

**THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF JOB STRESS ON THE
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOB DEMANDS, JOB
RESOURCES AND SICKNESS ABSENCE:
A STUDY AMONG NURSES IN MALAYSIA**

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**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
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RESOURCES AND SICKNESS ABSENCE:
A STUDY AMONG NURSES IN MALAYSIA**

By

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**Thesis Submitted to
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Kolej Perniagaan
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ABSTRACT

The issue of absenteeism has emerged as one of the main administrative problems in many large as well as small organizations. Sickness absenteeism or involuntary absence also affects the productivity and economic performance of an organization. The main purpose of this study is to examine the predictors of sickness absence and further determine the relationships between job demands, job resources, job stress and sickness absence. About 1,300 hospital nurses of various grades were selected randomly from six regional hospitals located in the northern states of peninsular Malaysia to participate in this study. The study was conducted in two phases. Sick leave data from the employer's sick leave registry was procured in the first phase of the study for a period of four consecutive months from February to May 2011. The second phase commenced in the mid of the sick leave data collection stage with the administration of survey questionnaires to the targeted participants. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis was used to examine the relationship between job demands, job resources, job stress and sickness absence; The study also investigated the mediating role of job stress on the relationship between job demands, job resources and sickness absence. The results found that workloads, co-worker support and job feedback were significantly related to all dimensions of job stress. Physical demands, job complexity, job feedback, job stress (physical and behavioural stress) were correlated with sickness absence. The findings also revealed the mediating effect of job stress (specifically physical and behavioural stress) on the relationship between job demands (physical demand and job complexity), job resources (job feedback) on sickness absence. Overall this study provided support to the job demands-resources (JD-R) model, and filled the research gaps in the mediating role of job stress. The implications, limitation of the study and future research direction were also discussed in this study.

Keywords: absenteeism, sickness absence, job demands-resources, stress, nurses

ABSTRAK

Isu ketidakhadiran telah muncul sebagai salah satu masalah utama pentadbiran dalam organisasi besar mahupun kecil. Ketidakhadiran kerana sakit atau ketidakhadiran kecemasan (*involuntary*) juga mempengaruhi produktiviti dan prestasi ekonomi sesebuah organisasi. Tujuan utama kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji faktor penentu terhadap ketidakhadiran kerana sakit serta hubungan di antara keperluan pekerjaan, sumber pekerjaan, tekanan dalam pekerjaan dengan ketidakhadiran kerana sakit. Sejumlah 1,300 orang jururawat hospital pelbagai gred telah dipilih secara rawak dari enam buah hospital yang terletak di kawasan utara Semenanjung Malaysia untuk menyertai kajian ini. Kajian ini dilakukan dalam dua fasa. Data berkenaan cuti sakit telah diperolehi daripada senarai daftar cuti majikan pada fasa pertama iaitu dari bulan Februari hingga Mei 2011. Fasa kedua bermula pada pertengahan peringkat pungutan data cuti sakit dengan pengedaran soal selidik tinjauan kepada peserta sasaran. Analisis regresi berganda berperingkat digunakan untuk mengkaji hubungan di antara keperluan pekerjaan, sumber pekerjaan, tekanan pekerjaan dan ketidakhadiran kerana sakit. Kajian juga menyiasat peranan tekanan pekerjaan sebagai perantara dalam hubungan antara keperluan pekerjaan, sumber pekerjaan dan ketidakhadiran kerana sakit. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa beban kerja, sokongan rakan sekerja dan maklum balas pekerjaan mempunyai hubungan signifikan dengan kesemua dimensi tekanan dalam pekerjaan. Keperluan fizikal, kerumitan pekerjaan, maklum balas pekerjaan dan tekanan pekerjaan (tekanan fizikal dan tekanan tingkah laku) mempunyai hubungan dengan ketidakhadiran kerana sakit. Penemuan kajian juga menyokong kesan perantara tekanan pekerjaan (terutamanya tekanan fizikal dan tekanan tingkah laku) terhadap hubungan di antara keperluan pekerjaan (keperluan fizikal dan kerumitan pekerjaan) dan sumber pekerjaan (maklum balas pekerjaan) terhadap ketidakhadiran kerana sakit. Secara keseluruhan, hasil kajian ini menyokong andaian model keperluan-sumber pekerjaan (JD-R), serta telah menjelaskan lompang dalam kajian terhadap tekanan pekerjaan sebagai faktor perantara. Implikasi, batasan kajian dan sasaran kajian masa hadapan turut dibincangkan.

Katakunci: ketidakhadiran, ketidakhadiran kerana sakit, keperluan-sumber pekerjaan, tekanan, jururawat

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Description of Abbreviation
ACTU	Australian Council of Trade Unions
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AN	Assistant Nurse
CAN	Canadian Association of Nurse
CBI	Confederation of British Industry
CCH	Commerce Clearing House
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CIPD	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
CN	Community Nurse
CNS	Clinical Nurse Specialist
COR	Conservation of Resources
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CPG	Clinical Practice Guidelines
CPS	Current Population Survey
CRC	Clinical Research Centre
CT	Computerized Tomography
DCM	Demand Control Model
DD	Divided Duty
DG	Director General
df	Degree of Freedom
DG	Director General

DON	Director of Nursing
DOT	Dictionary of Occupational Titles
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
ERI	Effort-Reward Imbalance Model
GAS	Generalized Adaptation Syndrome
GCP	Good Clinical Practice
GHQ	General Health Questionnaire
GHS	General Health Survey
GNP	Gross National Product
GP	General Practitioner
HAI	Hospital Acquired Infection
HCW	Health Care Worker
HDU	High Dependency Unit
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HMRA	Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis
ICU	Intensive Care Unit
IDS	Income Data Services
ILO	International Labor Office
JCQ	Job Content Questionnaire
JDC	Job Demands and Control
JDCS	Job Demands, Control and Support
JDR	Job Demands and Resources
JDS	Job Diagnostic Survey
KMO	Kaiser-Mayer Oikin

MC	Medical Certificate
MEF	Malaysia Employers Federation
MoH	Ministry of Health
MRI	Magnetic Resonance Imaging
MSA	Measure of Sampling Adequacy
MSD	Musculoskeletal Disorders
NBM	Nursing Board Malaysia
NCD	Non-Communicable Diseases
NCI	Noso-comial Infection
NHS	National Health Service
NIH	National Institute of Health
NMRR	National Medical Research Registry
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ORL	Otorhinolaryngology
OT	Operation Theatre
PAF	Principle Axial Factoring
PCA	Principle Component Analysis
PHC	Public Health Care
PTB	Pulmonary Tuberculosis
RN	Registered Nurse
RSI	Repeated Strain Injury
SD	Standard Deviation
SN	Staff Nurse

SR	Sister
TLI	Tucker and Lewis index
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor
WDI	Worst Day Index
WHO	World Health Organization

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Absenteeism is a major concern in human resource and administrative management of any organisation. There is a growing body of research on absenteeism because of its importance to organisational effectiveness. It has been reported that employee absence behaviour is a costly issue and it can result in decreased quality of services to customers and jeopardise the worker productivity and financial performance of an organisation (Biron & Bamberger, 2012; Benson & Leona, 2000). Despite the vast amount of international interest and research spurred by absenteeism, most studies tended to focus on administrative strategies for the prediction or control of absenteeism, rather than on employee attitude and the causes of their absenteeism. Therefore, more effort is needed to uncover the reasons that contribute to absence behaviour.

Miller and Norton (1986) defined absenteeism as unscheduled absences from work, whereas Robbin and Judge (2009) defined it as the failure to report for work. In other words, it is simply a non-attendance at work by an employee, when attendance is expected by the employer. Despite the apparent ease of definition, absenteeism has proved to be a complex phenomenon that resists single or straightforward explanations (Alexanderson, 1998; Briner, 1996). Briner (1996) argued that the above definitions lack holistic explanation, as the absenteeism in that context only reflects the non-occurrence of a specific behaviour, which can be interpreted as an administrative category rather than a behavioural one.

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