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## The Role of Supervisor in the Relationship between Job Stress and Job Performance

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### Abstract

Stress has been defined in different ways over the years, in which any human is confronted with an opportunity or demand related to what they want or desire for which the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important. There are several factors that can contribute to job stress, which consists of workload, work autonomy, and interpersonal relationship. Thus, the purpose of this study is to identify the relationship of job stress, job performance and while concurrently assessing the impact role of supervisor as moderating variable on association between job stress and job performance. This study gathered views of 120 individual associated with selected telecommunication centers in Shah Alam. The findings of this study revealed that job stress significantly influence job performance, whereas supervisory role did not moderate the relationship between job stress and job performance.

**Keywords:** Workload, Work Autonomy, Interpersonal Relationship, Job Satisfaction

### Introduction

Job performance is defined as the amount of effort that individuals exert in their job. Moreover, job performance also depends on the demands of the job, the goals and missions of the organization, and beliefs in the organization about which behaviors are most valued (Wu, 2011). Yet, with the existence of stress in the workplace it may cause a reduction in the quantity and quality of employees' job performance. When there is a high level of stressor at work, it may affect their performance. Therefore, due to the increasing levels in stress, individuals become more absent from the workplace, often quitting or being fired, increasing employee turnover where it consequently leads to an increase of organization's operational costs (Ornelas and Kleiner, 2003). Role of supervisor is an essential attribute for better organizational performance, in which their support will motivate employees, increase their performance, and improve their concentration level. In this way, the

support from the supervisor will help the workers indirectly by eliminating job stress. Thus, this study is conducted to identify the role of supervisor in the relationship between job stress and job performance.

### Literature Review

**Job Performance:** Job performance is defined as the amount of effort that individuals exert in their job. Moreover, job performance also depends on the demands of the job, the goals and missions of the organization, and beliefs in the organization about which behaviors are most valued (Wu, 2011). Whereas, Atteya (2012) mentioned that job performance can be referred as an activity in which an individual is able to accomplish the task that is assigned to them successfully, subject to the normal constraints of the reasonable utilization of available resources. In other words, job performance can be referred as the duties and responsibilities that each individual perform and it also is comprised of quality and quantity of task accomplished (Estrella, 2014).

**Job Stress:** According to Wu (2011), job stress is a condition in which job-related factors affect employees to the extent that their psychological state deviates from normal functioning. This is agreed by McShane, Olekalns and Travaglone (2013), whereby they also mentioned that stress is related to physiological and psychological condition that make the individual prepares in order to adapt to hostile or noxious environmental conditions, which cause them feeling uncomfortable in performing their job.

Moreover, Chen and Silverthorne (2008) also supported that stress could give an impact towards individuals' psychology and physiology that cause uncomfortable, undesirable or the feeling of danger in the workplace environment. Too much stress of any kind may lead to physical, psychological, and behavioral problems as well as job performance (Lee Larson, 2004). There are three dimensions that contribute to job stress which are workload, work autonomy and interpersonal relationship (Lu, Kao, Siu, and Lu, 2011).

- Workload

According to Lu et al. (2011), they described workload as amount of work in terms of pace and volume that prevent employees from translating ability and effort into high levels of job performance.

- Work Autonomy

Work autonomy can be described as an act of lack of freedom and discretion to the individual in scheduling the work and in determining the procedures to be used in carrying it out (Lu et al., 2011).

- Interpersonal Relationship

Refers to a conflict when one is experiencing disagreements or being treated poorly at work (Lu et al., 2011).

**Supervisory Role:** Previous studies have indicated that supervisory support is essential to help their employees attain a high performance and assist them to solve work-related issues. In this way, leaders will help subordinates to avoid stress. It is the role of a leader to understand the needs of employees and address them properly (Khalid et al., 2012). Support from one's supervisor is essential in reducing the unfavorable effects of job stress by providing emotional support to reduce stress and increase individual's self-confidence and self-esteem (Wickramasinghe, 2012).

According to Edmonson and Boyer (2013), to properly support employees, it is essential for the supervisor to bear in mind to not only speak to them or praise them when they are doing fine but also to be able to stay by their side especially when they are having a tough time. Supervisors should try to ensure that each of the employees feel appreciated. If employees are having a difficult time in completing the task towards targeted goals, the supervisor is responsible in helping them to focus and possibly readjust target goals to ensure that it is attainable.

**Conceptual Framework:** For the purpose of this study, the independent variable is job stress that consisted of workload, work autonomy and interpersonal relationship that have been adapted from (Lu et al., 2011). The dependent variable is job performance. Essentially job performance is adapted from Estrella (2014). Supervisory role is taken as the moderating variable in the relationship between job stress and job performance. The moderating variable has been adapted by Khalid et al. (2012). Therefore, this study proposed the following framework that illustrated in Fig. 1.

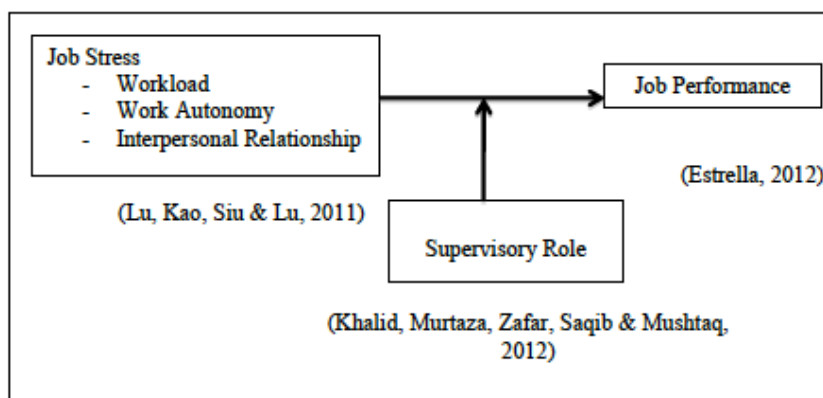


Fig. 1: Proposed Conceptual Framework of the role of supervisor in the relationship between job stress and job performance.

## Methodology

The samples of this research are employees in telecommunication centres in Shah Alam. There were 120 individual in total. A set of questionnaire was used to collect the data which consists of three sections. Section A concentrated on the demographic background, designed to collect and gather information regarding the respondents' personal information. Section B focused on job stress that include three parts which were workload, work autonomy and interpersonal relationship while for Section C is the moderating variable refers to supervisory role. Section D comprises the contribution to the job performance of an organization.

### Finding and Analysis

**Demographic Background:** Based on Table 1, the respondents of this study were from the selected telecommunication centres working in Shah Alam, Selangor. 115 questionnaire were collected out of 120 questionnaires distributed, giving a response rate of 95.3%. The percentage of the male respondents was 52.2% and female 47.8%. Majority of 63 respondents were married (54.8%) and 52 of the respondents were single. The highest number of respondents for this study were aged between 20 to 29 years old and the lowest number of respondents for this study was 50 years old and above. It was found that 33.0% of the respondents have been working between 4 to 5 years, followed by 1 to 3 years at 29.6%. Meanwhile, 23.6% have been working more than 5 years and 13.9% of the respondents have been working less than a year. In this study, majority of the respondents (40.0%) hold an Executive position, followed by Administrative officer (23.5%), Admin Assistant (22.6%) and the least of 13.9% respondents answered others.

Table 1: Demographic Analysis

	Variables	Frequency	Percent (%)
<b>Gender</b>	Male	60	52.2
	Female	55	47.8
<b>Age</b>	20 – 29 years old	56	48.7
	30 – 39 years old	27	23.5
	40 – 49 years old	17	14.8
	50 years old and above	15	13.0
<b>Status</b>	Single	52	45.2
	Married	63	54.8
<b>Length of Services</b>	Less than 1 year	16	13.9
	1 – 3 years	34	29.6
	4 – 5 years	38	33.0
	5 years and above	27	23.6
<b>Position</b>	Administrative Officer	27	23.5
	Admin Assistant	26	22.6
	Executive	46	40.0
	Others	16	13.9

\*Demographic profile in this study (n=115)

**Reliability Analysis:** Reliability analysis was Reliability analysis was conducted after factor analysis and it was carried out to measure consistency of the instrument in measuring the constructs. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), the instruments are reliable when Cronbach's alpha values are above .70 and closer to 1.0. But Lee and Kerlinger (2005) stated that for social science research .50 to .60 are still acceptable. It means that the higher the value, the higher is the internal consistency reliability. The respective alpha coefficient for the present study is between  $\alpha = .660$  and  $\alpha = .935$  which shows high degree of reliability (Table 2).

Table 2: Reliability Statistics after factor analysis

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of items
Workload	.780	5
Work Autonomy	.751	3
Interpersonal Relationship	.836	4
Job Performance	.660	5
Supervisory Role (as moderating variable)	.935	8

**Multiple Regression Analysis:** In this study, a standard multiple regression analysis was used in order to see whether the independent variable (Job Stress) and dependent variable (Job Performance) are associated with each other, illustrated in Table 3. The result indicates that  $R^2$  is .479 indicating that the independent variables explain 47.9% of the variance in Job Performance which is significant as the sig. of F value is .475. The Durbin-Watson value is 2.611. From the result, it can be found that job stress ( $\beta = -.483$ ,  $p > .05$ ) significantly influence job performance. As a result, hypothesis  $H_1$  is supported. From the three Job Stress dimensions, it was found that workload ( $\beta = -.421$ ,  $p < .01$ ) significant and negatively influence job performance. Similarly with work autonomy and interpersonal relationship, it was found that work autonomy ( $\beta = -.631$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and interpersonal relationship ( $\beta = -.502$ ,  $p < .01$ ) was significant and negatively influence job performance. As a result, hypothesis  $H_2$ ,  $H_3$  and  $H_4$  are supported.

Table 3: Multiple Regression Analysis between Job Stress and Job Performance

Notes: \*significant at the 0.05 level

**Hierarchical Regression Analysis:** Meanwhile was used to see the interaction of the moderating variable (Supervisory Role) with Job Stress and Job Performance, illustrated in Table 4. Table 4 describes the percentage of variance explained in Job Performance. Model 1 indicates 47.5% of the variance. Meanwhile, model 2 explains 48.3% of variance where there is an increment about 0.8% in

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<b>Independent Variable</b>			
Job Stress	.692	.657	.982
<b>Moderating Variable</b>			
Supervisory Role		.073	.756
<b>Interaction:</b>			
Job Stress * Supervisory Role			-.892
R	.692a	.695b	.701c
$R^2$	.479	.483	.492
Adjusted $R^2$	.475	.474	.478
F Change	103.948	.889	1.848
Significant F Change	.000	.348	.177
*Durbin Watson			2.631

the variance explained. Then, model 3 explains 49.2% of the variance which indicates about 0.9% increment from model 2. Furthermore, the researcher found out that there is no significant interaction between job stress and supervisory role. The supervisory role does not influence the relationship between job stress and job performance because the significant value of F change is  $p > .05$  and the interaction between job stress and supervisory role is ( $\beta = -.892$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). Based on the gathered result, the prediction that supervisory role would moderate the relationship between job stress and job performance is negative. It can be concluded from the table below that there is no moderating effect of supervisory role between the relationship of job stress and job performance. Thus,  $H_5$  is not supported and rejected.

Table 4: Hierarchical Regression Analysis of the Role of Supervisor in the Relationship between Job Stress and Job Performance

	Dependent Variable
	Job Performance
Independent Variable	Beta Values
Workload	-.421*
Work Autonomy	-.631*
Interpersonal Relationship	-.502*
R <sup>2</sup>	-.479
F values	103.948
Sig F values	0.475
Durbin Watson	2.611

## Discussion

**Does job stress influence employee job performance?:** From the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the independent variable (job stress) negatively influences dependent variable (job performance). Standard Multiple Regression Analysis was used to determine the findings. The results indicate that employees from selected telecommunication centres are experiencing stress whereas it is often seen as disruption that will reduce both the quality and quantity of job performance. In addition, the workers are working at private sector in which they frequently face stress compared to those who work in public sector. Other than that, when employees possessed high level of stress, it also affect their character whereby the employees tend to be demotivated in performing the job and continuously create an issue of behavioral problem, for instance, absenteeism, getting late to work, violence, conflict with team members and many more. Therefore, it can be seen that job stress brings negative impact to employees in an organization. Generally, employees working in telecommunication centres always feel stressed as they might feel insecure with the job they entitle if the organization is unable to sustain in the business environment. This is supported by a study conducted by Wickramasinghe (2012).

**Does supervisory role moderate the relationship between job stress and job performance?:** From the results, it can be concluded that the relationship between the independent variables (workload, work autonomy and interpersonal relationship) and the dependent variable (job performance) are

not moderated by supervisory role. In this study, it indicates that the presence of supervisor is unable to be the indicator in order to reduce stress as well as to improve employees' job performance. However, this result contrast with the previous study conducted by Khalid et al. (2012), whereas he found that employees who receive support from supervisor tend to perform better at work and indirectly the level of stress decreases.

### **Recommendation**

There are some recommendations that can be made based on this study. The recommendations would be very useful for both individual and organization. In this context, an organization should provide full support through communication so that there is no conflict or role of ambiguity among employees. Besides, the top management should also play the main role to encourage employee and should be a good listener to them in assisting their job. As a result, it would reduce the level of stress and could increase the degree of job performance within the organization. Lastly, employees should prioritize the tasks given to them. This is one of important elements in being an employee. When they prioritize the task, it means that they should be able to point out what needs to be done accordingly. In a nutshell, if the employees and organization take note on strategies above, for sure they will not be the victim of job stress and could easily perform their job and task in the organization. Work autonomy should be given to employees to achieve high performance.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, from the findings in this study, the job stresses were negatively significant with job performance. It gives a meaning that whenever the level of job stress increase, their job performance will be decrease. Furthermore, this study did not find that supervisory role moderate the relationship between job stress and job performance. Future research is needed to improve job performance.

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