

THE INFLUENCE OF TIME CONSTRAINTS, HEAVY WORK LOADS AND STUDENTS DISCIPLINES ON TEACHERS' EMOTIONAL STRESS

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ABSTRACT

The emotional stress is the challenge often faced by Malaysian teachers. The seriousness of the work pressure among teachers was repeatedly reported in the media. The issue seem to be continuously happened which has triggered the researcher to investigate why such things happen even for primary school teachers. This study had employed a quantitative research methodology using this cross-sectional survey method. The purpose of this study is to identify the factors influencing the emotional stress of primary school teachers in Seberang Perai Utara, Penang, Malaysia. Two validated research instruments were employed in order to collect data for this study. First, the study used the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) by Cohen, Kamarck, and Mermelstein (1983) consist of 14 items. Second, the Teacher Stress Inventory (TSI) by Fimian (1984) containing 28 items was used. A total of 495 teachers (Female=410; Male=85) were selected for this study. The completed questionnaires were collected and analyzed using IBM-Statistical Package for Social Science (IBM-SPSS) software version 24. The findings of this study show that the majority of teachers are at moderate to high levels of stress. It also showed that there were no significant differences in teacher emotional stress based on gender, age and teacher teaching experience. It is found that there is a significant relationship between workload, time constraints and student discipline with the emotional stress of primary school teachers in Seberang Perai Utara, Penang. These three factors were also found to influence the emotional stress of primary school teachers. The recommendations were suggested on how to Meanimize the emotional stress among teachers. Furthermore, the limitations of the study and improvements for future studies are also included.

KEYWORDS: Primary School Teachers, Teachers Emotional Stress, Work Load, Time Constraint, Student Discipline

Article History

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INTRODUCTION

Human life in facing the Industrial revolution 4.0 era is very challenging and complicated. The diversity and complexity of life can cause people to be depressed either by personal problems or by external factors such as unstable emotional stress, friends, time constraint, work load, client misbehavior, environment, work place and productivity. At its most basic level, stress happen when is our body's unable to cope with stimuli toward stress from situations or unpredicted life events. What

contributes to stress can vary from person to person and may vary according to our social and economic circumstances, environment, work loads and personal characteristic. Some common features of stress can include experiencing something new or unexpected, something that threatens your mood, or feeling that you have little control over your situation (Mental Health Foundation, 2018). In fact, the worst effect a stressful person can have is when someone is willing to change their way of working (unproductive) and quit (their job) (Harmsen, Helms-Lorenz, Maulana, Van Veen, & Van Veldhoven, 2019). Therefore, efforts to identify those who are beginning to feel stress should be intensified to prevent them from being emotionally sad.

Being a teacher as a profession, he/she is expected to change the way they teach with the continuously changing of syllabus and curriculum. These changes are to ensure that their students are physically, emotionally, Spiritually, intellectually and Spiritually balanced. This indicates that students' academic achievement in school is closely related to teachers' mental well-being. Teachers who have stable emotions (controlled stress), cheerful and energetic can positively impact the whole school community especially when dealing with their students (Norisham, 2018). Perhaps, today's education system is pushing these education professionals to work hard and go beyond their normal time limit to meet the high demand of education examination oriented success. Thus, in the quest for improvement and implementation, most teachers have become depressed because they are beginning to be overwhelmed by the high 'demands' from parents and public of that wanted their children score high marks in the examination. Therefore, teachers need to be aware that the responsibility of educating is not as simple a task as it is for the public to understand (Shalini & Mohd Jasmy, 2018). In other words, more in-house training for teachers should be provided by the Ministry of Education in order to ensure teachers are not overburdened by the emotional stress of public high demand of students' academic achievement.

Moreover, emotional stress on teachers is a phenomenon that causes teachers to be depressed, stressed, frustrated and anxious. In addition, poor teacher self-esteem when under pressure will create poor relationships between teacher and students, as well as their teaching and learning quality. This in turn could adversely affect the quality of education which in turn impedes efforts to create a society that capable of bringing Malaysia to its level of excellence in education (Sipon, 2007). Furthermore, depressed teachers cannot inspire student engagement and academic achievement (Tribhuvan, 2017). Likewise, Ismail and Abdullah (2019) also identified eight causes of stress among teachers including pupil behavior, task load, professional recognition, time and resources constraints, interpersonal relationships between teachers, training on the latest technology, facilities in teaching and literacy technology curriculum. If such a situation is allowed to continue, it is certain that the teaching and learning environment in the school will now go into an unmanaged situation and will face failure to achieve the desired goal. Perhaps, research on the school facilities and latest technologies provider should be examined in all schools in order to understand the needs of today's teacher in teaching and learning.

In this regard, teachers who are emotional stress are those who cannot control their emotions against the rapid changing of educational culture not only to provide knowledge but also to educate people to become useful communities. Teachers have to do heavy workload, lack of time and feel pressured to perform such tasks as clerical works, providing teaching aids, attending courses or workshops throughout the week while having to adapt to new teaching methods (Naima & Kaj, 2018). In addition, with new IT learning technology of webs and internet had also confusing most teachers on how to blend it with technologies, which they were not trained during their teacher training ten to thirty years ago. Likewise, high levels of work stress can often lead to job dissatisfaction and neglect. Teachers' emotional stress included psychological (fatigue and depression), physiological (headache, high blood pressure) and attitude (alcohol intake, excessive food intake, smoking, poor lifestyle and sleep problems). Moreover, poor work environment contributes to stress

factors and leads to job dissatisfaction and the desire to leave the teaching profession (Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1978b). High emotional stress on teachers can lead to frustration, aggression, anxiety, avoidance, increase in absenteeism and a decline in teacher performance (Kaiser & Polczynski, 1982). In fact, they may do two negative things - either quit (drop out) or do work but are unproductive (Hansen, et al. 2019). This means that teachers positive emotional stabilities should be continuously retained in order to produce a competence teacher especially when dealing with primary school children.

Teachers always have to make great efforts to assess their work performance. This can lead to tensions between work and personal life, which can lead to severe stress. Due to increase job demands and work stress, teachers are at greater risk for mental health problems than those from most other occupations. It has been found that 34.9% of Lithuanian school teachers experience high levels of emotional exhaustion (Naima & Kaj, 2018). This number, if not managed properly, will increase. Although in Malaysia only 20-30% of teachers have asked for counseling (Utusan, 2017), this symptom will only increase if there is no positive activity to hinder the spread of this psychological disturbance disease. Individuals cannot function effectively if they are emotionally depressed (Girdano et al., 1993; Smith, 1993). Depression makes one irrational, anxious, tense, unable to concentrate on work and fails to enjoy the work. These things will prevent a person from developing a positive attitude, or any other kind of affection. There are studies (e.g., Fejgin et al., 1995; Pastore & Judd, 1992) that show that some teachers are depressed will make foolish decisions such as think about quitting or retired early due to unstable emotional stressed. Teachers are also believed to experience more general mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, somatic disorders, and burnout than those of other professions (Naima & Kaj, 2018). The purpose of this study was to identify the relationship and the influence of time constraints, workload and student discipline with the level of teacher emotional stress. More specifically, this study will also examined the levels of time constraints, workloads, student discipline and teachers' emotional stress.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted on primary school teachers teaching in Penang, Malaysia. Teachers are asked to assess the factors of work pressure (time constraints, workload and student discipline) and their respective levels of work stress. The study was quantitative and the teachers were given a link to the questionnaire to answer the questionnaire based on the likert scale through the Google Form application. A sample of 495 respondents (85 male; 410 female) participate in this study. Permission from the Ministry of Education Malaysia was granted to conduct this research. In this study, the questionnaire was used as a medium to obtain data on the background of the respondents' demographics as well as the measurement for each of the study variables. In forming the research questionnaire set, it is divided into three (3) sections, namely; Part A (Demographic Background); Part B (Perceived Stress Scale), and part C (Teacher Stress Inventory). Two validated research instruments were employed in order to collect data for this study. First, the study used the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) by Cohen, Kamarck, and Mermelstein (1983) consist of 14 items with alpha Cronbach of 0.95. Second, the Teacher Stress Inventory (TSI) by Fimian (1984) containing 28 items was used with alpha Cronbach 0.87 (time constraint), 0.93 (work load), and 0.87 (Student discipline). The pilot test on 30 students was conducted earlier, however due to low alpha cronbach two of the Teacher stress inventory which are career development (alpha cronbach 0.15)) and Profession authorities (alpha cronbach 0.3) were dropped for further analysis.

RESULTS

Based on Table 1 below, the findings indicate that teachers' stress levels are at a moderate level ($M = 2.63$, $SD = 0.76$). The burden factor was moderate ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 0.81$) and followed by student discipline was also moderate ($M = 3.39$, $SD =$

0.77) and time constraints were also significantly lower ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 0.66$). Overall, the mean value is at a moderate level.

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Teacher Pressure Levels, and Factors of Time Constraints, Workload and Discipline of Primary School Students in North Perai, Penang

Variables	N	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Tacher pressure	495	2.63	0.76
Time Constraint	495	3.34	0.66
Work load	495	3.50	0.81
Student discipline	495	3.39	0.77

Based on Table 2 below, the findings show Mean work pressure level (2.64) of female teachers is higher than Mean work pressure level (2.62) of male teachers. The results of the independent sample t-test were not statistically significant [$t(493) = -2.34$, $p > .05$].

Table 2: Results of Independent Sample T-Test Differences in Primary School Teacher Pressure Differences by Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	T	P
Male	85	2.62	0.83	493	-0.234	0.815
Female	410	2.64	0.74			

* $p < .05$

Based on Table 3 below, the findings indicate that the ANOVA test was not significant [$F(5, 489) = 0.15$, $p > .05$] between teacher age and teacher job stress level. Post hoc analysis (Tukey HSD) also showed no significant differences among all age groups of teachers.

Table 3: Results of ANOVA Differential Levels of Age-Based Primary School Work Pressure

Age	N	Mean	SD	df1	df2	F	P
30 years and less	15	2.68	0.83	5	489	0.15	0.98
31 to 35 tahun	51	2.70	0.82				
36 to 40 tahun	127	2.62	0.72				
41 to 45 tahun	90	2.60	0.77				
46 to 50 tahun	82	2.62	0.68				
51 tahun dan lebih	130	2.65	0.80				

* $p < .05$

Based on Table 4 below, the findings indicate that the ANOVA test was not significant [$F(5, 489) = 6.36$, $p > .05$] between teacher teaching experience and teacher job stress level. Post Hoc analysis (Tukey HSD) also showed that there was no significant difference between all groups of teacher teaching experiences.

Table 4: Results of the ANOVA Test of Differences in Primary School Workers' Pressure Levels Based on the Teaching Experience

Age	N	Mean	SD	df1	DF2	F	p
5 tahun dan kurang	15	2.71	0.81	5	489	6.36	0.67
6 to 10 tahun	70	2.65	0.77				
11 to 15 tahun	138	2.66	0.74				
16 to 20 tahun	57	2.50	0.78				
21 to 25 tahun	99	2.60	0.66				
26 tahun dan lebih	116	2.69	0.82				

* $p < .05$

Based on Table 5 below, the correlation test results showed that time constraints were significantly associated ($r = 0.60$, $p < .01$) with teacher work stress. This positive relationship indicates that high time constraints have high teacher workload, while low time constraints have low teacher workload. The relationship between time constraints and teacher

work stress was strong ($r = 0.60$).

Table 5: Pearson Correlation Test Results between Teacher Work Pressure and Time Constraints

		Teacher job stress	Time constraint
Tekanan Kerja Guru	Korelasi	1	0.60**
	Sig. (2-ekor)		0.00
	N		495

**p <.01 (2-ekor)

Based on Table 6 below, the correlation test results show that work load has a significant relationship ($r = 0.56$, $p <.01$) with teacher work stress. This positive relationship indicates that high workload has high teacher workload, while low work load has low teacher workload. The relationship between work load and teacher job stress was moderately strong ($r = 0.56$).

Table 6: Pearson Correlation Test Results between Teacher Work Pressure and Workload

		Teacher job stress	Work load
Tekanan Kerja Guru	Korelasi	1	0.56**
	Sig. (2-ekor)		0.00
	N		495

**p <.01 (2

Based on Table 7 below, the correlation test results showed that student discipline had a significant relationship ($r = 0.42$, $p <.01$) with teacher work stress. This positive relationship shows that high student discipline has high teacher workload, while low student discipline has low teacher workload. The relationship between work load and teacher job stress was moderately weak ($r = 0.42$).

Table 7: Pearson Correlation Test Results between Teacher Work Pressure and Student Discipline

		Teacher Job Stress	Students discipline
Tekanan Kerja Guru	Korelasi	1	0.42**
	Sig. (2-ekor)		0.00
	N		495

**p <.01 (2-ekor)

According to Table 8 below, regression test results show that time constraints influence teacher workload of 36% ($R^2 = 0.36$), followed by work load of 4% ($R^2 = 0.04$), and student discipline of 1% ($R^2 = 0.01$). Overall, time constraints, workload and student discipline significantly affected 41% of teacher work stress.

Table 8: Regression Test Results between Factors of Work Pressure on Teacher Work Pressure

Model	R	R Square	Change Statistics				
			R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	0.60 ^a	0.36	0.36	271.3	1	493	0.000
2	0.63 ^b	0.40	0.04	33.3	1	492	0.000
3	0.64 ^c	0.41	0.01	10.0	1	491	0.002

a. Constant: Time Constraint

b. Constant: Time Constraint, Work load

c. Constant: Time Constraint, Work load, Student discipline

DISCUSSIONS

The findings show that the overall level of teacher stress is moderate. Results also shows that the emotional stress level of primary school teachers in Seberang Perai Utara, Penang is not yet at an alarming level. Although, most teachers are under moderate stress, however, these emotional stress can jump to higher levels if not well managed (Hamsen et al, 2019). Therefore, the school authorities should monitor closely those teachers with high levels of emotional distress. Therefore, precautionary measures should be taken to ensure that the teacher stress level does not continue to rise which may have adverse effects on the teaching profession (Naima & Kaj, 2018). Teachers should also be positive and open to the challenges of today's education world and to prevent them from being depressed and affecting their career as teachers (Tribhuvan, 2017).. At the same time, each party should also provide support and help to reduce the burden of stress faced by these teachers. Moreover, the stress management skills are essential and must be learned by all members of the educational organization. Failure to control the pressure not only negatively affect the individual, but also disrupt the image of the organization (Sipon, 2007). Finally, it is hoped that this study will provide some insight into the current level of skills available to teachers in dealing with stress. In turn, teachers will be able to generate high levels of human capital globally and respond to future challenges.

It is undeniable that time constraints are the highest level of emotional stress for teachers compared to other factors even among the primary school teachers in Malaysia. Although teachers are naturally attached to the special tasks of their profession, they are often burdened with work pressure that eventually lead to depression (Ismail & Abdullah, 2019). Meanwhile, the factor of work load reaches the second highest emotional stress and the mean value difference is relatively close to the time constraint factor. Teacher workloads can be divided into two sections, namely academic tasks that are more focused on the teachers primary tasks; teaching, checking students assignment and conducting tests and examinations; whereas for non-academic workloads, which include three areas: administrative management, student affairs and curriculum management. Teachers who carry out a variety of tasks are also easily distressed because they felt that those works are burdensome which they were not trained for during their teacher training days. Serious work stress will occur where there is no positive work culture which the school authorities need to create better school climate for teachers. This is in line with a study conducted by Norisham Abd Ghani (2018) who found that the teacher task load and the student discipline problems has led to increased levels of stress among teachers.

Limitation of the Study

The scope of this study is confined to the population of primary schools in Seberang Perai Utara, Penang, which consists of only 63 schools. Therefore, this study could not provide generalization of work stress for all primary schools throughout the Penang area. Therefore, the study would suggest taking into account all schools in the state of Penang or a combination of primary schools from some states and looking at differences in work pressure among teachers in nearby states such as Kedah and Perlis. On the other hand, this study examines only the levels of work stress and the three factors that influence work stress among teachers, so future studies are encouraged to consider some of the other factors that may be expected to be at the core of the work stress for teachers. Causes of stress can also be discussed from different perspectives such as time management, bureaucratic management, teacher mean factors in the education profession and personality types such as organizational behavior, social or family relationships. In addition, the effects of teacher work stress such as mental and emotional illnesses such as depression and burnout and physical illnesses such as high blood pressure may also be associated with symptoms of this teacher's work stress (Cohen et al, 2016). Finally, this study was conducted only among

teachers. Future studies may also be conducted among school administrators, school staff or school students. In addition, it is also recommended to use other research tools such as observations and interviews in the future to better identify the causes of teacher stress. It will be more interesting because it will likely result in different results.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, the following researchers can come up with some suggestions related to stress management of Seberang Perai Utara primary schools in Penang. These proposed proposals are considered appropriate to reduce the stress of schoolwork in general.

The Education District Officer

- Generally, they are responsible for assisting with the management and administration tasks of schools in their area.
- Supervision and overall supervision of the school not only focus on the students, but also on the well-being of the teachers.
- Supervising the training teaches the teachers in the training. Avoid directing and finding fault with teachers, but guide and instruct them.
- Supervise teacher discipline. Be tolerant and look for the root cause of your teacher's discipline and resolve it as soon as possible.
- Counseling services are always available to assist teachers.

School Authorities

- Implementing agendas on stress management, whether in the form of courses or workshops which need to incorporate religious or moral strategies appropriate to the pluralistic society in Malaysia.
- Establish a healthy and harmonious climate of good communication among staff, decision-making based on shared discussions, a comprehensive, well-organized school policy, appreciation and positive response to teachers, reducing administrative tasks, providing additional work when necessary to the teacher based on her skills, developing a cheerful work environment and building positive relationships and working together to solve any problems.
- Administrators or principals need to transform their administration style into democratic style that prefers humanistic, democratic or transformative approaches. Therefore, organizational change needs to be made with the consent of the teachers involved to prevent this pressure from becoming more serious (Robbins, 2017).

Teacher

- Being involved in sports activities, regular exercise and physical activity can help you overcome stress. Indirectly, it can avoid the stress caused by the repetitive task reinforcement at work (Cohen, et al., 2016; Robbins, 2017).
- Timely and balanced nutrition practices need guidance and attention for teachers. At the same time, it can rule out symptoms of stomach disorders, ulcers, and fatigue (Cohen, et al., 2016; Robbins, 2017).

- As a step towards addressing the issue of teacher stress, the Ministry of education need to examine the welfare of teachers in schools. The welfare of the unmanaged teachers will cause problems for the teachers which will effect their teaching that will also discourage students learning behaviour. It is good that the school facilities will be upgraded to create better learning and teaching environment.

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AUTHOR PROFILE



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Azri Muhammad was born in Sungai Petani, Kedah on March 14, 1988. He received his early education in SK Permatang Bertam and secondary education at SMKA Al-Irsyad in Penang. He went on to earn a Bachelor's Degree in Education with Honors (Arabic Language) at Institut Pendidikan Guru Kampus Pendidikan Islam, Selangor from 2008-2012 and most recently earned a Master of Science (Educational Management) in 2019 from Universiti Utara Malaysia. He started as a teacher at SKA Majlis Islam Sarawak, Lawas in Sarawak and since 2014 until now at SJKC Mah Hua, Penang. He is active in Arabic Language and Islamic Education. He was selected as the Head Coach of the Arabic Language for Lawas district, Sarawak in 2013. Since 2015 until now, he was elected as Officer of Track and Field in the North Zone Kepala Batas, Penang.



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