Crucial Personal Factors Leading to Stress in University

Khairunesa Isa, Nor Aishah Mat Jam, Wan Hanim Nadrah Wan Muda, Hazila Kadir@Shahar

Abstract: Stress can happen to all of us even when we are awake or asleep. Stress can be experienced at night when we try to sleep or having a nightmare, in the traffic on the way home, or even at work. Stress is related between the employee and the employer as the performance of the employee is affected by the stress level which intern affects the company's productivity. Therefore, this study aimed to examine the occurrence of stress among staff and the individual factors that contribute to stress. The sample of 50 respondents was randomly selected among staff in University A. The data of this study had been evaluated descriptively using SPSS version 2.0. The descriptive analysis was done on six sub domains, i.e personal problem, lack of personal appreciation, personal financial, work environment, personal support, and personal beliefs. The results showed that the personal problem has a higher magnitude of stress compared to other sub domains which is like personal finance, health problems, personal conflict, and unstable emotional controls have an influence on the personal problems that contribute to stress. The dual approaches involving both supervisors and co-workers are recommended in alleviating individual stress in their own workplace. Therefore stress management is vital for both. A creative and energetic working environment can be a mechanism for employee feel happy and belonging.

Keywords: stress, personal problem, personal belief, higher education

I. INTRODUCTION

Most people think that stress is something undesirable but it is not always necessarily the case. We need a minimum amount of stress in our lives to motivate us to take actions. Besides, stress often leads to good outcomes. For example, we take action and solve problems when our mum is nagging at us. Sometimes, stress can lead us to depression and anxiety which leads to terrible outcomes. At the workplace, stress is quickly becoming the single greatest cause of 'disease' and have reaching consequences for both workers and their

workplace. This is called "disease" will be more likely to attack employees due to their own individual's factors. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the occurrence of stress among staff and the individual factors that actually contribute to the stress.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Happiness is an important thing required by human beings and it affects human life physically or mentally. According to Sulaiman (2014), employees are unhappy at work because of several factors such as communication gaps from the upper level to the subordinate, limited concern of the development of employees' careers by the superiors, the ignorance of the employees ideas, lack of welfare benefits for the employees, and lack of appreciation by the superiors.. Those factors are important to be taken care of because the level of employees' satisfaction will somehow affect the employees' emotions ie stress and consequently it will affect the current behaviors in the organization (Rashid et al., 2014). Munira (2017) considers the unhappiness experienced by the individuals will affect the whole of human life either from physical or mental aspects. In Malaysia, it has been recorded that 62.3 percent of individuals being diagnosed as mentally ill and 61 percent of their patients blamed themselves for being mentally ill. The 3rd National Health and Morbidity Study Report in 2006 also reported a total of 3millions out of 26millions Malaysians who were suffering from mental health problems. Mental illness will cause individuals to suffer and feel unhappy, especially at work. This situation will have a massive impact on the productivity and well-being of the employees. According to Lunberg and Cooper (2011) depression will cause stress that leads to the distraction of individuals' well-being survival and organizational performance. Another side effects involve the feelings of sadness, anxious, emptiness, hopeless, and feeling worthless, angry and restless. Furthermore, a number of cases referred to the counseling center in (University A) can be seen as symptoms of stress facing by the individuals. The most alarming is that, employers may lose interest in working, loss of appetite and surprisingly these will lead them to have suicide attempts. This study was conducted to examine the factors that attribute to the level of stress among staff based on the individual domain.

III. LITERATURE REVIEWS

Stress is a burden or conflict experienced in a person. Stress in the organization occurs when the job requirements do not match the capabilities, abilities, and resources of employees.

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Employees who experience stress will change behavior, adverse effects on personal health, as well as work productivity. The change in behavior experienced by the employee is where his behavior is inappropriate or unequal to the needs, expectations of the organization, and other colleagues (Ma'arof, 2001). It will prevent the achievement of the organization and even affect the performance of other colleagues.

Majority of individuals are aware of the existence of symptoms of stress within the individual. However, individuals who are still letting the symptoms continue will harm their psychological and physiological aspects (Korolija dam Lunberg, 2010; Lazarus, Rodafinos, Matsiggos and Stamatoulakis, 2009; Myoung-Hee, Chang-yup, Jin-Kyung and Kawachi, 2008 and Zafir, 2007). According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), a situation can be considered stress depending on one's assessment, whether it is burdensome or anything that can endanger their well-being. Individual disabilities that meet the needs of these resources will cause individuals to face stress.

Stress is seen as a process that has pros and cons depending s on individual assessment. According to A Model of Stress, three factors that can potentially contribute to stress among individuals in the workplace are environmental factors, organizational factors, and personal factors. Personal factor is identified as the last factor that contributes to employee stress. The three most potent elements contribute to workers' stress are family problems, economic problems, and employees' personalities. The type of personality will also determine the individual's behavior and ability to perform the task. Usually, a person with an extrovert person is less likely to experience stress than an introvert person. Otherwise, a person who is communicating around with society tends to be less stressful than an anti-social person.

According to Cooper and Cartwright (1994), stress at the workplace can be defined as one of the most costly occupational health issues. The deleterious implications for individuals and organizations are manifold and can result in serious physical and psychological illness for individuals and this can be major resource loss for the organization. The variation of stress is different, although influenced by the same factor. It is due to the way individuals perceive and respond to the attributes of stress. The description of stress is personal for each individual, one person finds stress would be demanding and stressful, but others may perceive as challenging and stimulating.

Stress can be reduced with work-life initiatives, which can be seen in organization culture (Deery, 2008). Achieving an organizational culture that is accepting work-life balance programs may take time as the culture of the majority Indian organization is not very inclusive (Baral and Bhargava, 2011). The organization should understand the experience of what employee needs in work-life balance at the workplace.

In India and the United States, there is continued support for organizational cultures that provide a family-friendly environment and flexible working hour (Kalliath et al., 2011). According to Isa et al., (2019), there is a positive impact between family support and happiness at the workplace. Furthermore, Wayne et al., (2013) indicated that employee could feel less stress when they are at home. Therefore, family-friendly culture and home environment will help employees and organization to reduce stress at the workplace.

Otherwise, personal financial problems are often accompanied by financial illiteracy of individuals. Individuals are found to be overspending, lack of budgeting, too many debts, and inadequate shopping and spending skills as the main causes of employee financial troubles. Therefore, employers should provide workplace financial education for their employees (Garman et. al., 1999). This study also emphasized by (Helman & Paladino, 2014) that financial education will help employees to overcome employees battling with personal finances and thus improve their financial well-being. According to (Leech & Garman, 1998), financial stress related to job productivity of an individual in the workplace. By providing workplace financial education, employees can improve their personal finance and will have a positive return of investment to the organization.

In an evolving world of advanced technologies, organization struggling to focus on work production and cause a lot of external demands and conditions. Subsequently, individual stress will occur due to the burden of workload that does not match individual skills or knowledge. This case has attracted organization to provide individually oriented stress management programmes. According to (Giga et. al., 2003), the programme is a stress-management intervention that target individual includes one-to-one counseling, relation training, lifestyle education, and behavior change strategies. On the other hand, by providing an interesting working environment can improve employee well-being (Tews et. al., 2017), relieve employees' anger (Tews et. al., 2012), emotional exhaustion (Karl et. al, 2007), and work pressure (Karl et. al., 2005).

In addition, employers who can express appreciation for their employees' work are able to drive employees' productivity while simultaneously keeping their employees happy. Therefore, expressing appreciation is a vital element to maintain in order to create work engagement. Based on the description, (Schaufeli et. al., 2002) indicates that work engagement involves a positive, self-fulfilling, and work-related psychological state. Christian et. al., (2011) agrees that work engagement is a crucial personal factor that can determine employees' job performance. Therefore, employers must be creative to enhance sincere appreciation that matched employees' efforts on task job.

IV. METHODOLOGY

This study aimed to figure out the level of stress among staff and the individual factors that contribute to stress. This study involved 50 respondents, who were randomly selected among staff in University A. The respondents were from various backgrounds including different ages, genders, and periods of service. All the data were analyzed descriptively using SPSS version 2.0.

V. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings of this study found that individuals were more vulnerable to stress when facing their personal problems which attributed to 46 percent, followed by no personal appreciation 34 percent; personal finance; work environment; and personal support achieved the same score of percent, respectively and personal beliefs with 2 percent. Table 1 summarizes the finding as below.

Table 1 : Individual sub domain that leads to stress

No.	Sub domain	Frequency	Percentage
1	Personal Problem	23	46.0
2	No Personal Appreciation	17	34.0
3	Personal Finance	3	6.0
4	Work Environment	3	6.0
5	Personal Support	3	6.0
6	Personal Belief	1	2.0
	Total	50	100.0

Source : Respondent

A total of 50 respondents consisted of 56 percent of women and 44 percent of men were involved in this study. Previous studies had reported that more burnout among women than men (Hallsten et. al, 2002), whereby others found small or no differences between them (Benbow & Jolley, 2002). While, Bharat (2003) identify that both men and women have a more positive work-family balance. Men in dual-earning couples were frequently preoccupied with work at home, whereas women professionals indicated that a preoccupation with family matters interfered with work.

In addition, more than half of the respondents (84.9 percent) aged between 31-60 years old, while 15.1percent are below 30 years old. Meanwhile, the service periods of the respondents are between 11-30 years (61.7 percent). According to the data, most respondents are experienced workers and expert in their field of works. Several theories had accounted for age difference for both quantity and quality of work-related stress, thus most of them in favor of older workers. Although, stress over career development opportunities might be less harmful to the older workers compared to the younger workers according to Kooij et. al., 2011. Under the personal problems' sub domains, several factors contributing to individual stress were personal finance, health problems, personal conflict, and unstable emotional controls. Those factors are the source of a high percentage value for a personal problem domain. Akmal (2017) conceded that the personal problems of the employees were also a barrier factor to organizational excellence. In the context of University A, this personal problem is associated with financial problems, health, and attitudes faced by staff. According to (Garman et. al., 1996), poor financial behavior is often escorted with personal financial problems. Poor financial behavior is 'personal and family money management that has negative impacts on one's life at home and/or at work," This financial problem is parallel with a bunch of work tasks and caused multiple effects on individual stress. In this context, respondents focus more on personal economic elements to enhance their happiness. According to the respondents, the annual salary increment and annual bonus payout can be a mechanism in contributing happiness and reducing personal problems. It is because of personal problems faced by the staff also implicating the existence of uninspiring feelings. Financial rewards and employees performance have a strong correlation, thus employee will work more energetically if the performance is added by financial rewards (Saeed et. al., 2013). This financial benefits result in the positive performance of employees at work.

Besides, the most popular feedback gained by respondents was strict promotion system in the workplace. The changes in promotion policies caused the application for promotion turn to fail and the failure associated with limited financial support from the organization. It is seen as disturbing to set the direction for work performance and career enhancement. Subsequently, respondents raised an issue about the in equivalent tasks given by supervisors. For example, a subordinate with grade N19 was asked to create a paperwork policy. In this case, the supervisor has given the unrelated workload to the subordinate which is not relevant to his or her job scope. Therefore, personal support plays a significant role in alleviating workload stress. In this point of view, the staff sees recognition and appreciation may be taken into account from the supervisor as intermediaries to reduce stress.

As a key to achieving organizational goals, employers should be aware of employee welfare in order to keep the organization performance on track. Additionally, other aspects that can lead to employees' commitment and loyalty to organizations need to be explored and taken action. It is because employees with loyalty values to the organization will give their best commitment without expecting a reward in the assignment. In USA, 51 percent of supervisors said that they recognize employees who do a good job. Then at the same organization, 17 percent of the employees reported that their supervisors recognize them sufficiently (Society for Human Resource Management, 2012). In fact, 65 percent of the workforce merely reported that no recognition at work in the past 12 months (Rath and Clinton, 2004). Interestingly, research shows that non-financial factors are actually key to improving employees' morale and motivation (Mercer, 2011). However, rewards need to be given in order to reward and motivate employees to be more competitive. It can be proven through the findings that employees will be happier if their contribution is being recognized and rewarded. The feeling of appreciation and recognition are so crucial in a work setting because employees want to know as if what they have done. Additionally, respondents had mentioned that their supervisors gave an inconsistent score for their performance assessment and at the same time did not come up with appropriate explanations. Without a sense of being valued by supervisors, staff would start feeling like a commodity or that they are being used. When they do not feel valued, it will give negative results on their work performance. Respondents stated that *'Employers are not concerned about their career development*.' That statement concluded that respondents had less job satisfaction due to the level of the employer's concern over their career development. Meanwhile, Zarina et. al., (2018) recommend recognition and appreciation as a priority by the organization to avoid the motivation of staff to decline.

Nevertheless, the work environment in an organization has a strong influence in determining the level of employees' happiness. Respondents found that some work environments still need to be improved in order to ensure that staff performance is at the maximum level.

Therefore, Abdul Said (2017) believes that the work environment needs to be improved so that employees will not be stressed. Respondents had mentioned the existence of restrictions on the use of creativity in implementing their tasks. The most worrying is that employees will lose their sense of satisfaction in work and become less creative in completing their tasks.

Additionally, respondents stated that "open-minded" and mutual acceptance in an organizational culture is a must to overcome misunderstanding or conflicts between supervisors and co-workers. Respondents found that teamwork and an excellent professional relationship would lead to successful achievement for individuals and the organization. It is recommended that dual approaches between supervisors and co-workers may be necessary for creating a culture of appreciation. An "Any-direction" approach model will work well if supervisors and co-workers offer on workplace culture. Besides, all staff will be trained to communicate appreciation by saying "Thank you" and through actions. It is to enhance performance by creating organization' conditions that match the satisfaction on-task effort.

The feeling of being part of the organization also causes employees to feel owned or owned by the organization. Therefore, to ensure employees are always relevant to the organization's future needs, employees need to know their roles clearly and able to have multitasking skills. The willingness to learn something new and beyond the existing field of expertise is the advantage that every employee needs to meet for better career achievements. A creative and energetic working environment can be a platform for employees to feel happier. Typically, the ergonomic workstation can increase motivation to work productively .

In addition, employees are encouraged to train to be a leader for themselves. This method will help employees to be more responsible for achieving their goals for the sake of their careers. The responsibility of being sincere and trustful will make the employees feel happy about what was being done. It is also recommended for individuals to be positive in all directions. This action can help employees achieve their level of happiness because the way individuals perceive and respond will affect their happiness. The ability to manage and handle stress, conflict and anger helps employees to be more positive and calmer while working on their job tasks.

What can be done by individuals to be positive is to practice grateful and willing to accept other opinions. Reverting to the teachings of Islam that emphasize the basic concept of the Creator, then individuals should always learn to remember that every human being has their own advantages, disadvantages and fate. By practicing this concept, individuals are able to accept the outcomes that happen in their life sincerely.

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VI. CONCLUSION

The feeling of being part of the organization also causes employees to feel owned or owned by the organization. Therefore, to ensure employees are always relevant to the organization's future needs, employees need to know their roles clearly and able to have multitasking skills. The willingness to learn something new and beyond the existing field of expertise is the advantage that every employee needs to meet for better career achievements. A creative and energetic working environment can be a platform for employees to feel happier. Typically, the ergonomic

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AUTHORS PROFILE

Dr. Khairunesa Isa, phD, is a lecturer at Science Social Department, Center for General Studies and Co-Curricular, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn (UTHM). She is also leader of Social Impact Focus Group at the same department. She actively doing research in Sociology, Human Development and Social Transformation.

Nor Aishah Mat Jam, is a research assistant under supervision Dr. Khairunesa Isa. She was graduated in Master of Technical Vocational Education and will pursuing her phD level at Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM).

Dr. Wan Hanim Nadrah Wan Muda, phD, is a lecturer at Faculty of Technical and Vocational Education Science Social Department, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn (UTHM). She actively doing research in TVET as well OB.

Hazila Kadir@ Shahar, is a teacher at English & Linguistic Department, Centre of Language Studies, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM).