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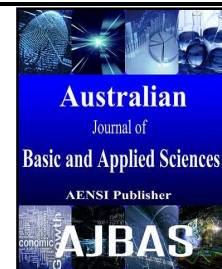Project   grant perpaduan di malaysia View project

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The Effect of Occupational Stress on Teachers' Psychological Well-Being: Social Support As Moderator

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A B S T R A C T
The main purpose of this research is to examine the effect of occupational stress on teachers' psychological well-being and also to examine the moderator role of social support on the relationship between occupational stress and psychological well-being among teachers in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia. A total of 112 secondary school teachers took part in this study and the results were analysed using SPSS version 20. The findings of this study indicated a significant effect of occupational stress on teachers' psychological well-being. However, social support did not show a significant moderating effect. In addition, the results also showed that there are no gender differences towards occupational stress and psychological well-being.

INTRODUCTION

Health at work is essential for both the employees and employers. According to Vázquez, Hervás, Rahona, & Gómez (2009), the traditional view of health is changing gradually to a wider concept as it includes not only the absence of diseases but also the aspect of personal optimal performance. Hervas, Sánchez, & Vázquez (2008) mentioned that this positive conception of health was initially introduced by the World Health Organization (WHO) in the year 1948, stated that "*health is not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, but a complete state of physical, mental, and social well-being.*". Hence, it is not only the workers' physical health that we must look into, but also their state of well-being.

Psychological well-being is defined as a state of well-being characterized by self-acceptance, purpose in life, environmental mastery, autonomy, personal growth, and positive relations (Snyder,Lopez, &Pedrotti, 2011). These six characteristics are also the six components proposed by Ryff (1989) in conceptualizing the eudaimonic approach of psychological well-being. Ryff (1989) argued that happiness and life satisfaction are not the only measurement of positive functioning. She had also pointed out that the prior formulations had neglected some important aspects of psychological well-being. After reviewing previous perspectives, Ryff (1989) found similar characteristics of well-being described in various studies. Thus, proposed that the loose conceptualizations in previous formulations can be integrated and summarized into six components in order to understand and define psychological well-being.

The study of occupational stress derived within social psychology, it started when Robert Khan and his colleagues introduced their occupational stress program at the University of Michigan (Buunk, Janssen, &Vanyperen, 1989). Currently, the study of occupational stress has gained its popularity in the field of psychology. Many studies have been conducted and occupational stress is defined broadly by various researchers. Nwadian (2006) defined occupational stress as a disruption of the emotional stability of the individual that causes a state of disorganization in personality and behaviour. Similarly, Mohajan (2012)

described occupational stress as negative physical and emotional responses that occur when job demands surpass the workers' capabilities. It seems that both descriptions of occupational stress, focus on human responses that are shown through their physical or emotional state. Thus, occupational stress is the stimulus or strains which derived from work or its environment that could affect workers in a negative way.

On the other hand, studies of social support began in the 1900s, as the earliest definition for this term can be traced back to the year 1973, where Moss (1973) referred social support to "the subjective feeling of belonging, being loved and accepted" (Burleson, Albrecht, &Sarason, 1994). However, rather than focusing on individual's feelings or one's interaction with others, Allen (2003) emphasized social support on an individual's perception of the availability of support from others, in which he defined social support as the extent to which individuals feel that provisions of social relationships are available to them (Salami, 2010). This is similar to the definition given by Barrera (1986) and Dunkel-Schetter& Bennett (1990), that social support is different in terms of the individual's perception of support and actual support (Goodwin, Costa, &Adonu, 2004), as an individual's perception of support is the assistance in which the person perceives that he/she could receive from others, while actual support is the support that is indeed given to the person.

The type of support that one can expect from others could be in the form of emotional, informational or tangible support and it can be obtained either from someone outside or in the work place, such as family members, supervisors, subordinates, co-workers, and friends. Cohen (2004) differentiated social support in terms of three resources. First is instrumental support, which are given in the form of material aid such as financial aid or help with daily tasks. On the other hand, informational support is the provision of information to assist individual in order to cope with difficulties in life. It could be given in the form of advice or guidance. While emotional support can be seen through the expression of empathy, caring, reassurance, and trust which enable opportunities for emotional expression and venting.

According to Cohen (2004), social support is a social network's provision of psychological and material resources that are able to benefit human's ability in coping with stress. In other word, it can act as a stress buffering mechanism in eliminating or reducing the effects of stressful experiences by promoting less threatening interpretations of adverse events and effective coping strategies. Overall, viewing all the definitions given to enable us an understanding, that social support is the assistance that one can receive from others. It could be in any form as mentioned by Cohen (2004), and it is able to evoke a feeling of belonging and happiness to the receiver and even aid individual when facing obstacles.

In psychology, studies have been conducted and occupational stress is believed to have a negative impact on psychological well-being (*see*Akintayo, 2012; Adegoke, 2014). In addition, there are also studies which had shown that social support is able to moderate the link between workers' stress and psychological well-being (*see*Salami, 2010). However, would that be the same for teachers?

Problem statement:

Current issues on teachers' psychological well-being are on the rise. Espinoza (2015) had reported the result of an online survey among 3500 teachers in England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, in which 84% of them claim that their health and well-being have been negatively affected by their job in the last 12 months. Compared to the year 2014, the percentage rose 4%.

Teachers' psychological well-being can be affected by various job-related issues. A research by Mabekoje (2003) showed that self-esteem is a significant predictor of teachers' psychological well-being. According to Blascovich&Tomaka (1991), self-esteem is the individual's sense of worth, including how a person feels and values himself. Indeed, teachers' sense of what can be easily affected due to the public's negative perceptionof them. Snyder *et al.* (2011) wrote a chapter on "positive schooling" and discussed on the negative comments that has been given to this profession. They agreed to the fact that not all teachers are good teachers, but they certainly disagree with the statement that *"Those who can do, do; those who can't do, teach"*. Apparently, this statement from the public simply shows that teachers do not get the recognition and appreciation for their hard work, which could have negatively affected their self-esteem and eventually their psychological well-being.

Besides, there are other job-related issues that are said to have effect on teachers' psychological well-being, such as their high level of stress. Recently in Malaysia, the Minister of Education had stated that over 420,000 teachers across the country are experiencing occupational stress, which have already affected their focus on teaching (Osman, 2015). The minister also mentioned that the cause of teachers' stress is mainly due to their great amount of workload in school and thus forming a committee is necessary to study their excessive workload in hopes to reduce their stress at work.

According to Eres&Atanasoska (2011), teachers experience more stress compared to other professions due to the handful of tasks at work, students being late to school, poor results among students, and not doing homework. Other than educating students, teachers are also responsible for administrative and also students' co-curriculum and disciplines. It is not as easy as it seems to be a teacher as they are required to be committed to their heavy and complex workloads.

Hence, it is crucial to give focus on psychological well-being among teachers as they play an important role as an educator in the society. Hanushek, Kain&Rivkin (2004) stated that teachers' quality contributes 7.5% of the variance in students' achievements. Therefore, more efforts to study and promote well-being among teachers are needed for the benefits of both teachers and students.

Purpose of research:

The aim of this research is to examine whether there are any significant effects of occupational stress on psychological well-being among teachers and how it can be moderated by social support. At the same time, the researcher is also interested to study if there is gender difference in occupational stress and psychological well-being.

Literature review:
Gender differences in occupational stress:

Nagra&Arora (2013) investigated the level of occupational stress and its relationship to health among teachers in relation to their gender and marital status. Descriptive analysis showed that female teachers scored higher in occupational stress. Also, married teachers were found to have greater stress compared to unmarried teachers. Another study by Chaturvedi (2011) had found a significant difference in occupational stress according to gender. This study was conducted among 180 academic staffs in India and findings indicated that women, either working in the public or private sector, were found to have higher stress than men. However, results obtain in a study by Aftab&Khatoon (2012) happen to be opposite. A total of 608 teachers from 42 schools of Uttar Pradesh, India, had taken part in their study and results indicated that male experienced more occupational stress than female. While most of the studies have found significant gender differences in stress, study of Walton &Politano (2015) reported that no difference between male and female pilot, although this is male-dominated occupation, women did not show greater stress when compared to men.

Gender differences in psychological well-being:

Bookwala& Boyar (2008) had investigated gender differences in the relationship between body weight and psychological well-being. There were 3251 adults participated and descriptive statistics in the study showed that there are difference in psychological well-being between male and female, in which female reported lower compared to male.However, a study published by Vescovelli, Albieri, &Ruini (2014)reported that there is no significant difference in psychological well-being between male and female. This study was conducted among 150 adolescents from Italy with the aim to investigate their prosocial behaviours and well-being. Results obtained clearly opposed to the findings of Bookwala& Boyar (2008).On the other hand, Panahi, Yunus, &Roslan, (2013) had analysed gender differences in psychological well-being according to its categories. The study was conducted in Malaysia with 534 graduate students as the respondents. The findings suggested that women scored higher in overall well-being. In addition, women scored higher in positive relations, self-acceptance, and also purpose in life.

Occupational stress and psychological well-being:

A study conducted by Adegoke (2014) on 250 police officers from five government areas of Ibadan metropolis, Nigeria, reported that there was a significant effect of work-stress, frustration, and depression on policemen's psychological well-being. This is because policemen are exposed to critical incident stress on a daily basis, which causes uncomfortable emotional reactions and affects their short-and-long-term behaviour (Adegoke, 2014). Other than their hectic work schedule, policemen have to undergo the stressful situation where they had to perform their duties in the field, putting their safety and lives at risk, which result in high levels of stress among policemen and eventually lower their psychological well-being.

Malek, Mearns, &Flin(2010) also studied on the relationship between stress and psychological well-being among fire fighters in the United Kingdom and Malaysia. Findings indicated that firefighters from both UK and Malaysia showed positive correlation between stress and psychological well-being. The higher the stress, the lower the level of psychological well-being. However, when coping behaviour was tested as a moderator of the relationship, only Malaysian fire fighters showed a significant moderating effecting effect of coping behaviour.

Another study by Yunus&Mahajar (2011) on stress and psychological well-being of government officers in Malaysia has found a significant relationship between stress and workers' psychological well-being. The respondents were 329 administrative and diplomatic (PTD) officers. The results showed that, the higher score on stress, the lower the level of psychological well-being.

Social support as moderator on the relationship between occupational stress and psychological well-being:

Salami (2010) had conducted a study to investigate the relationship between occupational stress and psychological well-being among teachers. The moderators are social support, emotional intelligence (EI), coping strategies, self-efficiency, and negative affectivity. A total of 420 secondary school teachers

wasrandomly selected as respondents from Southwest, Nigeria. A negative relationship was found between occupational stress and psychological well-being. However, it can be moderated. Except for negative affectivity, teachers with high level of EI, self-efficacy, active problem solving, coping strategy, and social support had higher psychological well-being, although they are experiencing high level of occupational stress.

A similar study was conducted by Glozah (2013) to examine the effect of academic stress and perceived social support on the psychological well-being of adolescents in Ghana. Even though the stressor studied is not related to work, however, social support is again found to moderate the relationship between stress and psychological well-being. There are only a few studies examined the role of social support as the moderator on therelationship between occupational stress and psychological well-being. Thus,the researchers aimis to contribute and extend the existing literatures on this field of study.

Research Model:
Person-Environment Fit Theory (P-E fit Theory):

According to Dewe*et al*. (2012), this theory was introduced by Lewin (1935) and Murray (1938) to explain stress in the workplace. Stress is seen as results of a misfit between people (P) and the environment (E). In other word, it is the mismatch between the nature of the work and characteristic of the person (Pithers&Soden, 1999). In this theory, individual differences are taken into account. When it comes to work, every worker has different preferences for working environment. Misfit between P and E is more likely to occur if the working environment doesn't suit the workers, which may result in occupational stress and in the end leads to poorer well-being.

Lewin (1935) proposed that the results of interaction between human and environment can be seen through human's attitude, suggesting that misfit can affect people's thinking, feeling and behaviour. Therefore, for the effective functioning to occur, there must be an optimal fit between the person and the environment because workers who are satisfied with their job tend to perform better (*see*Aftab&Idrees, 2012). Thus, if workers can adjust well or if they are provided with a good working environment and conditions, they are more likely to be satisfied with their work which results in better job performance.

Basic Psychological Need Theory (BPNT):

BPNT is the sub theory of Self- Determination Theory (SDT) that gives focus on the relation between basic human psychological needs with well-being (Ryan, 2009). It assumes that satisfying our basic needs may have a positive impact on well-being, and these innate needs are competent, autonomy, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Ryan & Deci (2006) an individual's experience defined autonomy as individual's experience of volition and self-endorsement. It is the freedom that one has to master and take control of his/her tasks or activities in the environment. Competence has been defined by White (1959) as individual's feelings and sense of effectiveness while interacting with the environment (Vansteenkiste& Ryan, 2013). It also can be understood as our capabilities in controlling and managing things in the surrounding. As for relatedness, Vansteenkiste& Ryan (2013) had summed up the definition and refer it to the availability of love and care of others. It is seen as the support that one is able to receive from people in the surrounding. People tend to achieve optimal development and well-being if their needs were satisfied (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Otherwise, degradation or ill-being is more likely to happen. Therefore, the three psychological needs are the predictors of human psychological well-being. Low satisfaction of these needs will lead to negative health or psychological issues.

Model of Psychological Well-being:

As opposed to Hedonic approach, Ryff (1989) believed well-being as wellness and optimal functioning. It is not just about experiencing pleasure and being happy in life, but also looks into one's development, function in life, and the evaluation or feelings toward the interaction between oneself and the environment. Model of psychological well-being was developed by Ryff (1989), which integrated all six dimensions as the criteria for psychological well-being (Snyder *et al*., 2011). These six dimensions are *self-acceptance* (refers to one's positive attitude toward the self), *positive relations with others* (one has warm and trusting interpersonal relationships; the person is concern and has strong empathy for others), *autonomy* (refers to an independent, self-determining and self-regulating person), *environmental mastery* (refers to one's active involvement and control of the environment; the person also feels capable and competence in managing complex environment, and able to choose or alter the environment according to one's suitability), *purpose in life*(the feeling of having purpose and meaning of life; the person recognizes his goal in life, has a sense of direction and intends to achieve his goal) and *personal growth* (refers to the development of one's potential; the individual feels an increase in knowledge and effective; continue to improve oneself and expand as a person).

Ryff& Keyes (1995) has analysed the six dimensions in this model and reported that this multidimensional model showed dramatic improvement in fit, indicating that this model is a better explanation of well-being than a single-factor model. Thus, well-being can be theorized as a multifaceted domain, which are positive self-

regard, mastery of the environment, purposeful living, continued growth and development, quality relationships, and the capacity for self-determination (Ryff& Keyes, 1995).
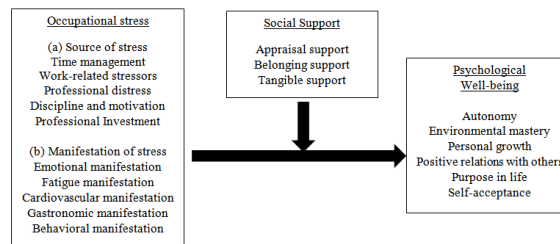

Fig. 1: Research framework .

Hypothesis:
By using alternative hypothesis, the researchers hypothesized that:
H_1 =There is gender difference in occupational stress.
H_2 = There is gender difference in psychological well-being.
H_3 = Teachers with higher occupational stress will have lower psychological well-being.
H_4 = Social support will moderate the effect of occupational stress on teachers' psychological well-being.

Methodology:
    This is a causal research to investigate the main objective, which is the effect of occupational stress on psychological well-being, with social support as the moderator. Survey method is employed in data collection by distributing questionnaires randomly to 112 secondary school teachers who are teaching in the five selected secondary schools located in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah.

Measurement:
    Each questionnaireconsists of Part A, B, C and D, following the sequence of teachers' demographic, Teacher Stress Inventory (TSI), Scales of Psychological Well-Being and Interpersonal Support Evaluation List. All set of questionnaires obtained are in English and were translated into Bahasa Malaysia. Thus, a questionnaire that was distributed to respondents are bilingual, both in English and Bahasa Malaysia. According to Weidmer (1994), back translation is a standard procedure which involves two translators in the process of translation. The first instrument is translated by a translator in the target language and then translated back to its original language by another translator independently. Eventually, the two versions are compared and amended in order to obtain optimal accuracy. In the current study, the process of back translation of the instrument used was completed with the involvement of two secondary school teachers.

Demographic:
    This part obtains information on teachers' demographic, including their gender, age, race, religion, marital status, duration of teaching experience, and place of work.

Teacher Stress Inventory (TSI):
    This instrument was developed by Fimian (1988) to measure teachers' occupational stress in term of their perceived strength of different stress experiences that resulted from their work (Fimian&Fastenau, 1990). It consists of 49 items. This instrument measures 5 different job-related stressors and 5 different stress manifestation, which made up 10 subscales in total. The 5 stressors are personal investment, time management, discipline and motivation, work-related stressors, and professional distress, while 5 manifestations of stress are behaviour manifestation, emotional manifestation, gastronomic manifestation, cardiovascular manifestation, and fatigue manifestation. This instrument uses choice method, which is a 5-point Likert Scale, to measure teachers' responses. Thus, ranging from 1 point that represents 'no strength; not noticeable' to 5 points representing 'strong strength, extremely noticeable'. The higher the score indicates greater experience and manifestation of stress. To obtain the total score for teachers' stress, the mean score for 10 categories in this instrument, which include 5 stressors categories and 5 manifestation categories, have to be calculated and sum up as a whole.

Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-being (Short Version):
    This instrument was designed by Ryff (1989) to measure psychological well-being and then shortened by Clarke, Marshall, Ryff, & Wheaton (2001) from 54 items to 18 items (Garcia, Archer, Moradi, &Andersson-Arntén, 2012). In this instrument, there are 6 scales in measuring psychological well-being. Following the sequence of self-acceptance, autonomy, positive relations, environmental mastery, personal growth and purpose

in life. For all 18 items in this instrument, there are 10 positive items and 8 negative items. The choice method for this instrument is a 7-point Likert Scale, ranging from 1 point strongly disagree' to 7-point 'strongly agree'. Higher scores on positive item response indicates better psychological well-being but higher score on negative item response shows poorer psychological well-being.

Interpersonal Support Evaluation List (ISEL):

The full version of this instrument was originally designed by Cohen &Hoberman (1983) to measure social support in terms of individual perception on the availability of support (Merz, Roesch, Malcarne, Penedo, Llabre, Weitzman, & Johnson, 2014). This instrument was then shortened to 12 items by Cohen, Mermelstein, Kamarck, &Hoberman (1985) and it consists of 3 scales, which are appraisal support, belonging support, and tangible support. This instrument uses choice method with a 4-point Likert Scale, ranging from 1 point 'definitely true' to a 4 point 'definitely false'. For positive item responses, a higher score indicates higher availability of support, but higher score on negative item response represents the lower availability of support.

Reliability in pilot and actual study:

Before conducting the actual study, researcher first carried out a pilot study among 30 teachers from one of the selected secondary schools. Data collected from these 30 teachers was analysed using Cronbach alpha method to test and interpret the value of reliability.With Cronbach alpha 0.9 and 0.8, the value obtained for both Teacher Stress Inventory (TSI) and Interpersonal Support Evaluation List (ISEL) was high, indicating that these two instruments are highly reliable. However, with Cronbach alpha of 0.6, the reliability for Scales of Psychological Well-being obtained was lower. The value of reliability of these 3 instruments are summarized and shown in table 1.

Table 1: Cronbach alpha for Teacher Stress Inventory (TSI), Scales of Psychological Well-being and Interpersonal Support Evaluation List (ISEL) inpilot study.

Instrument	Cronbach alpha
Teacher Stress Inventory	0.9
Scales of Psychological Well-being	0.6
Interpersonal Support Evaluation List	0.8

Thus, researchers reviewed the items in Scales of Psychological Well-being and altered some of it in the way that teachers can understand better and relate it to their lives. Note that some words and structure of the sentence were altered, but the content still remains the same. For example, item 6 was originally stated as 'maintaining close relationships have been difficult and frustrating for me'. This item was then replaced with 'for me, it's difficult and frustrating to maintain close relationship with teachers or others outside school'.

In the actual study, reliability for both Teacher Stress Inventory (TSI) and Interpersonal Support Evaluation List (ISEL) remain high. The value obtained for TSI was 0.9 and ISEL was 0.8. As for Scales of Psychological Well-being, the value has increased to 0.7, indicating that this instrument is reliable. The value of reliability of these 3 instruments are summarized and shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Cronbach alpha for Teacher Stress Inventory (TSI), Scales of Psychological Well-being and Interpersonal Support Evaluation List (ISEL) in actual study.

Instrument	Cronbach alpha
Teacher Stress Inventory	0.9
Scales of Psychological Well-being	0.7
Interpersonal Support Evaluation List	0.8

Results:
Descriptive analysis:

Among 112 respondents, 37 (33%) are male and 75 (67%) are female teachers. Majorities are Muslim (N= 66), followed by Christians (N=30), Buddhist (N=14) and Hindus (N=2). The age range is between 24 and 56 years old, and be classified into 3 age groups [24 to 34 years old (N=33), 35 to 45 years old (N=46), and 46 to 56 years old (N=33)]. Out of 112 respondents, 92 of them are married (82.1%), and 20 is unmarried (17.9%). The mean and standard deviation for the three variables are provided in Table 3, while the frequency and percentage of the categories for each variable are presented in Table 4.

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation in occupational stress, psychological well-being, and social support.

Scale/Subscale	M	SD
Occupational stress	2.64	.54
Psychological Well-being	93.69	9.92
Social support	37.11	6.65

Table 4: Frequency and percentage of the categories in occupational stress, psychological well-being, and social support.

Scale/ Subscale	Category	N	Percentage
Occupational stress	Low (1.44-2.42)	39	34.8
	Medium (2.43-3.41)	67	59.8
	High (3.42-4.44)	6	5.4
Psychological Well-being	Low (69-85)	26	23.2
	Medium (86-102)	66	58.9
	High (103-119)	20	17.9
Social Support	Low (21-30)	20	17.9
	Medium (31-40)	56	50
	High (41-50)	36	32.1

Gender differences in occupational stress:

Teachers who participated in this study were classified into 2 groups according to their gender to test if there are differences in work stress. Based on the result obtained, the two-tail significant value is greater than .05, indicating that there is no significant different in occupational stress between male and female [$t(110) = -.33$, $p > .05$]. Therefore, H_1 is rejected. The results for independent t-test in occupational stress is shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Gender differences in occupational stress.

Dependent variable	Independent variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t	df	Sig.
Occupational stress	Male	37	2.62	.57	-.33	110	.74
	Female	75	2.65	.52			

Gender differences in psychological well-being:

When psychological well-being is measured as a whole, the two-tail significant value obtained is greater than .05. Thus, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in psychological well-being between male and female [$t(110) = -.88$, $p > .05$]. Therefore, H2 is rejected. In this study, researchers are also interested in testing gender differences in the six categories and similar results were obtained. Table 6 indicates the t-value and significant value for both total scale and subscales in psychological well-being.

Table 6: Gender differences in total scale and sub scales of psychological well-being.

Dependent variable	Independent variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t	df	Sig.
Psychological well-being	Male	37	92.51	10.30	-.88	110	.38
	Female	75	94.27	9.75			
Autonomy	Male	37	14.27	2.56	.80	110	.42
	Female	75	13.84	2.72			
Personal Growth	Male	37	17.22	2.41	-1.29	110	.20
	Female	75	17.89	2.70			
Positive Relations	Male	37	14.78	3.20	-1.81	60.36	.08
	Female	75	15.88	2.61			
Purpose in life	Male	37	15.05	2.38	-.25	110	.98
	Female	75	15.07	2.53			
Self-acceptance	Male	37	15.54	2.99	-1.62	110	.11
	Female	75	16.48	2.84			
Environmental mastery	Male	37	15.65	2.68	.94	110	.35
	Female	75	15.11	2.98			

The effect of occupational stress on psychological well-being:

H2 was tested using simultaneous regression with the 'Enter' method. Results obtained indicates that occupational stress explained 12% of the variance [$F(1,110) = 14.95$, $p < .05$]. Besides, it was suggested that occupational stress is a significant predictor of psychological well-being (Beta = -.35), ($t = -3.87$, $p < .05$). The negative beta coefficient obtained shows that psychological well-being is expected to decrease when occupational stress increase. Thus, H3 which stated that teachers with higher occupational stress have lower psychological well-being is accepted. Table 7 below summarized the results obtained.

Table 7: Effect of occupational stress on psychological well-being.

Independent variable	Dependent variable					
	Psychological Well-being					
Occupational stress	R^2	F	Sig. F	Beta	t	Sig. t
	.12	14.95	.000	-.35	-3.87	.000

Social support as the moderator on the relationship between occupational stress and psychological well-being:

The moderator was analysed with hierarchical regression. In step 1, occupational stress was entered as independent variable, followed by social support in step 2 and the interaction of both occupational stress and social support in step 3. Results obtained show that there is a significant effect of social support on

psychological well-being (F(2,109) = 14.95, p<.05). However, the interaction of social support and occupational stress can only explained 0.3% of the variance and showed no significant moderating effect (F(3,108) = 10.02, p>.05). This indicates that social support does havesignificant positive effects on psychological well-being (Beta =.33), (t= 3.64 p<.05), but do not moderate the effect of occupational stress on psychological well-being. Results are demonstrated in Table 8.

Table 8: Social support as moderator in the effect of occupational stress on psychological well-being.

Dependent Variable	Variables	STD Beta Step 1	STD Beta Step 2	STD Beta Step 3	R^2	Adjusted R^2	R^2 Change	F Change	Sig. F Change	Const.
Psychological well-being	Independent: Occupational stress	-.346	-.242	-.250	.120	.112	.120	14.95	.000	93.688
	Moderator: Social Support		.326	.329	.215	.201	.096	13.27	.000	93.688
	Interaction: OS*SS			-.052	.218	.196	.003	.356	.552	93.532

P< .05

Discussion:

Gender differences in occupational stress:

T-value obtained from the independent t-test did not show significant difference in occupational stress between men and women [t(110) = -.33, p>.05]. This allows us to assume that teachers are experiencing work stress due to other factors within or outside the workplace regardless of their gender. The possible explanation for this result obtained is probably their years of teaching experience. As mentioned in descriptive analysis, only 17 (15.2%) out of 112 of them have more than 35 years of teaching experience, while the remaining 95 (84.8%) has low or moderate years of teaching experience. Teachers with less teaching experience may have inadequate skills or abilities required to perform their work routine in school. This can be explained by the demand-ability fit in P-E fit theory, stating that stress is resulted by the misfit between one's abilities with the demand from work. In addition, the study of Balankrishnamurthy& Shankar (2009) among police officers had found that workers with more working experiences tend to have lower stress. Thus, years of teaching experience allow teachers to gain knowledge and skills in handling their job. However, teachers with low teaching experience might have inadequate skills, causing them to experience work stress regardless of their gender.

Another possible explanation could be their marital status. Although most research on the relationship between marital status and stress were focused on women, marital status does found to have a significant effect on occupational stress. As reported by Nagaraju&Nandini (2013) and Nagra& Arora (2013), married women tend to experience greater stress and depression as they need to deal with more difficulties in life compared to unmarried women. To relate it back into the present study, 92 (82.1%) out of 112 respondents are married. Thus, the stress that teachers are experiencing at work are most probably the result of interaction with work-related stressors as a married person, regardless of their gender.

The result obtained is contradicted to those studies that have found gender differences in occupational stress. Most studies reported that female tend to be more stressful, such as the study of Chaturvedi (2011) which indicated that female academic staff have greater stress than men. Although many studies found significant gender differences in work stress, the findings of the present study happen to be similar to a study published by Walton &Politano (2014), which reported that the perceived work stress between male and female pilot has no significant differences.

Gender differences in psychological well-being:

Current findings show that there are no gender differences neither in overall nor categories of psychological well-being. One possible explanation is the scores of respondents on psychological well-being. In this study, there are 66 (58.8%) out of 112 respondents who scored medium in psychological well-being. Since majorities fall in the medium category, researchers believed that this is the factor that might have affected the comparison of male and female teachers in their well-being.

Current findings rejected H2 and the results is in line with the findings of Vescovelli*et al.* (2014) which reported no significant gender differences in overall psychological well-being. Other than that, current findings also support the work of Fernandes, Vasconcelos-Raposo, &Brustad (2012), which shows that no significant gender differences in overall psychological well-being. However, the result obtained in the present study is in contrast with findings that had claimed significant gender differences in psychological well-being. Study of Akhter (2015) had reported that female students have higher scores than male. Similar results were also obtained in the study of GÜREL (2009) among Turkish university students.

As for the six categories in psychological well-being, findings in the current study indicated no significant gender differences in every category. The researcher believes that this is most probably due to the limited data collected. This is almost similar to the study recently published by Chraif&Dumitru (2015), in which they had found significant difference in environmental mastery, positive relations, personal growth, and self-acceptance, but the remaining two categories (autonomy and purpose of life) were not reported due to insufficient data.

Findings of studies from other researchers regarding psychological well-being indicated vary scores across every category. Panahi*et al.* (2013) concluded that there are gender differences in positive relation, self-acceptance, and purpose of life, but no difference in the category of autonomy, personal growth, and environmental mastery. Similarly, although the study of Fernandes*et al.* (2012) had found no significant gender difference in overall psychological well-being, but the male had reported to have higher scores in environmental mastery and self-acceptance.

The effect of occupational stress on psychological well-being:

The result obtained indicated that occupational stress explained 12% of the variance [$F(1,110) = 14.95$, $p<.05$] and is a significant predictor of psychological well-being (Beta = -6.41, (t= -3.87, $p<.05$). There is no doubt that teachers carry the burden of heavy workload in school as their responsibilities at school encompasses teaching, students' academic progress, curriculum and disciplines. Students' performance at school also account for teachers' occupational stress (Eres&Atanasoska, 2011). Other than that, they are also responsible for administration, such as paperwork and handling programs or organizing celebrations at school. This shows that even though teacher seems to have the benefit of half day work basis, but the amount of work is no less when compared to workers of another profession. As suggested in P-E fit theory, employees tend to experience high work stress when work demands are greater and surpass their ability. Therefore, it is the heavy workload that has caused teachers to experience occupational stress and eventually results in poorer psychological well-being. Findings of current study accept H3 and support the result obtained in the study of Adegoke (2014), but is contradicted by the research of Akintayo (2012) and Abad Vergara & Gardner (2011).

Social support as the moderator on the relationship between occupational stress and psychological well-being:

In this study, social support shows no moderating effect. This can be explained by the level of social support perceived by this group of respondents as there are only 56 (50%) out of 112 respondents who reported a moderate level of support available. This leads to the assumption that the level of support is too low to moderate the effect of occupational stress on psychological well-being.Other than that, the Interpersonal Support Evaluation List (ISEL) measures individual's perception of support that they might obtain from others. The result could have been different if the moderator was to measure the actual social support received by the individual. Besides, since occupational stress derived from work, social support in organization could have a greater moderating effect on occupational stress and well-being. This is because work support includes the concern of supervisors or other co-workers on employees' global well-being by offering social interaction and resources (Kossek, Pichler, Bodner, & Hammer, 2011). According to Caplan (1972), receiving strong support from colleagues can help in relieving job strain. Thus, instead of supports receive from others outside their workplace, researchers strongly believe that social support organization could have acted as a moderator upon the effect of occupational stress and teachers' psychological well-being.

Findings in the study are similar to the study of Glozah (2013), in which social support was tested as the moderator upon the effect of academic stress on adolescents' psychological well-being. As a result, social support was again found to have no moderating effect, even though the stress studied was academic stress. Unfortunately, there are limited studies on social support as the moderator of occupational stress and psychological well-being. Therefore, future research is recommended to explore the context of social support and its moderating effect upon the effect of stress and psychological well-being.

Conclusion:

There are several limitations can bederived from the data. First, respondents were only a total of 112 secondary school teachers who are currently teaching in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. Researchers recognized that this small sample size is considered insufficient to be generalized into a larger sample or population. Besides, there was also a huge difference in the number of males (N=37.3%) and female teachers (N=75.7%). This gap might have affected the comparison of gender differences in occupational stress and psychological well-being.Considering the limited sample size in this study, future studies are recommended to include larger sample. Besides, primary school teachers or teachers from the private sector can also be included to see if similar results obtain. Other than that, since general social support showed no moderating effect, future studies can consider to measure actual social support received or social support at work to see if these different contexts of social support may contribute to different results. Cultural differences should also be taken into account in measuring social support.

To conclude, teachers' psychological well-being can be negatively affected by occupational stress. Therefore, actions should be taken in relieving their stress at work. One of the examples is the effort of school administrators in implementing stress management programs as this can not only help in reducing stress, but it can also introduce teachers the appropriate ways to cope with it. This kind of efforts is believed to be able to contribute to a higher possibility of improving teachers' psychological well-being. Social support, on the other

hand, showed no significant moderating effect in the present study. Thus, future research is needed to study its' contexts and to explore other factors that are able moderate occupational stress. All in all, teachers are the backbone of a strong nation. Therefore, their psychological well-being must not be neglected. In fact, it must be taken seriously as a vital point for the benefits of teachers themselves and also the growth of a strong nation.

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