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INSIGHT Journal focuses on social science and humanities research. The main aim of INSIGHT Journal is to provide an intellectual forum for the publication and dissemination of original work that contributes to the understanding of the main and related disciplines of the following areas: Accounting, Business Management, Law, Information Management, Administrative Science and Policy Studies, Language Studies, Islamic Studies and Education.

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## **FOREWORD BY DEPUTY RECTOR OF RESEARCH, INDUSTRIAL LINKAGES & ALUMNI**



Since 2018, the INSIGHT JOURNAL (IJ) from Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Johor has come up with several biennial publications. Volume 1 and 2 debuted in 2018, followed by Volume 3 this year as well as Volume 4 with 19 published papers due to the great response from authors both in and out of UiTM. Through Insight Journal, lecturers have the ability to publish their research articles and opportunity to share their academic findings. Insight Journal is indexed in MyJurnal MCC and abstracted in Asian Digital Library (ADL). Moreover, it is also an international refereed journal with many international reviewers from prestigious universities appointed as

its editorial review board members.

This Volume 6 is the second special issue for the 6<sup>th</sup> International Accounting and Business Conference (IABC) 2019 held at Indonesia Banking School, Jakarta. The conference was jointly organized by the Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Johor and the Indonesia Banking School Jakarta. Hence, this volume focuses mainly on the accounting and business research papers compiled from this conference, which was considered a huge success as over 66 full papers were presented.

Lastly, I would like to thank the Rector of UiTM Johor, Associate Professor Dr. Ahmad Naqiyuddin Bakar for his distinctive support, IJ Managing Editor for this issue Dr. Noriah Ismail, IJ Assistant Managing Editor, Fazdillah Md Kassim well as all the reviewers and editors who have contributed in the publication of this special issue.

Thank you.

**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR DR. SAUNAH ZAINON**  
Deputy Rector of Research, Industrial Linkages & Alumni  
*Editor-in-Chief for INSIGHT Journal*  
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## **Workload, Job Control, Work Relationship, and Work-Related Stress among employees in Sungai Buloh, Malaysia**

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### **Abstract**

In Malaysia, by 2030, depression has been predicted to be the number one disability and is expected to decrease workplace productivity. Deputy President of Malaysian Mental Health Association, Datuk Dr Andrew Mohanraj mentioned that depression has already dominated the Malaysian workforce and this issue has become a big problem to the country since it is difficult to identify due to its hidden symptoms. The author also made a comparison between employees and entrepreneurs in SME industry. Those entrepreneurs have more commitment to work as they had to work longer hours and tend to have more work-family conflict, compared to normal employees. Therefore, it has been confirmed that those entrepreneurs in SME industry contributed to a large part of employee turnover, poor well-being and the reduction in job's performance. This study was conducted to find out the impact of work-related stress on SME workers in Sungai Buloh. The objectives of the study are to identify the relationship between workload, job control, work relationships and work-related stress. This objective of the study is also to determine which factors (workload, job control and work relationships) are most influenced by work-related stress.

**Keywords:** Job Control, Malaysia, Stress, Workload, Work Relationship, Work-related Stress

## 1. Introduction

The Mental Health Foundation (MHF) has conducted a survey and the result shows that millennials aged between 18 and 38 feel more under pressure at work than their baby boomer colleagues. According to Richard Grange (2018), the Mental Health Foundation mentioned that the impact of mental health due to work can follow workers home. According to an article by Cocker et al. (2013), SME organizational features such as long work hours may increase job stress or work-related stress. Besides, it also mentioned that employees in SME industry who suffered high psychological distress lead to higher absenteeism and lower productivity on workplace. Other research by Omrane, Kammoun and Seaman (2018) mentioned that entrepreneurs or employees in SME industry has contributed a great number of professional stressors due to their work activities. Thus, it might lead them to be potential candidates for burnout. Their work activities lead them to the phase of occupational stress. Next, a journal by Tahar has mentioned that entrepreneurs that face work-related stress have given negative impact on their physical and psychological health.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Work-related Stress

According to Blaug, Kenyon and Lekhi (2007), work-related stress occurs when the demands from the job, resources and capabilities of the worker to meet those demands were mismatched. Besides, Salami (2010) stated that occupational stress or work-related stress can be defined as when employees experienced negative emotions such as anxiety, tension, frustration, depression and anger due to work. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH 2008) defined occupational stress or work-related stress as the situation where the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the work that might create harmful physical and emotional response.

NIOSH has ranked occupations according to their stress levels. These stressful occupations show that those employees have insufficient control over work because they feel that they are trapped in jobs that require them to work like machines rather than as people (Michailidis & Georgiou, 2005). Siu, Lu and Copper (2002) mentioned that the strongest indicator of productivity which is psychological well-being has been negatively impacted by work-related stress. Balducci (2012) and Notelaers et al. (2010) stated that work-related stressors can be seen as factors that influence bullying because excessive job demands, resource inadequacies and a lack of job control can lead to severe bullying perceptions.

### 2.2 Workload

Workload has contributed to work-related stress as it is one of the factors that influence work-related stress found in many cases nowadays. According to a journal titled "Occupational and Employee Stress in Small Businesses" by Dr. Yuhshy and Chuang, previous studies suggest that uncertainty, over load, personal problems, understaffing



and lack of sufficient experience can occur due to work-related stress occurred in SMEs. As mentioned in a journal by Wai et al. (2013), accounting workplaces have been known as one of the environments with high level of stress due to work overload during the peak period. Previous studies stated that employees have been exposed to long working hours or work overload, high demands and low support, high effort and work-family imbalance (Niedhammer et al., 2012).

Besides, Houtman (2007) reported that work-related stress can influence employees that work under pressure deadlines and at a very high speed. As stated by Kauppinen et al. (2013), when employees are hurried to do their works and unable to complete those works due to other intervening tasks, it can cause psychosocial overload. It has been verified that majority of the employees reported that feeling hurried on the job is one of the causes of psychosocial overload. Houtman (2007) also proved that workload is one of factors that influenced work-related stress the most. The author has mentioned that high quantitative demands or work overload have caused stress.

### **2.3 Job Control**

Job control has contributed to work-related stress because it is one of the factors that influenced work-related stress found in many cases nowadays. According to Doby and Caplan (1995), inadequate feedback, lack of control, lack of training, and lack of knowledge can lead to excessive levels of worker stress. Archer (1979) stated that employees who feel unable to control important outcomes may suffer anxiety. Based on a Swedish study, Karasek (1990) found that when job control has increased, there was a significant positive association with decrease in worker stress, absenteeism, depression, and heart disease. So, it has been verified that job control is one of the most factor that can influenced work-related stress.

Based on Karasek's psychosocial work factors (1970), low control and high demand have been shown to predict high rates of cardiovascular disease as well as high rates of sickness absence. There are strong evidences that high job demands, low colleagues and supervisor support, low job control and low procedural and relational justice can be the results of work-related stress (Nieuwenhuijsen et al. 2010). Besides, Houtman (2007) has classified that work factor that caused stress are autonomy or job control, learning opportunities and reward. As stated in "Working on Stress" (2002) article, factors such as work control, material and moral support, interesting work and comfortable and safe working conditions can reduce the effect of stress.

### **2.4 Work Relationship**

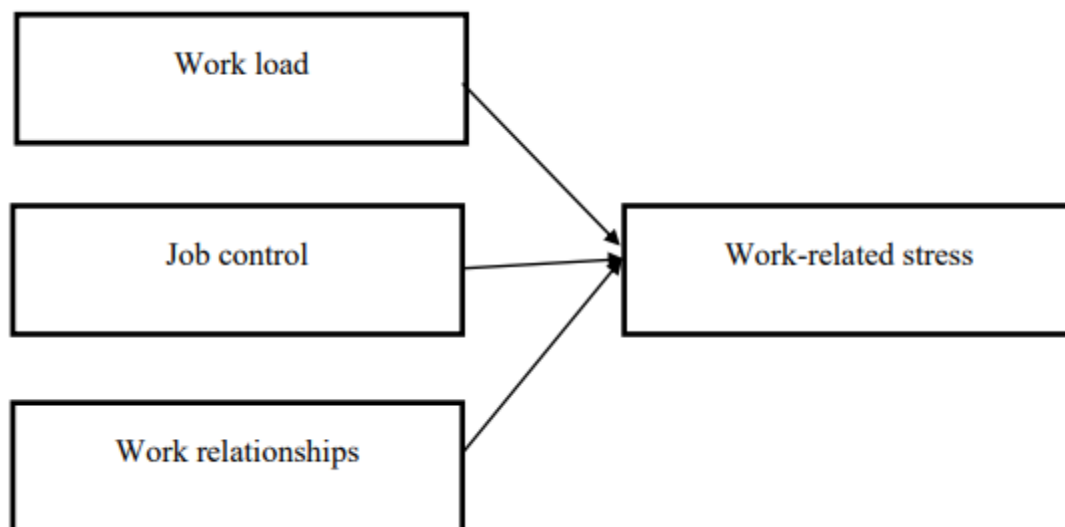
Work relationships have contributed to work-related stress as it is one of the factors that influenced work-related stress found in many cases nowadays. One of the significant factors in increasing workplace stress was lack of opportunity to interact with co-workers or managers. Jobs that are often judged to be boring and repetitive such as assembly line work or computer data entry, tend to increase employee stress levels as these jobs tend to make workers isolate from their colleagues (Karasek & Theorell, 1990). Houtman (2007) has classified that lack of social support at workplace can lead to stress. A general definition defined that co-worker relationships occur whenever there is some form of contact between two or more employees.

Co-worker relationships can exist between staff, managers, directors and executives. As stated in a journal titled “Workplace Relationships, Stress, Depression and Anxiety in a Malaysian Sample” by Khodarahimi, Intan and Norzarina (2012), proposed that satisfaction and involvement that occurred in a relationship usually based on how fair the distribution of costs and benefits are for each partner. A previous study speculated the significance of relationships in the workplace is a phenomenological issue and it might influence the arising of stress, depression and anxiety in the workplace.

## 2.5 Research Framework

The framework as per Figure 1 shows factors that influenced work-related stress based on researcher’s study. Those three variables were the common most influenced factors based on previous researchers and studies. Thus, based on those three factors that influenced work-related stress, researcher has proposed some hypothesis for this study. These hypotheses has been developed based on the previous studies that been concluded by significant previous researchers. Those three hypotheses are:

- H1 There is a positive relationship between workload and work-related stress.
- H2 There is a positive relationship between job control and work-related stress.
- H3 There is a positive relationship between work relationships and work-related stress.



**Figure 1: Research Framework**

### 3. Research Methodology

For this study, researcher chose quantitative technique using a 7-point Linkert scale with convenience sampling technique for the questionnaire that been distributed to SME workers in Sungai Buloh. The questionnaire use in this study was design by adopting research question items used by Ferneta et al. (2016), Khairuddin, Salim, Saidun and Hashim (2016), Lewis, Megicks and Jones (2017), Kinnunen (2016), and Petarli et al. (2015). The questionnaire was divided into five (5) parts, namely Section A-Demographic Profile, Section B-Work-related Stress, Section C-Workload, Section D-Job Control and Section E-Work Relationships. An interval 7-point Linkert scale use in this study as research process measurement to identify the extent or degree of each item's practice within the organization. It also enables data analysis through factor analysis, correlation analysis and multiple regressions. The questionnaires were distributed using printed questionnaire to employees in the organization and email using online questionnaire via google form. Online questionnaire helps this study to gather much faster information. It also provides much higher reliability of the data collection where the data collected could be directly extracted from the online database without any human intervention key-in the data for data analysis purpose.

### 4. Results and Discussion

From the questionnaire that been distributed, 48.4 percent of the respondents are within the age of 18-24 years old. This followed by 31.1 percent within the age of 25-34 years old, 10.7 percent within the age of 35-44 years old and 9.8 percent within the age of 45 years old and above. Besides, female has larger number of frequencies that consists of 73 respondents with 59.8 percent compared to male which consists of 49 respondents with the 40.2 percent. Next, Malay respondents have contributed the largest percentage, which is 95.1 percent compare to Chinese with 1.6 percent and Indian with 3.3 percent. Muslim respondents have contributed the largest percentage, which is 96.7 percent. This is followed by other religion with 1.6 percent, Christian with 0.8 percent and Buddhist with 0.8 percent. Besides, single respondents have responded to this study with 59.0 percent. This is followed by married respondents with 41.0 percent. Thus, there is no respondent with divorcee status. Besides, respondents that have Bachelor Degree with 45.9 percent have responded to this study. This is followed by respondent that have Diploma with 25.4 percent, SPM with 18.0 percent, STPM with 6.6 percent and Master Degree with 4.1 percent.

Next, 60.7 percent of respondents have less than 5 years' experiences in the organization. This is followed by 16.4 percent with 6-10 years of experience, 8.2 percent with 11-15 and 16-20 years, 2.5 percent with 21-25 years, 3.3 percent with 26-30 years and only 0.8 percent with years of experience more than 30 years. Most of the respondents with 56.6 percent worked 5-8 hours per day. Next, 33.6 percent of respondents worked 9-12 hours per day and 4.9 percent of respondents worked less than 4 hours and more than 12 hours per day. Most of the respondents with 22.1 percent worked 41-45 hours per week. Next, 21.3 percent of respondents worked 36-40 hours per week, 18.9 percent worked more than 50 hours, 13.1 percent of respondents worked less than 30 and 30-35 hours and lastly 11.5 percent worked 46-50 hours per week. 50 percent of the respondents have income of RM 1,000-2,000. This is followed by 21.3 percent with income of RM 2,001-3,000, 14.8 percent with income of RM 3,001-

4,000, 5.7 percent with income of RM 6,001 and above, 4.9 percent with income of RM 4,001-5,000 and 3.3 percent with income of RM 5,001-6,000.

Table 1 below showed the descriptive statistics of all study variables. The mean of work-related stress was the lowest with the value of 3.77. Work relationships was the highest mean with 4.92 follow by job control 4.63 which these indicate that most SME workers were highly agree on work relationships and job control item has been asked in the questionnaire. While workload with 3.90 has average mean value which indicated that average workers were neither agree or disagreed to the item has been asked in the questionnaire regarding workload. Pearson Correlation was used to analyse the strength of association between all variables in this research study. The table illustrated that there is a significant and greater positive relationship between workload and work-related stress ( $r=0.845^{**}$ ). Therefore, higher workload score lead to higher work-related stress score. Next, there is less significant and negative relationship between job control and work-related stress ( $r=-0.198^*$ ). Therefore, lower job control score lead to lower work-related stress score. Lastly, there is a significant and negative relationship between work relationships and work-related stress ( $r=-0.369^{**}$ ). Therefore, lower work relationships score lead to lower work-related stress score.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistic, Cronbach Alpha and Pearson Correlation**

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Work-related Stress	Workload	Job Control	Work Relationships
Work-related Stress	3.77	1.85	(0.913)			
Workload	3.90	1.81	.845**	(0.908)		
Job Control	4.63	2.55	-.198*	-.138	(0.847)	
Work Relationships	4.92	1.61	-.369**	-.229**	.473**	(0.935)

Note: \*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed). Entries in parenthesis indicate Cronbach Alpha values.

Table 2 below describes the result for multiple regression analysis performed for the framework proposed in this study. Based on multiple regression model with all predictors produced R Square=0.746. The 0.746 of R Square represent that there is 74.6% of variation of work-related stress can be explained by three independent variables which are workload, job control and work relationships. Meanwhile, the remaining 25.4% of the variation of dependent variable was interpreted by other factors which there are other additional variables that are important effect on work-related stress have not been considered in this study. Table 2 also shows also shows that workload and work relationships were fit on the study model which significant value that are less than 0.05 ( $p<0.05$ ) with F value of 115.734. Table shows that most independent variable that influenced work-related stress is workload. 80.2% of workload explain work-related stress and there was a significant relationship ( $\beta=0.802$ ,  $p=0.00$ ,  $p<0.005$ ). This was followed by job control where 0% influenced work-related stress with less significant relationship ( $\beta=0.00$ ,  $p=0.996$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Lastly, only -18.5% of work relationships influenced work-related stress but there was a significant relationship ( $\beta=-0.185$ ,  $p=0.001$ ,  $p<0.05$ ).

**Table 2: The results of Regression Analysis for Work-related Stress**

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized		
	Coefficients		Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	15.377	3.263		4.713	.000
Workload	1.013	.060	.802	16.838	.000
Job Control	.000	.063	.000	.006	.996
Work Relationships	-.185	.054	-.185	-3.463	.001
F value			115.734		
Sig.			0.000		
Adjusted R square			0.740		
R square			0.746		

## 5. Conclusion

The main objective of this study was to examine the factors that affecting work-related stress among SME workers in Sungai Buloh. The result of this study has answered the objectives of this study. It has been decided that only one hypothesis can be accepted which is H1, there is a positive relationship between workload and work-related stress as it has positive and significant relationship. The significant relationship between workload and work-related stress was identified using multiple regression analysis. Workload was found the most critical success factor from the regression analysis. Based on Table 2, it indicated that standardized coefficient beta for workload was higher than job control and work relationships. Therefore, this study concludes that workload was the strongest factor that affected work-related stress. Based on the results, researcher can suggest that employees should ensure that they are given task that been agreed to be done within a specific time. Besides, the manager or supervisor can offer something attractive to attract employees do extra tasks. Furthermore, if employees were given something in exchange, they will feel appreciated and their tasks have been recognized.

Organizations might have the initiative to take actions on how to overcome this problem but it may cost them in the other hand. So, employees should take one step ahead to overcome this problem because it might be difficult to reduce it. Next, even though work relationships hypothesis has been rejected, but it has significant relationship with work-related stress. So, it might be one of the important factor that influence work-related stress. A psychologist, Shelley E. Taylor (2002) has discussed that social ties are the cheapest medicine that we have. According to this psychologist, people who are always be with their social group in other to give and receive support are less likely to experience stress. So, employees have to ensure that they have good relationships in the organization so that they can perform their responsibility with less stress.

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