

**THE INFLUENCE OF STRESSORS ON
INTENTION TO LEAVE AMONG
TOURIST GUIDES IN SABAH**

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work in this report is of my own except for excerpts, equations, summaries and references, which have been duly acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is one of the industries that keep on growing every year. The growth means greater demand from this industry. This industry is just like any other industry can lead to the stress and also intention to leave. In many top organizations in order for them to succeed is to be able to sustain the worker. Therefore the aim of this study is to see the relationship between career development opportunity and also work life balance relates towards intention to leave. As both of is fall under the category of stressor which lead to the outcome. In this study we can see clearly that intention to leave among tourist guides in Sabah is a serious issue. This is because most of the result that show they have the intention of leaving this organization. Basically because they said that there is limited among of career development opportunity and also definitely interupt their work life balance as tour guide work odd hours. Therefore this study give a very good overview regarding the current situation that needed to be further research and action need to be taken before its getting bad from years to come.

ABSTRAK

HUBUNGAN PENGARUH STRESS TERHADAP KEINGINAN BERHENTI KERJA DIKALANGAN PEMANDU PELANCONG DI NEGERI SABAH

Industri pelancongan merupakan salah satu industri yang berkembang pesat dari tahun ke tahun. Hal ini bermakna industri ini mempunyai permintaan yang sangat tinggi. Oleh yang demikian industri ini serupa dengan industri-industri di luar sana dengan pelbagai masalah stress dan juga niat hendak berhenti kerja dikalangan para pekerja. Mana-mana organisasi yang unggul, salah satu cara untuk mengukuhkan prestasi mereka adalah dengan menjaga kebajikan pekerja. Oleh itu kajian ini untuk melihat hubungan diantara peluang pembangunan karier dan juga keseimbangan kehidupan dan kerja terhadap niat untuk berhenti kerja. Dalam kajian ini kita dapati bahawa para pemandu pelancong mempunyai keinginan untuk berhenti kerja yang tinggi dikalangan mereka. Hal ini adalah kerana keputusan kajian mengatakan peluang karier pekerjaan yang sangat terhad dan juga keseimbangan kehidupan dan kerja yang tidak seimbang. Hal ini kerana masa berkerja mereka adalah tidak tetap. Oleh yang demikian kajian ini memberi gambaran situasi semasa yang berlaku didalam industri ini dan secara tidak langsung mendorong kepada kajian yang lebih mendalam dan juga tindakan-tindakan susulan agar masalah ini dapat dibendung.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Organizations nowadays are pushing their limit in order to gain profit. Therefore, we can see that all the organizations are put most of the burden on others which is their employees. In order to have a high productivity, organizations are trying their best to fully utilize their resources. The most important resources for an organization is employees which is basically human beings. With all of the expectations, pressures, extra ordinary targets and many more other things that been given to those employees will definitely leads to something call 'stress'. Stress can create more problems to individuals and also to the organization itself. Interventions at the organizational level are therefore critical as many stressors are able to be controlled by employers. These includes excessive work hours, unreasonable performance demands, health and safety risks, lack of autonomy, poor communication, role ambiguity, job insecurity, workplace conflict, and bullying and harassment (Ahsan, Abdullah, Fie, and Alam, 2009).

However, pressure at the workplace is unavoidable due to the demands of the contemporary work environment. Because there is a research literature supports the prediction that workplace factors will have direct effects on stress (Lyne *et al.*, 2000). Pressure perceived as acceptable by an individual, may even keep employees alert, motivated, able to work and learn, depending on the available resources and personal characteristics. However, when that pressure becomes excessive or otherwise unmanageable it leads to stress. Stress can damage an employees' health and the



business performance.

Nowadays organizations do pay attention of this matter since it will indirectly affect the performance of that particular organization. This is because the outcome from a stressful employee is something that is really needed to be avoidance by those big organizations. Some studies have an applied emphasis due to organizational immediacy and importance of retaining employees. There is a high public cost in replacing employees and limited training capacity increases the dependency on a steady flow of training a new employee (Fairbrother and Warn, 2001). Law, Pearce, and Woods (1995) highlighted the need to apply stress and coping research to tourism and hospitality employees, and identified clear sources of stress and coping strategies of Australian attractions staff. Because there would be less productive or which come to worst in to quit their job. This will lead to waste of that particular company because they have spent a lot on training and development towards that particular employee. Aside from that to lose an experience employee is crucial for a company. This is the main reason why organizations pay more attention regarding this matter lately.

Different organizations which have different professions will lead to various types of stress. Researchers have been doing research regarding stress in a lot of occupations such as nurse, manufacturer, salesperson and many more (Velnampy and Aravinthan, 2013; Jamadin *et al.*, 2014; Lua and Imilia, 2011). According to Ivancevic, Konopaske and Matteson (2011) the stressors that contribute to stress were than classified into individual, group, organizational or non-work level stress. Some examples for the individual group are the role ambiguity and role conflict. As for the organizational level is career development and as for the non-work will be the work-life balance. All of this stressor usually will lead to negative impact as the consequence from all of this stressor will affect the behavioral, cognitive and also physiological outcomes.

However there is a gap in the literature on stress and turnover intention among tour guides. Most of scholars study hospitality industry and focus more on hotel employees. Seldom research is regarding tour guides and this is a neglected area in the literature. Few studies of issues faced by tour guiding professionals have been reported in the English-based literature. Research that has begun to identify a range of issues confronting tour guides (Ap and Wong, 2001; Mak, Wong, and Chang, 2011) has generally neglected to examine the psychological aspects of encountering these issues, such as stress and emotional responses. The closest to this kind of research are based on hospitality line which focuses more on the hotel lines and non-tour guide professions. This study seeks to remedy this gap in the literature.

1.2 Problem Statement

Sabah is one of the thirteen states which Malaysia is made of. Sabah is the second largest state in Malaysia and shares the island of Borneo with Sarawak, Brunei, and Indonesian Kalimantan. Basically Sabah have a wide range of tourist attraction from the world's largest flower - the Rafflesia, one of the highest mountains in South East Asia - Mount Kinabalu, and one of the world's top dive sites - Sipadan Island. So basically Sabah is richly blessed with all the tourist attraction. Therefore, this is the main reason why the number of tourists that come to Sabah increases year by year. According to Sabah Tourism Board Statistics Department, there is a huge increase of arrival of tourists in 2013 (see Appendix A). This is because the number of tourist for the year of 2012 is 2,875,761 visitors where else the number of tourist for the year of 2013 has increased by 17.6% more than the previous year which consist of 3,383,243. Therefore, tourism industry is one of the factors driven economic in Sabah.

All of these can lead to higher demand in tourism industry. Those who have the most effect by this tremendous demand is none other than the tourist guides. The number of hours they spend in term of working in and out during the peak and also

low seasons will be a lot because the peak and low season is depend on the tourist origin country and its differ from one and another country. Therefore this could leads to those organization making fully utilize of those tourist guides to the maximum limit. Tourist guide are believe to face some kind of stress due to the increase number of hours work in and out that been set by those organization that they are working for. According to Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Arts (MOTOUR) Malaysia website the number of tourist guide in Sabah for the year of 2013 is 1548 tour guide. The number includes a mixture whether they are active or non-active. Due the work demand that leads to few type of stressors such as lack of career development and also there is no work life balance in this field of working can lead to higher turnover ratio among the guides. Usually there will be no career development for them which will definitely give them some bad impression or uncertainty for their future. Threats to career development and achievement, including threat of redundancy, being undervalued and unclear promotion prospects are stressful (Nelson and Burke, 2000).

Aside from that due to the number of demand from their particular organization will lead to no quality of life for them and also known as no work life balance exist in this field. This is because the conflict between home and work and the work impact on personal relationships is stressful (Sparks and Cooper, 1999). Tourist guide task can contribute to burnout and turnover (Marchland, Russell, & Cross, 2009). All of these stressors will lead to turnover intention. Therefore it is important to examine if there exists turnover intention within this profession and if so is it caused by stressor at organizational level and non work related.

On the other hand, there are few studies on the issue that related to tour guiding profession, especially regarding the matter of stressor and also turnover intention. Therefore, there is a need to understand and know more about stressors at organizational level and non-work level that can lead to turnover intention among tour guides in Sabah.

1.3 Research Questions

The specific research questions are outline as the following:

- i. Does career development opportunity influence on intention to leave among tour guides in Sabah?
- ii. Does work life balance influence on intention to leave among tour guides in Sabah?

1.4 Research objectives

The overall objective of this study is to determine the influence of stressors at organizational level and also non work level towards the turnover intention among tour guides in Sabah. The specific objectives are to determine

- i. To investigate the influence of career development opportunity on intention to leave among tour guides in Sabah
- ii. To investigate the influence of work life balance on intention to leave among tour guides in Sabah

1.5 Scope of study

This study is to determine the influence of stressors at individual level towards the intention to leave among tour guides in the area of Sabah. It is a quantitative study where questionnaires will be distributed to all potential respondents through the Sabah Tourist Guides Association of which most tourist guides (TGs) become members; additionally questionnaires will also be distributed through industry contacts as some TGs are freelance but can be approached through regular tour operators with whom they work.

The respondents are basically all the tour guides no matter whether they are blue badge or green badge tour guides. So basically the questionnaire will be fairly distributed through all the tourist guides in Sabah. Therefore the target respondents are all the tour guides licensed in Sabah, a population of around 1548.

1.6 Significance of study

Sabah's tourism revenue is expected to reach RM5.7 billion this year from RM5.17 billion in 2012. It is a huge increase from the previous year which shows that tourism is one of the major contributions for Malaysian tourism industry. According to Datuk Seri Masidi Manjun, which is the state Tourism, Culture and Environment Minister despite the incursion earlier this year by an armed Filipino group in the eastern coast of Sabah, the state experienced a double-digit increase in tourist arrivals from Europe, Japan and Australia (The Sun Daily, 2013). This means that the demand for the tourism industry is high in Sabah. However, there a huge drop in the number of new tour guides that coming into this industry as been illustrated in the table below. We can conclude that although there is 1548 tourist guides in Sabah not all is active member and also the number of people joining this industry is rather low. Therefore, once there is an increasing turnover intention means this industry will have serious problem in the future.

Therefore it is worthy to investigate if there any sign of intention to leave in this tourism field especially for those tour guides. By doing this research we can see is stress is the cause for them to quit their job and go find other job. This is because in this field they really need someone who really have experience because one person cannot help the industry grow they need more tourist guide in the future with huge experience. Furthermore, it will definitely increase the efficiency and effectiveness of those organizations in the long run because tourist will be increasing from year to year.

Therefore the other benefit of conducting this study is that the entire employer can learn something on why the turnover rate is really high in this field.

1.7 Key Definition of Terms

Several terms are defined in the context of the research study which includes the turnover intention and the two stressors which are the career development opportunity and work- life balance.

Stress: Modern definitions of stress all recognize that it is a personal experience caused by pressure or demands on an individual, and impacts upon the individual's ability to cope or rather, his/her perception of that ability.

Tour Guide: The term tour guide applies to those who hold a tour guiding license which is the green and blue badge. Green badge refer to those guide who is specific on the nature base tourism. Where else the blue badge guides are mean to guide those city attractions.

Career Development: Career development is the lifelong process of managing progression in learning and work. The quality of this process significantly determines the nature and quality of individuals' lives: the kind of people they become, the sense of purpose they have, the income at their disposal. It also determines the social and economic contribution they make to the communities and societies of which they are part.

Work Life Balance: Work-life balance is the separation between your work life and your personal life. It is the boundary that you create between your profession, career, or business and every other segment that makes up your life. Aside from your career, these segments include your family, personal growth, spirituality, fitness and health, and community and friendships.

1.8 Summary

This chapter is all about an introduction of stressors at organizational level and non-work level towards the intention to leave among tour guides in Sabah. It also highlights the important of conducting this study for the benefit of future purpose. Research objectives and key terms definition are also stated and explained in this chapter.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the previous literature on work stressors and non-work stressors that result in turnover intention. The stress model is presented to show a clear picture on the process of how organizational level stress and non-work stress lead to turnover intention. Career development stress and work-life balance stress is discussed as predictors under organizational level stressors and non-work stressors on turnover intention. This chapter is divided into two main sections which are the theoretical background and past researches on the variables.

2.2 Theoretical Background

2.2.1 Stress

Stress is a phenomenon that spreads widely among people nowadays. The concept of stress is mainly related to psychology. However, many scholars study stress applying to organizations. According to Sonnentag and Frese (2003), there are four stress concepts: the stimulus concept, the response concept, the transactional concept and the discrepancy concept. The stimulus concept refers to situational conditions or events that bring strain to individuals. The response concept focuses more on physiological reaction which means how individuals react when they are stress. The transactional concept is brought by Lazarus (1966) which combines situation and individual. However, this concept has not yet been widely applied in empirical studies.



The last concept of discrepancy describes the difference between individual's expectations and the environment (Edwards, 1992).

Other researchers Ursin, and Eriksen (2003) found out a stress theory which is called cognitive activation theory of stress (CATS). Stress is divided into four aspects in this theory, stress stimuli, stress experience, the non-specific, general stress response, and experience of the stress response.

Moreover, Ivancevich, Konopaske and Matteson (2011) defined stress as "an adaptive response, moderated by individual differences, that is a consequence of any action, situation, or event that places special demands on a person."

Thus, stress has a broad term and contains a variety of meanings. Stress may not necessary to be a bad situation as long as individuals who know how to cope with stress.

2.2.2 Stressors

A stressor is a stimulus from an environmental condition or an external event that causes stress to a person. It can be external, environmental or social factors, or internal, biological or psychological factors that faced by individual. People who are facing these factors will choose to either adapt it or make changes Ivancevich, Konopaske and Matteson (2011).

Stressors at work are mainly related to organizational behavior. Mathieu and Zajac (1990) conducted a meta-analysis to examine the antecedents, correlates, and/or consequences of organizational commitment. The results provide evidence that individuals who work under stressors are less committed to their organizations.

Stressors at work can also be experienced outside the organization. Doby and Caplan (1995) found out that job stressors are likely to generate anxiety symptoms and employees may bring the anxiety to home.

Therefore, there are more and more empirical studies that provide evidence of individuals experience stressors no matter at work or at home. Those stressors will bring different effects to individuals in terms of behavioral, psychological or other aspects.

2.2.3 Stress Model

In this 21st century, all the employed people are facing stress because work has already become a major part of their life. Ivancevich, Konopaske and Matteson (2011) put forward a stress model (see Exhibit 2.2.3) to connect the three fundamental concepts stressors, stress and outcomes into a stress process. The stressors are divided into four main categories: individual, group, organizational, and nonwork.

a) Individual Level

Stressors in individual level are the most common variables that studied by researchers. It consists of role conflict, role overload, role ambiguity, responsibility for people, harassment and pace of change.

b) Group Level

Group level stressors are mostly relating to a group of individuals who contact to each other in order to accomplish a common goal. Stressors in this level are usually related to managerial behavior, lack of cohesiveness, intragroup conflict and status incongruence.

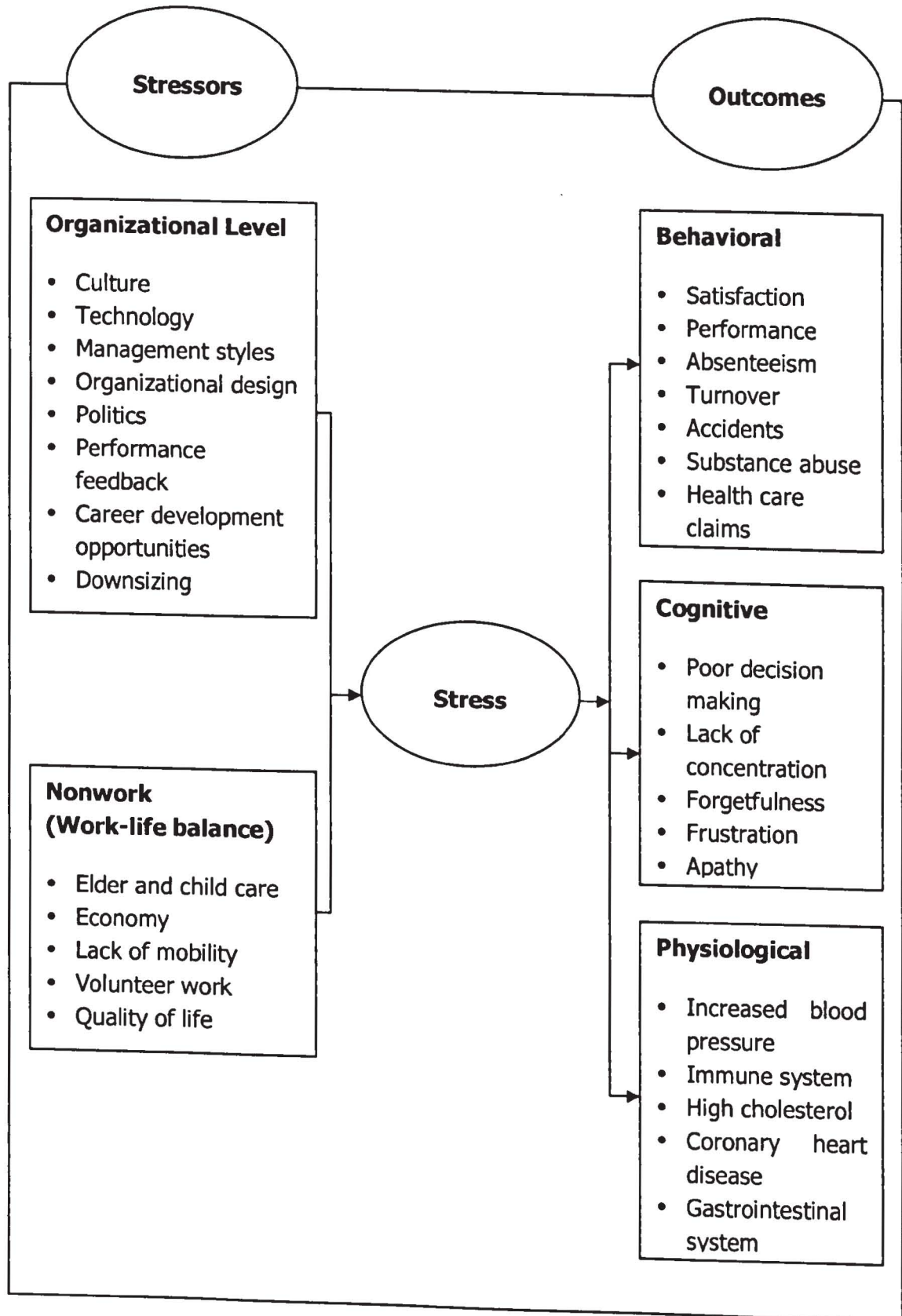
c) Organizational Level

Organizational level stressors are faced by most of the employed people. It is mainly related to organizational culture, management style, organizational design, organizational politics, performance feedback, career development opportunities, downsizing and so on.

d) Nonwork

Stressors fall on this category are not work-related which means they are come from outside the organization such as elder and child care, economy, lack of mobility, volunteer work and quality of life. These stressors are referred to as work-life balance.

Exhibit 2.2.3 A Model of Stressors, Stress, and Outcomes



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