's attitudes about work; hygiene factor and motivator factor. Based on this theory, factors like company policy, supervision, interpersonal relations, working conditions and salary are hygiene factors rather than motivators, and the absence of hygiene factors can create job dissatisfaction. Nevertheless, their presence does not motivate or create satisfaction. In contrast, the motivators are elements that enrich a person's job. According to Herzberg, there are five factors that are considered as strong determinants of job satisfaction: achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility and advancement. These motivators (satisfiers) were associated with long-term positive effects in job performance while the hygiene factors (dissatisfiers) consistently produced only short-term changes in job attitudes and performance, which quickly fell back to its previous level. Satisfiers describe a person's relationship with what she or he does, much related to the tasks being performed. Dissatisfiers on the other hand have to do with person's relationship to the context or environment in which she or he performs the job. In this study, this theory may explain the relationship between physical environment which is a factor of job stress, and job satisfaction.

Previous Studies on the Relationship between Job Stress and Job Satisfaction

This section discusses on previous studies on the relationship between job stress, particularly the role conflict and physical environment's factor, and job satisfaction. According to Mansoor, Fida, Nasir and Ahmad (2011), their study on 134 employees in the telecommunication sector in Pakistan indicated that the job stress factors which consisted of workload, role conflict and physical environment, were negatively correlated to employees' job satisfaction. An almost similar study by El Shikieri and Musa (2011) on employees at one university at Sudan indicated that the job stressors which included the role conflict and role ambiguity, lack of participation in decision making, lack of authority, workload, unsatisfactory working conditions and interpersonal relationships were negatively affecting the job satisfaction.

A more recent study by Trivellas, Reklitis and Platis (2013) on 271 nurses revealed that the job stress factors which related to conflict and heavy workload were significantly and negatively associated with all job satisfaction dimensions (physical environment and career opportunities, management style and job enrichment, and rewards and job security). In addition, a study by Venkataraman and Ganapathi (2013) which was done in small-scale industry in India with a 300 sample of employees revealed that the relationship between job stress factors and employee's job satisfaction was very strong. The study also revealed that the workload and role conflict were negatively associated with employees' job satisfaction. On the other hand, Ul-ain, Khattak and Iqbal (2013)

in their study on 350 employees in a private bank indicated a negative and significant relation between role conflict and job satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design, Population and Sampling

In the present study, a cross-sectional survey research was conducted to examine the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction. For hypotheses testing, a correlational approach was used to determine the relationship between variables of the study. The target population of the study were employees from one local authority's organization in Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, and a simple random sampling technique was utilized to choose the sample of the study. At the time when the study was conducted, approximately 70 employees were eligible and the required sample size was 55 (Luck, Taylor and Robin, 1987). Nonetheless a total of 61 questionnaires were distributed randomly and the same numbers of questionnaires were returned back.

Instrumentation

A cross-sectional survey questionnaire was designed to collect the data for the study. It has three sections; section one was on respondent's background, section two was on job stress that covers on role conflict and physical environment adapted from NIOSH Generic Job Stress Questionnaire developed by the National Institute for Organization Safety and Health (NIOSH), section three was on job satisfaction adapted from the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire de-

veloped by Weiss, Dawis, England and Lofquist (1967). All items of research questionnaires were closed ended, in English language and measured using the five-point Likert scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree” (1) to “Strongly Agree” (5). A pilot test was done prior to the actual study to determine the reliability and validity of the research instrument.

Data Analysis

The data derived from the the study were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows Version 21. Prior to further analyses, several important steps were undertaken by researchers. Firstly, the responses to all items in research questionnaire were classified and coded for the data entry. Subsequently the exploratory data analysis was performed to check for the normality, linearity and multicollinearity. Then the reliability of the data was examined using the Cronbach’s alpha. The data of the study were analysed using the Pearson’s Correlation analysis test.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Majority of the respondents were male (59.0%), at the age between of 21 to 30

years old (31.1%), married (37%), have worked for less than 5 years (44.3%) and with the SPM qualification (37.7%).

The Relationship of Job Stress and Job Satisfaction

The result of the Pearson’s product-moment correlation shows in Table 1 indicates a significant, negative and weak relationship between role conflict and job satisfaction ($r = -0.292$, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, the first null hypothesis of the study was rejected. The result shows that the role conflict in terms of disagreements, differences of opinions, clashes and bickering among employees affect the employees’ satisfaction in the work place. The result implies that the higher the role conflict, the lower the job satisfaction of employees. As for the relationship between physical environment and job satisfaction, the findings as indicated in Table 1 also shows a significant, negative and weak relationship ($r: -0.275$, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, the second null hypothesis of the study was rejected. In particular, the result shows that the physical environment in terms of noise, lighting, temperature, humidity affect the employees’ satisfaction in the work place. In other words, when these undesirable conditions exist in the working environment, it decreases the level of job satisfaction among employees. Hence, the findings of research hypotheses were consistent with past studies by Trivellas et al. (2013), Ul-ain et al.

Table 1: The Relationship of Job Stress and Job Satisfaction

Job Stress Variables	Job Satisfaction	
	Pearson Correlation, r	Significant Value, p
Role Conflict	-0.292*	0.022
Physical Environment	-0.275*	0.032

(2013), Venkataraman and Ganapathi (2013), Mansoor et al. (2010), El Shikieri and Musa (2011).

IMPLICATION, RECOMMENDATION & CONCLUSION

In overall, the findings of the present study indicated that a significant relationship exists between job stress and job satisfaction, in particular among employees in a local authority's organization. Consequently, this adds to the body of knowledge in the related fields of study. More importantly, this study provides a better understanding on the relationship between the two variables that may become an essential guideline for the HR practitioners and future researchers, and at the same time provided empirical support on the two theories related to the study as mentioned above. Also, the evidences drawn from the present study proved that job stress factors particularly the role conflict and physical environment as experienced by the employees, were associated with job satisfaction. In relation to this, as indicated by the findings of past studies, these factors contributed to problems not only to job satisfaction but also to the general physical health of employees, their performance as well as their commitment.

Accordingly, several recommendations were proposed based on the findings of the study. For example, the allocation of role for each employee should be done right and with their consensus. Besides, the management should ensure that employees are working in a good environment; physically and emotionally. In addition, relevant training programs on stress management and job satisfaction should be provided to employees

that help them to tackle related issues. Since the public employees are the most important group to ensure that the best quality of Government's delivery system are provided to the public, it is very crucial for the top management to determine factors that affect their job satisfaction as it affects the efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery system of the Government to the public.

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