



Fakulti Pengurusan Perniagaan
(Faculty of Business Management)
Universiti Utara Malaysia

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: **PUAN HANISSAH BT. A. RAZAK**

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: 

Tarikh
(Date)

: **21/11/04**

**A STUDY ON OCCUPATIONAL STRESS EXPERIENCED BY LECTURERS OF
THE HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTIONS**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
Science (Management) Universiti Utara Malaysia

By

BASKARAN A/L SUBRAMANIAM

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ABSTRACT

This is a study on occupational stress experienced by lecturers of the higher learning institutions in the state of Perlis. It has five main objectives. The first objective is to determine the average level of job stress experienced by lecturers of various higher learning institutions in the state of Perlis. The second objective is to determine the most common factors (stressors) that caused job stress of the lecturers. While the third objective is to determine whether there is a significant difference in term of the occupational stress level experienced by the type A behavior pattern and type B behavior pattern lecturers. Next, its' fourth objective is to determine the association between personality type (type A or type B) among the lecturers and their occupational stress level. Last but not least, the fifth objective is to determine whether there are significant differences in term of the occupational stress levels experienced by different subgroups of the demographic factor, such as, age, gender, work experiences and marital status. The result of the findings of this study showed that; (a) generally, the lecturers of the higher learning in the state of Perlis were experiencing low level of occupational stress. (b) the most common factors that caused occupational stress among the lecturers were job overload, job nature and time management. While in term of the association, reward system ($r = 0.663$, $p = 0.000$) and relationship ($r = 0.649$, $p = 0.000$) seemed to show stronger correlations with occupational stress level. (c) there was a significant difference between the mean level of the TABP and TBBP respondents of this study (p value < 0.05). There was also a significant positive correlation between TABP respondents and the level of occupational stress ($r = 0.197$, $p = 0.043$). (d) it was also clear that there were no significant differences in the occupational stress levels among the different subgroups of the demographic variables such as sex, age groups, work experiences and marital status (p value > 0.05). Based on the research findings, it is recommended that organizations concerned should help the lecturers to achieve mental, emotion and physical preparedness to cope with OS effectively.

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji tentang isu tekanan kerja dikalangan para pensyarah institusi-institusi pengajian tinggi di negeri Perlis. Kajian ini menggariskan lima objektif utama. Objektif pertama kajian adalah untuk menentukan tahap tekanan kerja (TK) yang dialami oleh para pensyarah tersebut. Keduanya, kajian ini berusaha menentukan faktor-faktor (stressor) yang menyebabkan TK dikalangan mereka. Objektif ketiga pula, adalah bagi menentukan sama ada wujud perbezaan yang signifikan dari segi tahap TK yang dialami oleh responden-responden TABP dan TBBP. Manakala, objektif keempat adalah untuk mengkaji tentang perhubungan diantara TABP dan TBBP, dengan tahap TK. Akhir sekali, kajian ini juga berusaha untuk menentukan sama ada wujud perbezaan yang signifikan dari segi tahap TK dikalangan pelbagai kumpulan kecil dalam aspek demografik seperti jantina, kumpulan umur, pengalaman bekerja dan status perkahwinan. Dapatan kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa; (a) umumnya, para pensyarah institusi-institusi pengajian tinggi di negeri Perlis, mengalami tekanan kerja yang rendah. (b) antara faktor-faktor yang menjadi punca utama TK adalah beban kerja yang berlebihan, ciri-ciri kerja itu sendiri dan pengurusan masa. Manakala, sistem upah ($r = 0.663$, $p = 0.000$) dan hubungan sesama pekerja ($r = 0.649$, $p = 0.000$) menunjukkan korelasi positif yang signifikan dengan tahap TK. (c) wujud perbezaan yang signifikan dalam tahap TK diantara responden-responden TABP dan TBBP (nilai $p < 0.05$). Seterusnya, ianya jelas bahawa responden-responden TABP menunjukkan korelasi positif yang signifikan dengan tahap TK ($r = 0.197$, $p = 0.043$). (d) tidak ada perbezaan yang signifikan dari segi tahap TK dikalangan pelbagai kumpulan kecil dalam aspek demografik seperti jantina, kumpulan umur, pengalaman bekerja dan status perkahwinan (nilai $p > 0.05$). Justeru itu, pelbagai cadangan telah diutarakan oleh pengkaji untuk memastikan agar para pensyarah tersebut mempunyai kesediaan dari segi fizikal, emosi dan mental untuk menangani masalah TK di tempat kerja masing-masing.

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Baskaran a/l Subramaniam
Faculty of Business Management
Universiti Utara Malaysia
06010 Sintok
Kedah Darul Aman

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

OS	:	Occupational Stress
TABP	:	Type A Behavior Pattern
TBBP	:	Type B Behavior Pattern

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Research

Change is an inevitable element in the history of human civilization. Human beings have learnt their lessons of coping with these multitude waves of changes to ensure their future survival. Initially, these changes were scarce, later they became more and fast at pace, and along the way they posed problems for human to cope with these changes. This condition of inability to cope with the environmental changes, have caused a new phenomenon called 'stress'. Stress is simply a consequent of a disturbance to the equilibrium state that existed previously. In the new millennium, stress has become a common and serious problem faced by almost everyone at one point of time or the other. This problem has become so common both in developed and developing countries that people have called it 'the third wave plague' (Sutherland and Cooper, 1990).

Stress in workplace, particularly, is reported to be on the rise in many countries. It is the major issue that many labor unions are making big hue and cry, so that respective authorities will take appropriate actions to safeguard the workers' welfare. According to

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