

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORK RELATED
STRESSORS, NON-WORK RELATED STRESSORS
AND EMPLOYEES' COMMITMENT AMONG STAFF
OF ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS IN KOTA
KINABALU**

KHALILAH IBRAHIM

**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH
2007**



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KHALILAH IBRAHIM

**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Masters of
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BORANG PENGESAHAN STATUS TESIS

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DECLARATION

The materials in this thesis are original except for quotations, excerpts, summaries and references, which have been duly acknowledged.

KHALILAH BINTI IBRAHIM

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ABSTRACT

Stress has long been an important concept in the study of employees' responses to their work surroundings. Stress was defined as "the nonspecific response of the body to any demand". The objectives of this study are: firstly, to examine the relationship between work-related stressors (office politics, relationship at work, workload, role conflict and unfavorable environment) and non-work related stressors (personal financial and family problem) that will have a significantly related with employees' commitment. Secondly, to examine whether demographic factors (gender, age, working experience, and education level) act as moderators between work-related stressors, non-work related stressors and employees' commitment among staff in academic institution in Kota Kinabalu. Theoretical and managerial implications of the findings are also discussed. The findings generally confirmed all out of two independent variables hypotheses are supported in this study. In other words, there are significantly related between work related stressors and non-work related stressors as independent variables and employees' commitment as dependent variable. For the moderating variables, gender and age are supported. Gender and age has a significant moderating influence on the relationship between independent variables (work related stressors and non-work related stressors) and dependent variable (employees' commitment).



ABSTRAK

HUBUNGAN ANTARA TEKANAN DALAM KERJA, TEKANAN BUKAN DALAM KERJA DAN KOMITMEN PEKERJA TERHADAP SEMUA PEKERJA INTITUSI PENGAJIAN DI KOTA KINABALU.

Tekanan adalah konsep yang penting untuk dipelajari dan dikaji tindakan pekerja terhadap pekerjaan mereka. Tekanan boleh diterangkan sebagai "tindakan terhadap tubuh badan kepada apa jua permintaan". Objek yang paling utama dalam kajian ini adalah untuk menilai hubungan antara tekanan dalam kerja (politik di pejabat, hubungkait dengan kerja, kerja berlebihan, konflik dalam peraturan dan ketidakelesaian persekitaran) dan juga tekanan bukan dalam kerja (kewangan peribadi dan masalah keluarga) yang mempunyai signifikasi hubungan terhadap komitmen pekerja, serta untuk melihat factor-faktor demografi (umur, jantina, pengalaman kerja dan tahap pendidikan) bertindak sebagai perantaraan tekanan dalam kerja, tekanan bukan dalam kerja dan komitmen pekerja terhadap semua peringkat kakitangan di institusi pendidikan di Kota Kinabalu. Secara teori dan keberkesanannya telah dibincangkan. Keputusan didapati bahawa tekanan dalam kerja dan tekanan bukan dalam kerja mempunyai signifikasi hubungan terhadap komitmen pekerja. Begitu juga dengan factor-faktor demografi (umur dan jantina) yang mempunyai signifikasi terhadap hubungan tekanan dalam kerja, tekanan bukan dalam kerja dan komitmen pekerja.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

Nowadays, we spend more time at the office than any other place. Therefore, it would make sense that the content of our work, our work environment, and the people, with whom we work, combined in various ways, can add a significant amount of stress to our lives. Stress is a highly researched topic. Scientific journals averaged fewer than 50 stress articles per year in 1970. Stress is essentially reflected by the rate of all wear and tear caused by life (Hans Selye, 1956: 1). This issue personally attract researcher to study because according to (Hans Selye, 1976; 1), a pioneer of stress research, points out that stress is a scientific concept which has suffered from the mixed blessing of being too well known and too little understood.

Today's fast paced and ever changing environment has caused stress to become a part of our daily living. Many of the frustrations and pressure we experience in our social, personal and work lives cause us to feel stress. All of us have at one time or other encountered stressors, experienced stress and felt the effects of stress (Adam, 1999). Stress is a person's physical and emotional response to change. While most people tend to think of stress as bad, it can be either positive or negative. Sources of positive stress include having a new baby or starting an exciting new job. Sources of negative stress include divorce, unemployment or legal battles.



It may take only a short time to adjust to the change (acute stress) or it may take a much longer time (chronic stress). Acute stress is an immediate reaction to a change that is judged as threatening (stressor). Sources of acute stress include a car suddenly cutting someone off in traffic, or hearing a loud, unexpected noise. Unfortunately, there are many changes in modern society to which it is more difficult to respond, such as daily job stress, unrelenting financial pressures and dysfunctional long-term relationships. The longer that people go without either changing or adapting to these changes, the longer they will experience stress. The type of stress that people experience for a long period of time is called chronic stress.

In recent years, there has been a plentiful of literature examining the causes and consequences of occupational stress (Cooper and Payne, 1988; Fotinatos and Cooper, 1998; Sparks *et al.*, 2001). Indeed, much evidence has now accumulated in an attempt to explain the problems associated with various sectors of the working population. For example, stress amongst professional occupations (Travers and Cooper, 1993) teaching profession, a stable and low risk profession, is no exception in encountering the effects of stress. According (Robbin, 2001) mentioned that stress is a dynamic condition in which the individual is confronted with in opportunity, constraint, or demand related to what he or she desires and for which the outcome in perceived to be both uncertain and important. Refer to (Matteson & Ivancerich, 1999; Coola & Hansakar, 2001) stress could be caused by environmental, organizational and individual variables. Based on a review of researching stress has been a topic of interest for social scientists for many years. The study of occupational stress has become a significant branch of stress research. In the field of education, occupational stress research has included studies



with various groups of faculty and administrators in secondary and postsecondary education.

Stress and its relationship to commitment have been of growing concern and interest to administrators in academic institution settings. Widespread concern with the effects of stress upon those who work in academic institutions is demonstrated by the frequency with which the topic is addressed in current books, educational journals, magazines and newspapers. This research was designed to investigate the proposed moderating effect of commitment on the stress outcomes relationship under adverse organizational condition such as to all level staff in academic institutions.

Refer from New Oxford English-English-Malay Dictionary; (2003) stress is defined as worry and pressure that is caused by having too much to deal with. Stress is also can defined as any change that we must adapt to in our ever changing world. In particular, stress is any demand (force, pressure, and strain) placed on the body and the body's reaction to it. Stress is experienced by everyone who is living, working, and breathing at this very moment. It is a fact of life you cannot avoid. Stress, itself, ranges in intensity from the negative extreme of being in physical danger to the joy of completing a desired goal. All stress is not bad. It is important to identify how you respond to stressful events. This will determine the impact that these experiences have on our life.

No one can escape even the housewives, executives, teenagers or also teachers (Cole and Walkers, 1989). "I'm stressed out." The reality may be that the worker saying this is, in fact, experiencing an occupational illness. Many employees undergo stress as a normal part of their jobs, but some experience it more severely than others, to the point that they need time away from work. Stress has become such a common phenomenon



to the society that it has literally affected people from all walks of life. Actually, stress is inevitable. To be entirely without stress is to be dead! However, not all stress is unpleasant.

Therefore, it is important to understand more about the relationship between stresses with employees' commitment. Due to stress there may be more frequent verbal conflicts either direct or indirect occurring at home or work place. Stress is implicated as an etiology for a variety of disease (Collins, 2001). Some of the examples of health injuries highlighted by Collin are: - anxiety, depression, heart disease, back pain and insomnia. Stress can take on many different forms, and can contribute to symptoms of illness. According that, stress has divide in Physical symptoms such as headaches, digestive problems, sleep deprivation, constipation, rashes or hives, heartburn, night sweats, diminished sexual desire, loss of appetite, weight gain. Other symptoms based on Emotional or mental symptoms like increased anger, frustration, depression, moodiness, loneliness, problems with memory, and increased use of nicotine/alcohol/drugs.

Refer from many scenarios; it is important to understand in more details the career experience and behavior of this small number of highly stress among all level staff in academic institutions. Staff in academic institution can includes from all level in the organization such as lecturers, deans, librarian and staff based on their grade. For example, in the teaching profession, actually lecturers have to deal with heavy curriculum demands, time demands, sourcing for research fund and deadlines in writing journal and books at the same time they may have to endure working in poor working condition lack of teaching facilities, poor school management, and lack of parental



support (Roselina *et al.*, 2003). Stressors the causes of stress include any environmental conditions that place a physical or emotional and also their attitudes demand on a person. There are numerous stressors in organization settings and other life activities.

1.2 Problem Statement

Stress is an adaptive response to a situation that is perceived as challenging and threatening to a person's well-being. Stress was defined several decades ago by (Selye, 1976), as "the nonspecific response of the body to any demand". Because these "responses" include endocrinal as well as psychological and physical reactivity to demands, they can, if intense enough or repeated frequently enough, upset the homeostasis of the body (i.e. its state of natural balance). Stress can arise for a variety of reasons. Stress can be brought about by a traumatic accident, death, or emergency situation. Stress can also be a side effect of a serious illness or disease. Stress is as unique as the individual and its influence on psychological and physiological health also can effect to behavioral that determined by the characteristics or nature of the given stressor, the perception of the individual regarding that stressor, the hereditary, psychological and physiological susceptibility of the individual experiencing that stressor and the ability of the individual to perceive positive control over the outcomes potentially generated by that stressor.

The problems of this study was to analyze the relationship between certain of the factors work and non-work related stressors (office politics, relationship at work, workload, role conflict, unfavorable environment, personal financial burden and family problem) will have a significantly related with employees' commitment among staff in academic institution in Kota Kinabalu. The moderating variables analyzed included age,

education, gender and working experience have any act as moderators between independent variables and dependent variables. Refer to (Steve and Mary Ann, 2008), psychological consequences, including job dissatisfaction, moodiness depression, and lower organizational commitment.

The employees of this academic institution also could not avoid from the pressures of their daily work demand. Prolonged exposure to stressful situations has been found to produce serious dysfunctional effects to an individual, which whether can effect to stress as a negative consequence of modern living. People are stressed from overwork, job insecurity, information overload, and the increasing pace of life. These events produce distress which to investigate the degree of psychological, physiological and behavioral deviation from healthy functioning.

The stress experienced by different occupation types and job roles has been discussed in many papers with a number of different occupations being described as experiencing above average levels of stress, for example, teachers (Travers and Cooper, 1993) healthcare (Cooper *et al.*, 1999), nurses and social workers (Kahn, 1993), and the ambulance service (Young and Cooper, 1999) to name but a few. There are a number of work related stressors which have been linked to an increased likelihood of an individual experiencing negative stress outcome. In other articles, that examines the effects of organizational commitment on employee faced with consolidation of work units and possible staff reductions because of a sharp decrease in work load. So this research, want to measured employees' commitment before the consolidation and employee stress after it.



1.3 Research Questions

The research questions for this study are:

- a) What the relationship between work-related stressors (office politics, relationship at work, workload, role conflict and unfavorable environment) that will have a significantly related with employees' commitment among staff in academic institution in Kota Kinabalu?
- b) What the relationship between non-work related stressors (personal financial and family problem) that will have a significantly related with employees' commitment among staff in academic institution in Kota Kinabalu?
- c) What the relationship between work related stressors and non-work related stressors that will have a significantly related with employees' commitment among staff in academic institution in Kota Kinabalu?
- d) What expend the demographic factors (gender, age, working experience, and education level) act as moderators between work-related stressors and employees' commitment?
- e) What expend the demographic factors (gender, age, working experience, and education level) act as moderators between non-work related stressors and employees' commitment?

1.4 Research Objectives

The main objectives of this study are:

- a) To examine the relationship between work-related stressors (office politics, relationship at work, workload, role conflict and unfavorable environment) that



will have a significantly related with employees' commitment among staff in academic institution in Kota Kinabalu.

- b) To examine the relationship between non-work related stressors (personal financial and family problem) that will have a significantly related with employees' commitment among staff in academic institution in Kota Kinabalu.
- c) To examine the relationship between work related stressors and non-work related stressors that will have a significantly related with employees' commitment among staff in academic institution in Kota Kinabalu.
- d) To expend the demographic factors (gender, age, working experience, and education level) act as moderators between work-related stressors and employees' commitment.
- e) To expend the demographic factors (gender, age, working experience, and education level) act as moderators between non work-related stressors and employees' commitment.

1.5 Scope of Study

This study to examine the independent variables that was mentioned some of the factors work and non-work related stressors (office politics, relationship at work, workload, role conflict, unfavorable environment, personal financial burden and family problem) that relationship to employees' commitment among staff in academic institution in Kota Kinabalu. Demographic characteristics act as moderating factors testing the relationship between the independent variables and dependent variables.

The respondents chosen for this study focus to all level staff based on their grade of academic institution in Kota Kinabalu. Therefore, the researcher has proposed



Universiti Malaysia Sabah, UNITAR and UiTM of academic institution in Kota Kinabalu as the case study. The proposed site has been chosen based on the fact that university has offers education services as a famous academic institution in Kota Kinabalu Sabah.

1.6 Significance of Study

According (Swanson *et al.*, 1998) stress at work is also associated with other factors including individual, socio-economic, and family factors. The earlier study on sources of stress at the work place in Malaysia found that there are numerous other unmeasured variables that can contribute to stress at the work place (Manshor, 2000). These include individual and family factors, socio-economic and financial status, and mental, work environment and physical health factors.

According to (Amat, Fontaine and Chong, 2003) research on stress in the Malaysian working environment is limited and understanding the factors that contribute to occupational stress in necessary for improving stress management programs in Malaysia organization and working environment. Therefore such knowledge is important for both research stresses among to all level staffs of academic institution need to understand the sources of stress and cause stress measure that relationship to employees' commitment.

From this study, it is hoped that there will can provide a clearer understanding the relationship between work and non-work related stressors (independent variables) with the demographics as moderate have significantly related to employees' commitment among to all level staff in academic institution in Kota Kinabalu Sabah. Critical factors could be identified and the necessary recommendation could be made.



1.7 Key Variables

In this study will understanding of the relationship between work and non-work related stressors (independent variables) with the demographics as moderators have significantly related to employees' commitment among staff in academic institution in Kota Kinabalu Sabah. This study more concentrate and focus in two independent variables and one moderating variables which are:

- Dependent variables:
 - i. Work related stressors - office politics, relationship at work, workload, role conflict and unfavorable environment.
 - ii. Non-work related stressors - personal financial and family problem.
- Moderating variables:
 - i. Demography - age, education, gender and working experience.

Then to understand and examine the significant of relationship between on independent variables stressor and the moderating variables with employees' commitment among staff of academic institution in Kota Kinabalu Sabah which was the dependent variables.

1.8 Organization of Study

This study consists of five chapters. In chapter one, an Introduction of the topic being discussed which formulated the research problem, objectives, scope of study, significance of study and key of variables. In chapter two, the Literature Review of the relationship between certain of the factors work and non-work related stressors (office politics, relationship at work, workload, role conflict, unfavorable environment, personal

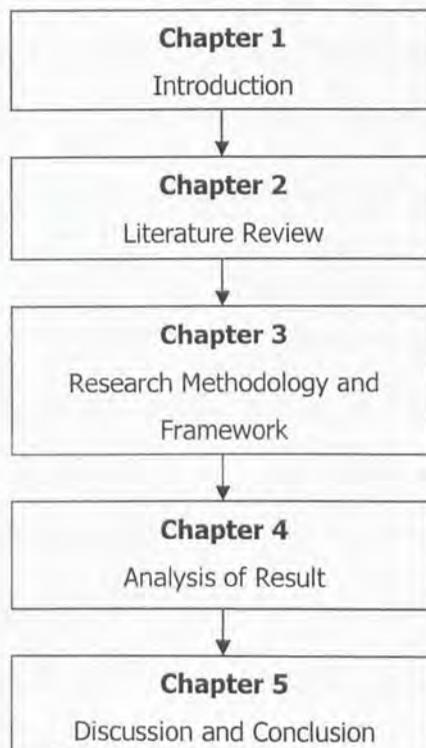


financial burden and family problem) will have a significantly related with employees' commitment among staff in academic institution in Kota Kinabalu.

The moderating variables analyzed included age, education, gender and working experience have any act as moderators between independent variables and dependent variables among staff of academic institution in Kota Kinabalu Sabah will be discussed in order to get a clearer understanding and knowledge of the study. Chapter three, basically deals with the formulations of the Research Methodology and Framework of this study. This chapter covers the definition of variables involved, proposed hypothesis, research design, units of analysis, sampling design, instruments design, data collection method and data analysis methods.

Then the last two chapters will discuss on the analysis of result or research finding and also discussion and conclusion of this study. The flow of each chapter in this study is shows clearly below Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1: Flow of each Chapters



CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the related Literature Review of work-related and non-work related stressors will have a significantly related with the employees' commitment. Definitions of the concept of stress, work-related stressors, non-work related stressors, moderating of demographic and employees' commitment were viewed. Finding from various scholars in relations to this study are being included in this chapter. According (Pervez *et al.*, 1995) stated that the main purpose of the literature review is to structure the research problem and to position the study.

2.2 The Concept of Stress

Stress has been defined in many ways by many different people. It has been a topic of interest to medical professionals, social scientists, anthropologists, psychologists, and even zoologists. For the purposes of this study, it seems most enlightening to examine it from several different perspectives, thereby getting a broad overview of the phenomenon, as well as its roots in the history of humankind.

Any discussion of stress surely would be incomplete without some mention of the work of (Hans Selye, 1946) considered by many to be the father of stress research; Selye began studying the phenomenon of stress over fifty years ago. (Selye, 1946) definition of stress is a nonspecific response of the body to a demand. Noted healer Serge Kahili King has defined stress as any change experienced by the individual.



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