

## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOB STRESS AND ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT AMONG PUBLIC SERVANTS IN PONTIAN, JOHOR.

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### ABSTRACT

*This study was conducted to determine the relationship between job stress and organisational commitment among public servant in Pontian, Johor. 262 public servants were chosen as respondents of this study through random sampling technique. Job Stress Scale (Crank, Regoli, Hewitt & Carlberson, 1995) and Organisational Commitment Scale (Meyer and Allen, 1997) were used to measure job stress and organisational commitment respectively. Result revealed that there were significant negative relationships between job stress and organisational commitment (affective  $r=-.272$ ,  $p=.000$ ), continuance ( $r=-.160$ ,  $p=.01$ ), normative ( $r=-.231$ ,  $p=.000$ ). The findings gave an implication that worker with low job stress will have a high organisational commitment. Therefore, employer and organisation should strive to take appropriate steps in reducing job stress and providing adequate and good facilities at work place, thus ensuring that worker has a high level of organisational commitment. High organisational commitment will contribute to worker's high productivity that will not only benefit the worker himself but also the employer and organisation.*

Keywords: Job stress, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, public servant

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### Introduction

One of the factors influencing physical and mental health of employees is the stress related to the job and organisation environment which is called job stress. Job stress can have a great impact on organisational commitment and consequently, on organisational performance and success. There are many things that create job related stress like workload, working times, lack of opportunity for involvement and control in decision-making, lack of control over work processes, work life conflict, lack of upkeep for domestic problems at work, lack of sustenance for work glitches at home, lack of organisational rules and policies to support work life balance, lack of career development opportunities, unsupportive supervision, poor relationships with colleagues (Bhati et al. 2016). In short, job stress relates to employee's feeling of lost control over the situation or event.

Organisational commitment is an important issue in any organisation because having capable and committed human resources will not only reduce absenteeism, delays and displacements but also promote organisational performance, mental freshness of employees, manifestation of ultimate goals of organisation and achievement to personal goals (Alipour & Kamaee. 2015). The most common way of dealing with organisational commitment is to take it into account as a kind of emotional attachment to the organisation or as a sense of loyalty to the organisation (Allen & Meyer, 1997; Meyer & Allen 1998)).

Organisational commitment is the bond employees experience with their organisation (Stan, 2013). Broadly speaking, employees who are committed to their organisation generally feel a connection with their organisation, feel that they fit in and, feel they understand the goals of the organisation. The added value of such employees is that they tend to be more determined in their work, show relatively high productivity and are more proactive in offering their support.

### Problem Statement

High profit, productivity and performance are pertinent goals of every organisation. One of the important mechanisms to achieve these goals is the aspect of human resource in the organisation, in particular the employee's commitment. Thus, committed employees are assets for the organisation. However, stress has become a major problem in today's challenging working environment. The presence of job stress has been proven by previous studies (Azizi et al., 2012; Fairbrother & Warn, 2003) to decrease employee's commitment towards the organisation. The present study was conducted to determine the relationship between job stress and organisational commitment among employee in public sector.

The objectives of this study were twofold:

- a. to describe the level of job stress and organisational commitment;
- b. to determine the relationship between job stress and organisational commitment

## **Organisational Commitment**

Becker, Randal, and Riegel (1995) defined organisational commitment as:

- a. a strong desire to remain a member of a particular organisation;
- b. a willingness to exert high levels of efforts on behalf of the organisation;
- c. a define belief in and acceptability of the values and goals of the organisation.

According to Northcraft and Neale (1996), commitment is an attitude reflecting an employee's allegiance to the organisation, and an ongoing process through which organisation members convey their concern for the organisation and its continued success and well being. Organisational commitment is determined by a number of factors, including personal factors (age, tenure in the organisation), organisational factors (job design and the leadership style of one's supervisor) and non-organisational factors. All these things affect subsequent commitment.

Mowday, Porter, and Steer (1982) see commitment as attachment and loyalty. There are three components of commitment:

- a. an identification with the goals and values of the organisation;
- b. a desire to belong to the organisation; and
- c. a willingness to display effort on behalf of the organisation.

Based on the multidimensional nature of organisational commitment, there is growing support for a three-component model proposed by Meyer and Allen (1991). All three components have implications for the continuing participation of the individual in the organisation. The three components are:

- a. Affective commitment relates to how much employees want to stay at their organisation. If an employee is affectively committed to their organisation, it means that they want to stay at their organisation. They typically identify with the organisational goals, feel that they fit into the organisation and are satisfied with their work. Employees who are affectively committed feel valued, act as ambassadors for their organisation and are generally great assets for organisations.
- b. Continuance commitment relates to how much employees feel the need to stay at their organisation. In employees that are continuance committed, the fundamental reason for their commitment lies in their need to stay with the organisation. Possible reasons for needing to stay with organisations vary, but the main reasons relate to a lack of work options, and salary. A good example of continuance commitment is when employees feel the need to stay with their organisation because their salary and fringe benefits will not improve if they move to another organisation. Such examples can become an issue for organisations as employees that are continuance committed may become dissatisfied and disengaged with their work and yet, are unwilling to leave the organisation.
- c. Normative commitment relates to how much employees feel they should stay at their organisation. Employees that are normatively committed generally feel that they should stay at their organisations. Normatively committed employees feel that leaving their organisation would have devastating results, and feel a sense of guilt about the possibility of leaving. Reasons for such guilt vary, but are often concerned with employees feeling that in leaving the organisation they would create a void in knowledge/skills, which would subsequently increase the pressure on their colleagues. Such feelings can, and do, negatively influence the performance of employees working in organisations.

## **Job Stress**

Most modern theories of job-related stress define stress as a negative emotional state that can result from the interaction between an employee and his environment. The source of stress or also known as stressor is any force that pushes a psychological or physical factor beyond its range of stability, producing a strain within the individual. The stress may have to do with the responsibilities associated with the job itself. It is also something that is caused or made worse by the job.

Job stress is the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker. (National Institutes for Occupational Safety and Health, 1999). Job stress is a pattern of emotional, cognitive, behavioural and physiological reactions to adverse and harmful aspects of work content, work organisation and work environment. Pressure at work can affect both physical and emotional well being if not managed efficiently and effectively. Job stress has been linked to absenteeism, decreased productivity, increased health care costs and illness (Azizi et al., 2012). Unlike other harmful factors of working environment, psychological factors, including job stress, are not specific to a particular job and exist in various forms and degrees in all jobs. Assigning a person a job which is not well-suited with his or her abilities and knowledge or any change in individual's obligations can cause stress. Generally, job stress is related to working environment and its associated factors. Job stress can negatively affect individual employees highlighting counter productive work behaviour (Chraif, 2010) low performances at workplace (Pitariu, Radu & Chraif, 2009) as well as the entire organisation.

## **Relationship Between Job Stress And Organisational Commitment**

Stress at work is a well-known phenomenon that may express itself differently, and affect workers differently, in different work contexts (Michael, Court & Petal 2009). Meyer and Allen (1998) relate comfort, competence and status related experience to organisational commitment. They further state that positive early work experience results in high affective commitment. Brewer and McMahon (2003) asserted that perceived organisational support was the greatest determining factor of stress and commitment levels. Khatibi et al (2009) found that there is a significant inverse relationship between job stress and organisational commitment.

According to Stranks (2005), stress essentially instigates a number of complex changes on the psychological and emotional level (tiredness, anxiety and lack of motivation), cognitive level (increased potential for error and, in some cases, accidents arising through error), behavioural level (poor or deteriorating relationships with colleagues, irritability, indecisiveness, absenteeism, smoking, excessive eating and alcohol consumption) and on the physical level (increasing ill health associated with headaches, general aches and pains, and dizziness). Occupational or job stress is strongly associated with important organisational outcomes such as reduced job satisfaction and organisational commitment or high employee withdrawal behaviour (Fairbrother & Warn, 2003).

Jobload and time pressure to complete the job assignment in short period of time is a great source of job stress which leads to lower organisational commitment. When job assignment is given to an employee and it causes pressure on him to complete the assignment in the fixed due date while at the same time give him no liberty to accomplish the assignment fitting to his convenient schedule, then an employee views his job more stressful.

Hence, in order to ensure and achieve the organisational performance and goals, job stress should be managed so that its adverse effects on employees' commitment and their performance can be minimised.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This study employed a quantitative approach in examining relationship between job stress and organisational commitment. In addition, this study also adopted a descriptive design along with a cross-sectional survey that facilitates the collection of data set at one point in time.

### **Participants and Procedures**

The sample consisted of 262 public servants working in various government agencies at Pontian Commercial Centre. Pontian is a district in the state of Johor, located in the southern portion of Peninsular Malaysia. Approval and willingness to participate in the study from the respondents were sought prior to the distribution of structured questionnaires. Respondent were also informed on the confidential aspect of the study. The questionnaires were self-administered.

### **Instruments**

Job Stress Scale (Crank, Regoli, Hewitt & Calberson, 1995) was used to measure the frequency with which employees were bothered by stressful occurrences. The measure contains five subscales that assess the extent of occupational stress due to job responsibilities, quality concerns, role conflict, job vs. non-job conflict and workload. Obtained coefficient alpha values were of .71 for responsibility pressures, .75 for job vs. non job conflict, .78 for quality concerns, .69 for role conflict and .81 for workload stress.

The Organisational Commitment Scale Meyer & Allen (1997), was used to measure the three types of organisational commitment (affective, continuance and normative). Coefficient alpha values were of .78 for affective commitment, .70 for continuance commitment and .83 for normative commitment.

## **Data Analyses**

Firstly, descriptive analysis was conducted to provide a clearer picture of the data distribution. Secondly, exploratory data analysis was conducted to determine whether the inferential statistical methods selected fulfilled the basic assumptions in terms of normal distribution of population, linearity between the dependent variable and the independent variables. Thirdly, the magnitude and strength of the relationship of the studied variables were quantitatively measured using Pearson product-moment correlations.

## **Result And Discussion**

### **Level of Job Stress**

These findings answer objective (a) of the study i.e. to describe the respondents' level of job stress. Table 1 showed the overall respondents' level of job stress. Based on the findings, majority of the respondents, that is 77.9% (n=204) reported of having low job stress while 22.1% (n=58) reported of having moderate job stress. This result indicated that the respondents in this study had a good experience and enjoy their job. The mean score for the level of job stress was 11.847 with the standard deviation of 4.45. The minimum score for level of job stress was 6 while the maximum score was 21.

Table 1 : Level of Job Stress

Job Stress Level	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)	Mean	Std. Error Difference
Low	204	77.9	11.847	4.124
Moderate	58	22.1		
High	0	0.0		
Min : 6 Max : 21				
Total	262	100.0		

### Level of Organisational Commitment

These findings answer objective (a) of the study i.e. to describe the respondents' level of organisational commitment. Table 2 revealed the respondents' level of affective commitment. A little over half (53.1%, n=139) of the respondents were categorised in low level and followed by 46.9% (n=123) in high level. The mean score for affective commitment in this study was 26.389 with the standard deviation of 1.766. The minimum score for level of affective commitment was 21 while the maximum score was 27. The analysis was shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Level of Affective Commitment

Level of Affective Commitment	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation
Low	139	53.1	26.389	1.766
High	123	46.9		
Min : 21 Max : 31				
Total	262	100.0		

In term of continuance commitment, slightly over 50% (51.9%, n=136) of the respondents were categorised in the low level. This was followed by 48.1% (n=126) of the respondents who were categorised in the high level. The mean score for the level of continuance commitment in this study was 27.347 with the standard deviation of 1.819. The minimum score for level of continuance commitment was 21 while the maximum score was 32. The analysis was shown in Table 3.

Table 3 : Level of Continuance Commitment

Level of Continuance Commitment	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)	Mean	Std. Error Difference
Low	136	51.9	27.347	1.819
High	126	48.1		
Min : 21 Max : 32				
Total	262	100.0		

As regards to normative commitment, 55.7% (n=146) of the respondents were categorised in low level and followed by 44.3% (n=116) in high level. The mean score for normative commitment in this study was 22.05 with the standard deviation 1.861. The minimum score for level of subjective happiness was 20 while maximum score scored by the respondent was 31. The analysis was shown in Table 4.

Table 4 : Level of Normative Commitment

Level of Normatif Commitment	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation
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Low	146	55.7	27.05	1.861
High	116	44.3		
Min : 20				
Max : 31				
Total	262	100.0		

### Relationship Between Job Stress and Organisational Commitment

These findings answer objective (b) of the study i.e. to determine the relationship between job stress and organisational commitment. The correlation for all variables included in this study is presented in Table 5. The findings revealed that job stress were significantly related to organisational commitment of the respondents.

As shown in Table 5, job stress was found to have a negative association with affective commitment ( $r=-.272$ ,  $p=.000$ ), continuance commitment ( $r=-.160$ ,  $p=.010$ ) and normative commitment ( $r=-.231$ ,  $p=.000$ ). This result is consistent with prior research suggesting that the higher stress experienced in work place by the workers, the lower will be their commitment to the organisation (Cicei, 2012; Nart & Batur, 2014).

Table 5 : Relationship Between Job Stress and Organisational Commitment

Variable	Affective Commitment	Continuance Commitment	Normative Commitment
Tekanan Kerja			
r	-.272*	-.160*	-.231*
p	.000	.010	.000

Note : \* $p \leq .05$

### Limitations And Conclusions

Some limitations of the present study should also be noted. Firstly, due to the cross-sectional nature of the data retrieved, the conclusion about the direction of effects regarding to the relationship between job stress and organisational commitment among public servant in Pontian cannot be generalised to other population. Secondly, data of the study were retrieved from self-report questionnaire. Therefore, the validity and reliability of the obtained information depended solely on the integrity of the respondents.

Although the data do not represent the whole employees in the public sector, the findings present a clear trend on the relationship between job stress and organisational commitment. Thus, the objectives of this study have successfully been achieved.

The findings imply that employee who experienced high job stress will have a tendency to feel less committed to his work and organisation. Past studies have proven that low commitment to organisation will lead to a more serious problem to the organisation such as absenteeism, increased turnover over rate and non-performance and low productivity. Organisational commitment level shows how long the employee tends to stay in the organisation. Lower commitment level among employee shows that the employee will leave the organisation soon. Therefore, commitment level among employee can be seen as a predictor whether the employee will stay longer or leave the organisation. Employers can use the results of this study as evidence to be considered in planning to reduce the causes of job stress and increase the level of commitment in employees. It is hoped that this research will contribute a great deal towards a better and ideal policies pertaining to organisational management, as well as good governance in human capital management that benefit the organisation, the employees and the economics of the country.

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