

The copyright © of this thesis belongs to its rightful author and/or other copyright owner. Copies can be accessed and downloaded for non-commercial or learning purposes without any charge and permission. The thesis cannot be reproduced or quoted as a whole without the permission from its rightful owner. No alteration or changes in format is allowed without permission from its rightful owner.



**RELATIONSHIP OF ROLE CONFLICT, PERSON-JOB FIT AND SOCIAL  
SUPPORT WITH WORK STRESS AMONG TRAVEL AGENCIES'  
EMPLOYEES IN KEDAH**



**UUM**  
BY  
**ALIAA DIYANA BINTI ZAMRI**  
Universiti Utara Malaysia

**MASTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

**JUNE 2016**

**RELATIONSHIP OF ROLE CONFLICT, PERSON-JOB FIT AND SOCIAL  
SUPPORT WITH WORK STRESS AMONG TRAVEL AGENCIES'  
EMPLOYEES IN KEDAH**



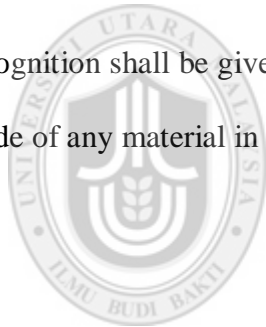
**BY  
ALIAA DIYANA BINTI ZAMRI**

**UUM**  
**Universiti Utara Malaysia**

**A thesis Submitted to  
Othman Yeop Abdullah Graduate School of Business  
In partial fulfillment of the Requirement for the  
Master of Human Resources Management  
Universiti Utara Malaysia  
2016**

## **PERMISSION TO USE**

In presenting this dissertation/project paper in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Post Graduate degree from the Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), I agree that the Library of this university may make it freely available for inspection. I further agree that permission for copying this dissertation/project paper in any manner, in whole or in part, for scholarly purposes may be granted by my supervisor(s) or in their absence, by the Dean of Othman Yeop Abdullah Graduate School of Business where I did my dissertation/project paper. It is understood that any copying or publication or use of this dissertation/project paper parts of it for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission. It is also understood that due recognition shall be given to me and to the UUM in any scholarly use which may be made of any material in my dissertation/project paper.



**UUM**  
Universiti Utara Malaysia

Request for permission to copy or to make other use of materials in this dissertation/project paper in whole or in part should be addressed to:

Dean of Othman Yeop Abdullah Graduate School of Business

Universiti Utara Malaysia

06010 UUM Sintok

Kedah Darul Aman

## ABSTRACT

This research examines the relationship of role conflict, person-job fit and social support with work stress among 140 employees of travel agencies in Kedah (Kota Setar). It also investigates the difference in experiencing work stress between male and female employees. The level of work stress among employees is also examined. Descriptive analysis is conducted to ascertain the data normality as well as to analyze the frequencies of the respondents' demographic profile. Multiple regression outputs show that the relationships of role conflict and social support with stress are significant, but not with person job fit. While the t-test shows that there is a difference between male and female employees in experiencing work stress. Based on the research findings several recommendations to reduce work stress in the agencies are made. Finally, the directions for future research are also discussed among employees.



**UUM**  
Universiti Utara Malaysia

## ABSTRAK

*Kajian ini meneliti faktor-faktor tekanan kerja seperti konflik peranan, kesesuaian pekerjaan individu dan sokongan sosial dalam kalangan pekerja di agensi pelancongan. Ianya juga bertujuan untuk mengkaji perbezaan di antara pekerja lelaki dan perempuan dalam menghadapi tekanan kerja. Tahap tekanan pekerjaan dalam kalangan pekerja juga dikaji. Analisis deskriptif dijalankan untuk memastikan kenormalan data dan juga untuk menganalisis kekerapan profil demografi responden. Output regresi berganda menunjukkan bahawa hubungan konflik peranan dan sokongan sosial dengan tekanan adalah penting, tetapi bukan dengan kesesuaian pekerjaan individu. Ujian t telah menunjukkan bahawa terdapat perbezaan antara lelaki dan perempuan dalam mengalami tekanan. Beberapa cadangan untuk mengurangkan atau mengelakkan berlakunya tekanan dalam agensi dibuat. Akhir sekali, cadangan untuk penyelidikan di masa hadapan juga dibincangkan dengan sewajarnya.*



**UUM**  
Universiti Utara Malaysia

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious and Most Merciful Alhamdulillah, praised to Allah S.W.T for the completion of this thesis. I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to those who helped, supported and encouraged me, and made this accomplishment possible.

My sincere gratitude is given to my supervisor, Dr. Fais Ahmad who gave his valuable input during my dissertation and also guidance throughout completing this thesis. Also to my supervisor, Dr Zurina Adnan, it was a great pleasure to work under her supervision for always supporting me in accomplishing the thesis.

A token of love and appreciation, I dedicated this to my beloved parents, siblings and loved one who always make me feel special. My most profound thankfulness goes to all my dearest family members, especially my parents, Mr. Zamri bin Othman and Madam Rohaya binti Wan Chek for their endless support and made this thesis possible. I would like to give my special thanks to both of them and my younger siblings for having so much faith in me and for their love and support.

It is also a pleasure to offer my appreciation to my beloved one, Muhammad Syazwan Azizan for all his support, helped and encouragement throughout the process of completing this dissertation. Thanks also dedicated to all my friends, Ayuni, Hidayah and Azreen for supporting me throughout this journey. Not forgetting, to the employees of travel agencies who have cooperated to complete the questionnaire.

Finally, thanks to my university, Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) for giving me a chance and opportunity to carry out this study in a very conducive environment.

Thank you.





## TABLE OF CONTENTS

PERMISSION TO USE.....	i
ABSTRACT.....	ii
ABSTRAK.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	iv-v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi- viii
LIST OF TABLES.....	ix
LIST OF FIGURES.....	x

### CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0	Introduction.....	1
1.1	Background of Study.....	1
1.2	Problem Statement.....	5
1.3	Research Objectives.....	7
1.4	Research Questions.....	8
1.5	Significance of Study.....	9
	1.5.1 Body of Knowledge.....	9
	1.5.2 Tourism Industry.....	9
	1.5.3 Travel Agencies.....	9
	1.5.4 Managers.....	9
1.6	Definition of Key Terms.....	10
1.7	Scope of The Study.....	11
1.8	Organization of The Thesis.....	11

### CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0	Introduction.....	12
2.1	Work Stress.....	12

2.2	Role Conflict.....	16
2.2.1	Relationship between Role Conflicts with Work Stress.....	17 19
2.3	Person-Job Fit.....	
2.3.1	Relationship between Person-Job Fit Employees with Work Stress.....	20 21
2.4	Social Support.....	22
2.4.1	Relationship between Social Supports with Work Stress.....	23 24
2.5	Relationship between Gender Differences with Work Stress.....	24
2.6	Underpinning Theory.....	
2.6.1	Model Of Job Stress and Health.....	

### **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

3.0	Introduction.....	28
3.1	Framework Of The Study.....	28
3.2	Hypotheses.....	29
3.3	Research Design.....	30
3.4	Unit Of Analysis.....	31
3.5	Population Of Study.....	31
3.6	Questionnaire.....	33
3.7	Operational Definition And Measurement.....	34
3.8	Instrumentation.....	36
3.9	Data Collection.....	37
3.9.1	Data Collection Procedure.....	38
3.10	Pre Test.....	39
3.11	Data Analysis Technique.....	39

## CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

4.0	Introduction.....	43
4.1	Demographic Characteristics.....	43
4.1.1	Gender.....	43
4.1.2	Age.....	44
4.1.3	Marital Status.....	46
4.1.4	Race.....	47
4.1.5	Years Of Service.....	48
4.1.6	Descriptive Frequency Of Variable.....	49
4.2	Level Of Work Stress.....	55
4.3	Reliability Test.....	55
4.4	Correlation Test.....	56
4.5	Regression Analysis.....	60
4.6	Difference Between Male And Female Of Respondents In Experiencing Work Stress.....	63
4.7	Summary.....	65

## CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.0	Introduction.....	66
5.1	First Objective: Level Of Work Stress.....	66
5.2	Second Objective: Relationship Between Role Conflict And Work Stress.....	67
5.2	Third Objective: Relationship Between Person-Job Fit And Work Stress.....	68
5.3	Fourth Objective: Relationship Between Social Support And Work Stress.....	69
5.4	Fifth Objective: Relationship Between Gender Differences In Experiencing Work Stress.....	70
5.5	Limitations.....	71
5.6	Suggestion For Future Research.....	72
5.7	Conclusion.....	73

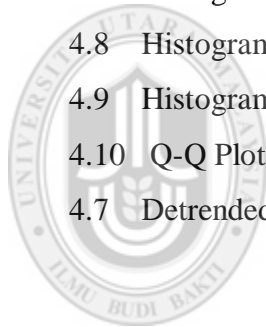
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>82</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

3.1 Target Population.....	32
3.2 Cronbach's Alpha Value With Level Of Reliability.....	40
4.1 Respondents' Gender.....	43
4.2 Respondents' Age Categories.....	45
4.3 Respondents' Marital Status.....	46
4.4 Respondents' Race.....	47
4.5 Respondents' Year Of Services.....	48
4.6 Descriptive Statistics Of Variables.....	49
4.7 Distribution Of Data.....	50
4.8 Means Value of Work Stress.....	55
4.9 Result Of Reliability Analysis.....	56
4.10 Relationship Between Role Conflict And Work Stress.....	57
4.11 Relationship Between Person-Job Fit And Work Stress.....	58
4.12 Relationship Between Social Support And Work Stress.....	59
4.13 Results Of Multiple Regressions In Evaluating The Relationship Of Role Conflict, Person-Job Fit And Social Support With Work Stress.....	61
4.14 Unstandardized Beta Coefficients.....	62
4.15 Collinearity Statistics Of Independent Variables.....	63
4.14 Levene's Test.....	64
4.15 Comparison Of Work Stress Experienced By Female And Male.....	64
4.16 The Outcome Of The Tested Hypotheses.....	65

## LIST OF FIGURES

1.1	Real GDP by Kind Of Economic Activity for 2010-2015.....	2
2.1	Model Of Job Stress and Health.....	25
3.1	Framework Of Work Stress Among Employees In Travel Agencies.....	29
4.1	Gender.....	44
4.2	Age.....	45
4.3	Marital Status.....	46
4.4	Race.....	47
4.5	Years Of Service.....	49
4.6	Histogram of Work Stress.....	51
4.7	Histogram of Role Conflict.....	51
4.8	Histogram of Person-Job Fit.....	52
4.9	Histogram of Social Support.....	52
4.10	Q-Q Plot.....	54
4.7	Detrended Normal Q-Q Plots.....	54



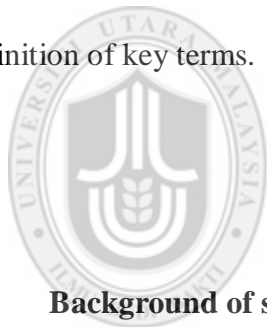
Universiti Utara Malaysia

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Introduction

This chapter comprehensively describes the background of the study which subsequently followed by the actual research problem and the research gap in the following sub-topic of problem statement. The outcomes of research problem discussions have yielded four research objectives as well as research questions. Significance of the study is explained and finally this chapter ends with the definition of key terms.



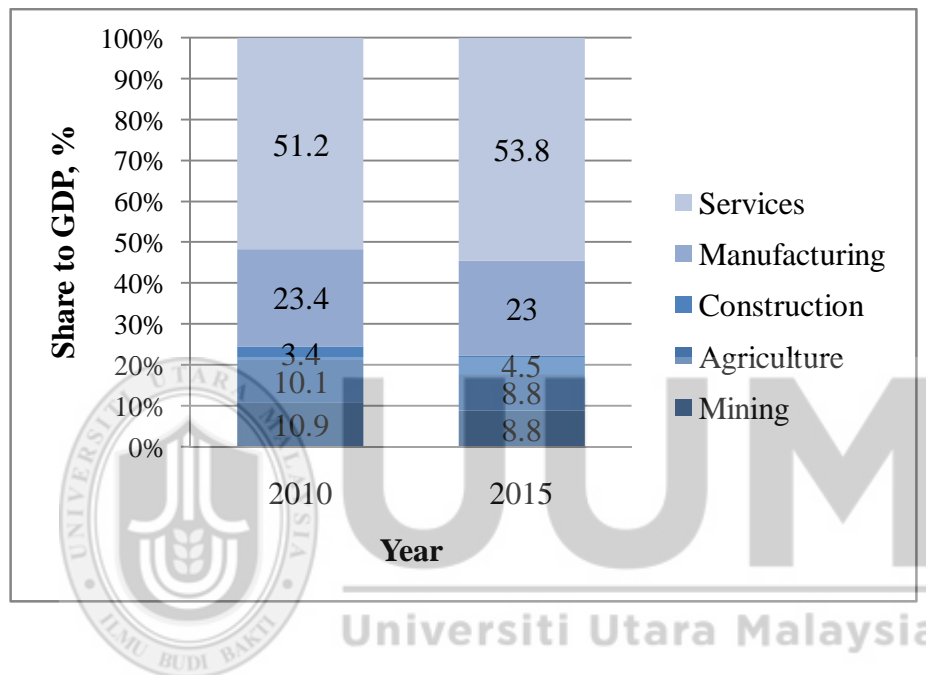
UUM  
Universiti Utara Malaysia

### 1.1 Background of study

Malaysia is a Southeast Asian country which including the Malaysian Peninsula and part of the Island of Borneo. Malaysia is known as a peaceful country with different races of people such as Malays, Chinese and Indian. The current Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dato' Sri Mohd Najib bin Tun Haji Abdul Razak, has presented the Eleventh Malaysia Plan in 2015. The Eleventh Malaysia Plan has focused on the plans to make Malaysia as an advanced nation that is inclusive and sustainable by 2020. Based on the Eleventh Malaysia Plan, during the year of 2010 to 2015, the gross domestic product (GDP) in Malaysia shows that services sector contribute the most (53.8% in 2015) compared to manufacturing (23%), construction (4.5%),

agriculture (8.8%) and mining (8.8%) sector. The related statistical information can be seen in Figure 1.1 below.

Figure 1.1  
*Real GDP by kind of economic activity for 2010-2015*  
*Source: Eleventh Malaysia Plan*



The tourism industry is one of the service sectors in Malaysia which is seemed to be moving up tremendously. In the Eleventh Malaysia Plan, it is stated there was an increase in tourist arrivals from 24.6 million in 2010 to 27.4 million in 2014. Tourism is also an important source of foreign exchange earnings as there is an increase of 27.4% from RM 56.5 billion in 2010 to RM 72 billion in 2014. This industry has also helped in providing 2.2 million jobs which comprises 16.8% of total employment in 2013. In addition, in 2013, the healthcare travel segment recorded an increase of 82% in total revenue to RM 690 million with 770,000 foreign patients, compared with RM 379 million and 393,000 foreign patients in

2010. Thus, it can be concluded that the tourists visit play a vital role in helping government to improve Malaysia's economy.

Tourism industry is said to give a positive impact on the lives of the local community. Several researches have proven that it helps in improving standards of living, improving public infrastructure and recreational facilities, preserving the local culture and also increased the income and employment opportunities (Andereck *et al.*, 2005; Choi and Sirakaya, 2006; Deery *et al.*, 2012; Haralambopoulos and Pizam, 1996; McGehee *et al.*, 2002). It is important for any country to highlight and focus on tourism industry as it can help both improving the economy of the country and also good for the culture preservation.

The World Tourism Organization (WTO, 2009), defines tourism as “a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business or professional purposes”. Tourism as stated in WTO, (2009), has three basic forms, namely domestic tourism, inbound tourism and outbound tourism. Inbound tourism is when the non-resident travelling to the country of destination whereas the outbound tourism involves residents travelling out to another country. Thus, both of them (outbound and inbound tourism), imply the border crossing for the purpose of travelling or visit. Domestic tourism is an activity of travelling of resident within the country.

Inbound tourism could help to improve the economy of Malaysia not only in a healthy economic condition of a country but also during recession especially when our currency is in an unstable state. On the other hand, albeit the currency value of



Malaysia is going down, outbound tourism is increasing demanding especially religious travel such as umrah and hajj which remain in need across the years.

Tourism and Travel Related Services according to Malaysian Investment Development Authority (MIDA) is divided into four sub-sectors which are hotels and restaurants (including catering); travel agencies and tour operators' services; tourist guides services; and other tourism services. There is a total of 3683 of travel agents registered in Malaysia. Out of this, 366 travel agents were operating in Kedah (Malaysia.travel, 2016). In Kedah, Langkawi is the most popular destination chosen by the tourists. In January 2016, Air Asia had launched its maiden flight from Guangzhou to Langkawi. Transport Minister of Malaysia, Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai has stated during the press conference that the passenger movements for Langkawi had jumped from 1.4 million in 2011 to 2.3 million in 2015. The flight route from Guangzhou hoped to increase tourists arrival. (The Star online, 2016). It can be concluded that the tourism activity in Langkawi is growing drastically in Malaysia.

Travel agencies are believed to have intensified their effort to improve the tourists satisfaction and leads to more tourists arrival. A study by Pastiu, Muntean, Moisa, and Maican, (2014), found that travel agencies are important in improving the tourism industry. There is basically three mains role play by the travel agencies in tourism development namely 1) Travel agencies have a great power to fulfil consumer's demands, 2) It act as an interface between supply and different demands and, 3) Modern travel agencies have different forms and very complex relationships with clients.

The employees in travel agency companies felt the stress as they played the vital role to improve the tourists' satisfaction. T. Hennig-thurau (2004) shows that the travel agencies employees who are working directly with customers feel more stress than the employees in a less individualized and personal services.

This study aims to explore factors causing work stress among employees in travel agencies, especially in Kedah with a variety of issues related to the tourism sector to work stress concepts. This study is beneficial to understand the factors that can contribute to work stress among employees in travel agencies in Kedah, and can help managers to overcome work stress experience by the employees.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

These days, travel agencies operating in Malaysia have increased in number and the competition among the companies is getting tougher. Consequently, it has led to work stress among employees. A matter of fact, it is becoming critical and need to be monitored by managers. This circumstance has forced companies to intensify their efforts in order to mend this predicament.

The employees who worked directly towards customers' satisfaction would feel more stress than those who are not working directly (Hennig-thurau, 2004). Work stress can lead to bad effects on the individual and also organizations. According to Ganster and Schaubroeck (1991); Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, Rosenthal, (1964); Westman (1992), stress can have damaging effects on individuals' mental and physical health. Work stress also gives negative effects on organizational outcomes

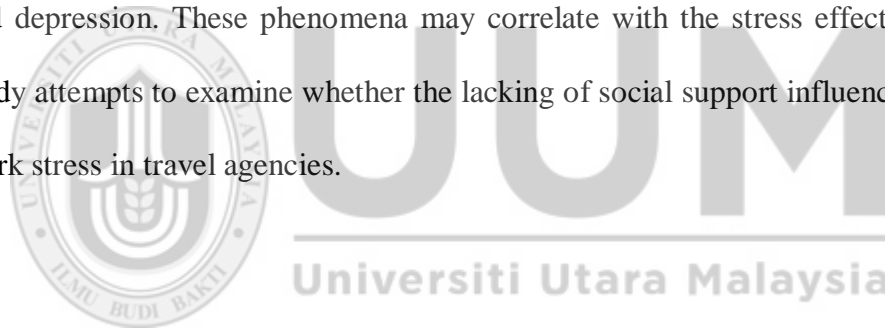
such as lower performance (Westman and Eden, 1992) and high staff turnover (O'Driscoll and Beehr, 1994).

As the previous researchers have shown how harmful stress is, the study on factors of work stress is indeed important in order to control the work stress among employees in organizations. In travelling sector, previous studies were mostly focussed on the customers' behaviour and the travel agencies itself. Examples of study that focussed on customer behaviours were conducted by Mohamed, Moustafa, Ismail (2012), Heesup and Sunghyup (2012), Rob, Rosanna, Ada, Daniel and Lawrence (2015), Zhongmin (2004), Natasa, Daniel and Pearl (2010), Khaldoon, Nusair and Hua (2010), Wu, Ho, Lam, Ip, Choy and Tse (2016), Andrew (2015), Mustafa (2015), Chulmo, Namho and Sunyoung (2016) and Sandra and Ana (2015). On the other hand, the study that focussing on the behaviour of employees of travel agencies is limited. Examples of studies include Gaji (2014) and Henniq-thurau (2004). Thus, this study is hoped to contribute on knowledge and understanding on employees' work stress in travel agency.

Role conflict among employees is one of the contributing factors to work stress. The employees may get confuse with their job scope and unclear about job objective or goals which may eventually lead to work stress. In manufacturing firms, there is only one distinct authority or boss, whereas in service firms, there is another party to serve, which is customer. The role conflicts perceived by the employees who need to manage customers' demand and at the same time need comply with management's requirements (Beth and Benjamin, 2002). Thus, this study examines the relationship between the role conflict and the work stress among employees in travel agencies.

Additionally, this study also focuses on the relationship between the person-job fit with the work stress among employees in travel agencies. The person who needs to be employed in the tourism industry should have a personality that is suitable to the working environment of service industry. The job scope of the employees in travel agencies is more flexible in accordance with the demands. It has been stated in a paper by Fatma and Kemal (2013), that person who fit with their job scope will be less stressful than those who do not. Thus, the study is focussing on this relationship between person-job fit and work stress on employees in the travel agencies.

Social support plays a vital role in reducing stress. Cohen and Wills (1985) stated in general, lack of social support leads to negative psychological states such as anxiety and depression. These phenomena may correlate with the stress effects. Thus, this study attempts to examine whether the lacking of social support influence employees work stress in travel agencies.



### 1.3 Research Objectives

The main focus of this research is to identify specific factors that significantly affect work stress among employees in travel agencies. This study has addressed the following objectives:-

- To examine the level of work stress among employees in the travel agencies.
- To examine the relationship between role conflict with work stress among employees in the travel agencies.

- To examine the relationship between person-job fit with work stress among employees in the travel agencies.
- To examine the relationship between social support with work stress among employees in the travel agencies.
- To examine the relationship between gender difference with work stress among employees in travel agencies.

#### 1.4 Research Questions

Based on the problem statements discussed, the following research questions have been focussed:-

- What is the level of work stress experienced among employees in travel agencies?
- Is there any significant relationship between the role conflict and work stress among employees in travel agencies?
- Is there any significant relationship between the person-job fit and work stress among employees in travel agencies?
- Is there any significant relationship between the social support and work stress among employees in travel agencies?
- Is there any difference in terms of work stress between male and female employees in travel agencies?

## **1.5 Significant of study**

This study will be useful for those who are responsible to managing stress among employees in any organization especially that is related directly to the customers. Among them are the travel agencies employees, managers and society in general.

### **1.5.1 Body of knowledge**

This study hopes to contribute to the body of knowledge. There is lack in study on the employees' behaviour in travel agencies and this study help to fill the gap.

### **1.5.2 Tourism industry**

In terms of tourism industry, since this study is focusing on travel agencies help to improve employees' satisfaction and eventually improved their productivity in the tourism industry.

### **1.5.3 Travel agencies**

The study helps travel agencies recognize the work stress factors and handling the employees stress. There is a lack of the study about the work stress perceived by the travel agencies in previous literature. Thus, this study is hoped to help those involved to recognize the work stress factors and improve employee's well being.

### **1.5.4 Managers**

In any organization, the stress factors are reasons for the employees to leave their job and find job in other organization in order to reduce the occupational stress. Managers who recognize the factors will have a chance to control or rectify them and consequently they can reduce or solve the problem of employees' turnover.

## 1.6 Definition of Key Terms

**Stress:** Stress is defined in terms of stimulus, response or relationship between stimulus and response (Dewe, 2012). Stimulus in this study is the role conflict, the person-job fit, and the social support which response to stress in psychological or physically.

**Role conflict:** Role conflict is when the workers feel unable to fulfil the work requirements (Boles and Babin, 1996). In this study, the requirements of work are related to the supervisor, job scope and the policies of the work.

**Person-job fit:** Person-job fit is a match between the demands of the job and the person's abilities to fulfil those (Edwards, 1991). In this study, the demand of the job is based on the requirements for the employees in travel agencies.

**Social support:** Social support is about giving of social interaction on the job with co-workers and supervisors (Karasek and Theorell, 1990). The study is focussing on both social support from supervisors and co-workers.

**Gross domestic product (GDP):** GDP is the monetary value of all the goods and services provided in a country within a period of time.

(<http://www.investopedia.com>)

## **1.7 Scope of the Study**

This paper is conducted to study the relationship between the role conflict, person-job fit and social support that could contribute to work stress. The targeted respondents of this study are the employees in travel agencies that were located in Kota Setar, Kedah.

## **1.8 Organization of the Report**

This paper consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 discusses the introduction and background of the study, statement of problem, objectives of research, research questions, and the significance of study, the scope of study and definition of key terms. In Chapter 2, the research covers literature review and describes the relationship between role conflict and work stress, person-job fit and stress and social support and work stress. Chapter 3 presents the research framework, research design, and operational definition. It also discussed the measurement of variables, data collection, and data collection procedures and data analysis technique. Chapter 4 is about presentation of the findings and finally, Chapter 5 discusses research findings and recommendations for future research.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter critically reviews the related literatures. All the concepts in the forms of independent variable and dependent variable are defined and explained, followed by a series of discussions. An explanation on the relationship of underpinning theory with the established theoretical framework of this study is also included in this chapter.

#### 2.1 Work stress



Stress is one of the psychological phenomena which are inescapable by anyone. It is a reaction when the individuals faced something that stimulates it. Selye (1956), states that stress is coupled with the concept of stressor or something that produce stress. Freud (1978) believes that stress is the result of energy that is affected from external obstacles or from internal obstacles. Parter and De Coths (1983) define stress as a normal psychological or physiological affected by the demands and urgency of environment. Cooper *et al*, (1988) concluded that stress is the result of an interaction between various sources of pressure and the individual.

Basically there are two main theories that focus on relationship between bodily processes (stress) and external sources (stressors). The theories are the approaches to both physiology and psychobiology stress which called 'systematic stress' (Selye, 1976). Another approach is 'psychological stress' which developed within the field of cognitive psychology (McGrath, 1982, Lazarus and Folkman, 1984, Lazarus, 1966). Selye (1976) has done stereotypical response pattern to analyze the individual's resistance to stress. First, when the organism faces the shock phase, it tends to respond in counter shocked for defensive. If the stressors continue, the organism will start to resist the stressors and adapting to it. However, if the stimulation or the stressors persists, the organism starts to exhaust and lead to tissue damage and if continue the stimulation, the organism dies.

Stress can lead to positive or negative reactions of the stimuli. Selye, (1987) discussed that distress happens when the body face the demands is higher than capacity to use the energy. Selye (1987) also discussed that eustress is understood as optimum level of stress perceived by an individual that can help them to achieve a better performance. According to Nelson and Simmons, 2003, if negotiated and controlled appropriately, stress can produce positive response and outcomes. However, it is argued that the individual's perception is what determining whether the stress is distress or eustress. According to Grol et. al (1985), when the practitioners feel negative feelings about work and also time pressures, they tend to not provide explanations to the patients whereas when the practitioners have a positive feeling of the job, they have a more open approach to patients and more focus to psychosocial aspects to the emotion of the patients. Thus, it can be seen that the stress perceived depends on the individual. When the individual view the stress

as negative it leads negative reaction, and whenever the individual view the stress as something positive, then, it leads to positive reaction.

As stated by Selye (1976), not all stress is bad and also not all can be avoided. In order for an individual growth, motivated and developed, they need to be responding to stress. This is why it is important to identify and manage the stress well. When the uncontrollable demand is exceeding the capabilities of individual, it will lead to negative stress which is called distress. The individual will start to experience a negative reaction as the effects due to physiological and psychological symptoms of anxiety and fear. Typical problems are failure to prioritise, loss of concentration, “tunnel vision” and also “freezing” (Flin, 1996; Flin et. al, 1997; Klein, 1996; Orasanu and Backer, 1996)

If the stress level is not controlled and managed properly, it will give adverse effects to the individual and organization. Work stress can affect the employees’ performance in the organization if the management not managing the employees well. According to Kerry and James (2003), the negative effect of work stress is it decreased capacity to perform, reduced efficiency, increased rigidity of thought, dampened initiative and reduced interest in work, low responsibility among employees, and a loss of concern for the organisation and colleagues. Another effect to the organization is that it leads to job dissatisfaction, low in productivity, absenteeism and also leads to turnover (Beehr and Newman, 1978; Schuler, 1980).

A four-phase approach to identify negative work stress is introduced by Sutherland (2009). First, recognize the stressors that exist. Second, examine individual attributes to help mediating the stress-response process.

Third, measure the manifestation of stress (physical or psychological) and coping mechanism (alcohol and drug abuse); and finally identify which of stressors that contribute the most strongly with negative outcome.

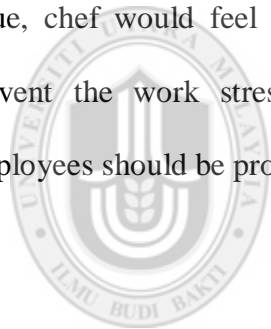
In a paper by Rose and Unnithan (2014), the work stress factors have been studied among police profession. The factors of work stress discussed in the paper are gender, working position, the racial characteristics and years in law enforcement. The gender differences gave no effect on employees' stress. It is because the women in this profession are likely to do "masculinity" (Martin and Jurik, 2007). However, the gender differences affecting the work stress perceived among the practitioners. It is proven in a paper by Cooper et. al (1989), that the woman doctors were significantly more job satisfied rather than man general practitioners. Thus, it can be concluded that, the gender differences influencing work stress among employees will also depends on the profession itself.

Work stress can be perceived by the employees because of the job scope within the organization. This has been supported by Ann and Stephen, (1997), in which they stated that the work pressures or stress is not caused by the occupation itself, but the factors within the organization or the job which contribute to stress among employees in organization.

Sutherland (2009), who focused on the work stress factors among practitioners argue that factors contribute the most are the job demands, role conflict and ambiguity and organizational climate and structure. In another paper by MrComick and Ayres (2009), it explains the study of work stress among teachers.

The most contributing factor is when the teachers need to face the change with little help and social support from the management. The teachers have been facing the change in the education management and feel ready with it. However, the change in technology is what makes them feel stressful and need more time to adapt to the change.

In a paper by Murray Gibbons and Gibbons (2007), the work stress factor is studied among chef profession. The factors that contribute to stress among chefs is the workload; communication issue; bullying or violence in kitchen; and locus of control. The working environment of kitchen which is full of stress leads to violence in kitchen. When the management of kitchen is not good with some communication issue, chef would feel stressful and starts to bully and do violence. In order to prevent the work stress issue among chefs, the management of kitchen and employees should be properly done.



UUM  
Universiti Utara Malaysia

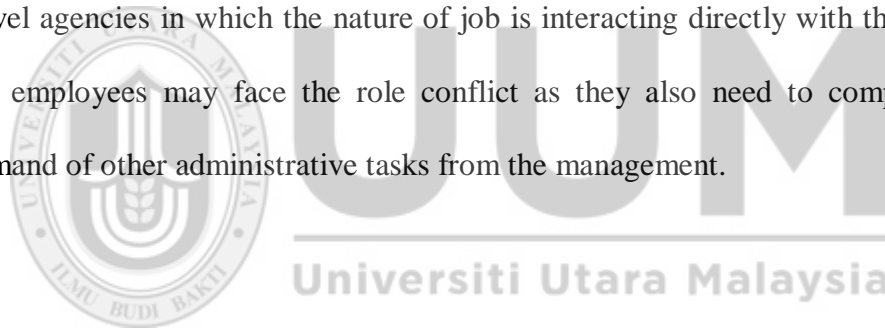
## **2.2 Role conflict**

According to Boles and Babin (1996), the role conflict involves an employee's feeling of incompatibility in job requirements. This could arise when employees feel pressure to take actions in which they are not the most productive and also afraid the course of action suggested by the supervisor is inconsistent with the demands of the customers.

Role conflict could be happened within a single role or between multiple roles when there is existence of conflicting demands (David and Catherine, 2003). The role

conflict may exist internally and externally. Based on a paper by David and Catherine (2003), if the consideration of only work-family conflict simplifying the concept of role conflict, it may consist of intra-role and inter-role conflict. Intra-role conflict is about the conflict exist when there is a lack of agreement between occupants to the expectations for a particular role. While inter-role conflict is occurs when pressures experienced in one's role are incompatible with pressures experienced in another role. Role pressure incompatibility exists when participation in one role is made more difficult by the participation of another role.

In this paper, the researcher is focussing on the role conflict perceived by the employees at the organization; specifically employees in travel agencies. In the travel agencies in which the nature of job is interacting directly with the customers, the employees may face the role conflict as they also need to comply with the demand of other administrative tasks from the management.



### **2.2.1 Relationship between the role conflicts with the work stress**

In a paper by Beth and Benjamin (2002), employees experienced role conflict as they have to fulfil both the customers and management's demands. The customers need can be seen based on: the physical presented between service employees and customers, the amount of time they spend together, the amount of feedback customers provide, the amount of information customers give, and the fact that employees know how crucial customers are to the organization and to their own jobs. At the same time, the managements have the legitimate power because it

representing the employing organization and it has the power to reward the employees, thus it will infuse conflict of roles among employees.

The confusion about employees' role on duty is likely contributed to stress in doing work. In this regard, Robert and Brian (2004) state that a problem with unspecified or overload of responsibilities and demands will lead to problems like the employee unable to prioritise tasks or perform the main tasks appropriately. The employees become overworked, confused and unable to work effectively and efficiently.

Sylvia (1995), whose study focussed on work stress and coping strategies among nurses; argues that one of the contributing factors of work stress is the role conflict. The nurses need to fulfil both the patients' needs and the nurses' standard. The nurses face the difficulties to meet the demands of the work. The workload need to be shared with smaller staff numbers which consequently caused them difficult to focus on emotional and psychological caring aspects of nursing. They need to fulfil the high nursing standards and also the patients' need.

In conclusion, there has been a number of researches stated that the role conflict leads to work stress among employees in travel agencies. This situation happens in various kinds of organization and travel agency is one of them.

### 2.3 Person-job fit

Person-job fit concept is traditionally use as a foundation to select the employees for a job (Werbel and Gilliland, 1999). During selection of employees, the concern is to find the applicants who have skills and abilities that suit with the job. It is done by determining the demand of the job through job analysis, the requisite skills, knowledge and abilities to fulfil the job.

Person-job fits concern with the determination of whether a person has the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to perform the tasks. Fatma and Kemal (2011) stated in their study that when the workers have the right skills to fulfil the demands of job, they will be able to perform at an optimum level in and thus could meet the expectations of supervisors and ultimately remain on the job. Person-job fit can also be defined as the needs of the supplies and person of the job or the abilities of a person in achieving the job demands (Edwards, 1996).

Bretz (1993) clarified that the person-job fit is individuals' congruency with the requirements of the job and his abilities to perform it. According to Blau, (1987), the term 'job' can be loosely equated to environment in some fit research. In this research, the researcher defines job as the tasks that a person is expected to accomplish and the characteristics of the tasks.



### **2.3.1 Relationship between person-job fit employees with the work stress**

According to Christina et. al (2001), the person who is not fit with the job will have a work stress and eventually leads to burnout. As the attributes of the person with the job is difficult to be aligned, then the employees will turn out to have low productivity and stressful doing his or her job.

As been stated earlier in this report, person-job fit is a person who can achieve the demands of a job. Employees who are fit with their job will be able to have a positive work outcome rather than the employees who do not. This idea has been argued by Fetma and Kemal (2011), that person-job fit is when a person achieving a good compatibility with all dimensions of work environment (organization, group, or job). It will reveal a positive outcome for both employees and organizations.

A study conducted by Edward (1991) supported that the person-job fit is able to give low job stress, motivation, job satisfaction, performance, attendance and retention among employees in the organization. The person who has a match between abilities and job demands will be able to have a job longer retention.

In a nutshell, it is believed that person-job fit can be linked to stress among employees. Thus, the relationship between person-job fit with work stress among employees in travel agencies will be studied.

## 2.4 Social support

Naturally social support is needed by everyone who loves to have companion and using them to achieve their dreams. Social support is defined as when the individual is cared for and loved, esteemed and a member of a network for mutual obligations (Sidney Cobb, 1976). In his study, he tried to to examine how social support helps to protect people in crisis from different kinds of pathological states.

Seers et. al (1983) state the concepts of social support include “helpful activities of others” and also “ease of communications”. Basically, there are two categories of social support which are the primary or secondary sources (Beehr, 1985). For the primary social support, its sources is from family and friends; and secondary social support is from the supervisor, co-workers and others whom the employee has little intimate relationships (Rashmi S. and Jogendra (2015).

According to Peggy (1995), social support is categorized as coping resource. The social support is referring to functions that performed by significant others such as family members, friends, and co-workers for the individual. Significant others can provide emotional, informational, instrumental and/ or assistance (House and Kahn, 1985). The emotional support is appeared to be much stronger influence on mental health (Dunkel-Schetter and Bennett, 1990; Wethington and Kessler, 1986).

#### **2.4.1 Relationship between social supports with work stress**

According to Sylvia (1995), the social support has been used as a coping strategy among nurses. There are two main types of social support being addressed which are the spouses or partner and the co-workers. However, most of the nurses agreed that the support from other nurses (co-workers) is the most helpful to reduce the work stress. The nurses reported that when there is traumatic incident happened at the ward, the staff will not go home, and instead they all stay back until the end of the shift and discussing with each other through their feelings.

According to a study done by Viswesvaran, Sanchez, And Fisher (1999), the social support has been proven to reduce the stressors experienced by the individuals. Wills (1985) argues that the social support from the supervisor or “boss support” is able to buffer the work stress among employees. It perceived as supportive environment to the employees. For family support, it depends on the personality of individual namely, personality hardiness, a mixture of three separate traits: commitment, control, and challenge. The individual with high hardiness found to have buffering effect from work stress when have a social support from family.

Murrell et. al (1992) stated that an employee with high job stress but strong social support turns up to be able to cope up with stress very successfully and feel little distress. On the other hand, the individual with little social and organizational support from the organization will have high distress. Communication with supervisor is also one type of social support and has a relationship with stress factors among employees (Beehr et. al, 1990).

Based on the above discussion, it is understood that the existence of social support could somehow reduce or avoid work stress among individuals. On the other side of the spectrum, the lack of social support might likely to cause or heighten the level of individuals stress. By taking this argument into account, it is proposed that social support is essential in creating the work environment that free from severe stress. Conversely, lack of social support may give a significant impact to work stress among employees in travel agencies.

## **2.5 Relationship between gender differences with work stress**

Work stress can be experienced differently from female and male employees. Previous findings discovered that gender differences have an effect to the level of work stress experienced by the employees in different organizations. Vivien and Thompson (1996), studied about the gender differences in occupational stress and coping strategies among information technology (IT) personnel in Singapore. Based on the findings, it was found that the female IT personnel was reported significantly higher scores on sources of work stress originating from “factors intrinsic to the job”, “managerial role”, “career and achievement”, “organizational structure and climate”, and “relationships with others”. Most of the female workers coping their work stress by having social support and chatting to others whereas the male workers founded dealing with their problems in a logical way and unemotional manner.

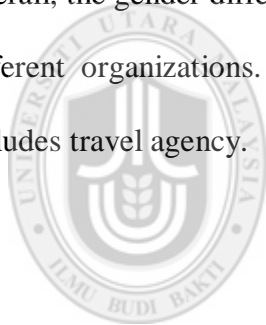
Work stress also can make someone depressed with the job. In another study done by Pablo and Immanol (2014), found out that the female workers experienced more on

occupations effect which make them more depressed rather than male workers. It is done across occupations using Labour Force Survey data from UK in 2007.

Nelson and Burke (2002) cited in Pablo and Immanol (2014), stated that female workers are more likely to suffer psychological distress because of poor paid; higher job demands also lower occupational status.

According to Sigalit and Ayala (2008), woman engineers reported higher levels of burnout than men. They argued that women feel more depressed because of lack of peer support, emotion-focused coping, and greater work-family conflict. Burnout effect is mainly comes from the work stress experienced by the workers.

Overall, the gender differences do give an impact of work stress among employees in different organizations. This situation might happen in any organizations and it includes travel agency.



**UUM**  
Universiti Utara Malaysia

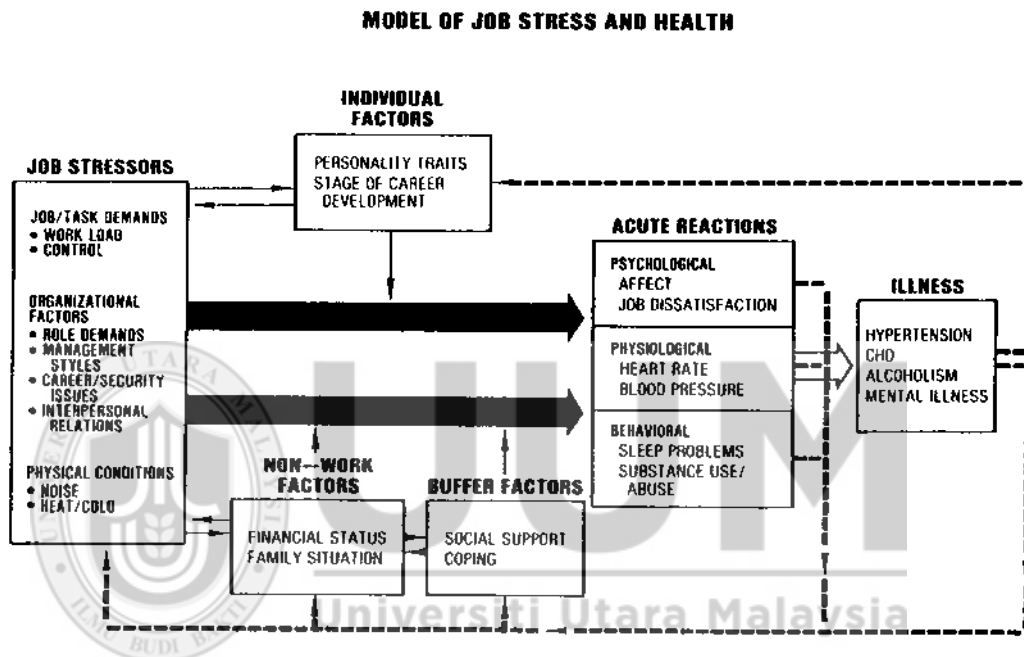
## **2.6 Underpinning theory**

### **2.6.1 Model of job stress and health**

Model of job stress and health (JSH), builds upon frameworks proposed by Caplan, Cobb, French, Harrison and Pinneau (1975), Cooper and Marshall (1976), and House (1974). The stress hazard is not the same as physical and chemical hazards as it has no specific boundaries and there is a potential for exposure to it. The model presented in Figure 2.1 contains the key features of most job stress and health models. The main point of the model is the job stressors produce acute reactions and

these can lead to some chronic illness. Based on the figure, the job stressors are listed as single category. However, they can also be divided into some categories.

Figure 2.1  
*Model of Job Stress and Health*



According to Cooper and Marshall (1976), job stressors can be divided into five main categories which are intrinsic to the job, the role in the organization, relationships, career development and organizational structure or climate. Other boxes in the figure represent the moderating factors in which the factors that influence job stressor or health relationships. The moderating factors are the personal characteristics (personality traits), non-work factors (family matters, child-rearing, financial issues, social relationships); and buffer factors (social support, coping

skills, physical exercise). These moderating factors are either help to strengthening or weakening the relationship between health outcomes and job stressors.

JSH model basically has three important features that give significant relationship towards the stress. First box is the job stressors. The job stressors are the main factors that contribute to stress among employees in any organization. The second box is the individual factors that contributing to the stress. The third box is describing about the buffer effect of the stress among employees.

Association of JSH model with the theoretical framework of this study can be seen when the researcher used three important features contributing work stress among employees in organization. The first independent variable is the role conflict in which in JSH model it is shown in the box of job stressors categories. The job stressors provided from the model is mainly come from the organizations itself. Employees would feel stressful because of their own job and also with the management of the organization. The role conflict exist when the employees unable to clarify their job scope and when the management of the organization is at the worst. Thus, model JSH supports the research framework of this study which indicates that the role conflict is exists as the job stressor among employees.

Besides, the second independent variable of the paper project is the person-job fit. Comparing with the model, person-job fit suitably explaining the individual factors box. Person-job fit in this study can be defined as the abilities, skills and knowledge that an employee has to fulfil the requirements of the job pertained by the organization. Supporting by JSH model, the individual factors box could be representing the person-job fit which also could strengthen or weaken the work stress among employees in travel agencies.

While social support in this study is made as third independent variable. Referring to the JSH model, the social support is the buffer factor to work stress. However, there are many types of social support could be studied. In this study, the focus of social support is on supervisors and co-workers support. The researcher studied whether there is significant relationship between social support and work stress among employees in travel agencies. Thus, again JSH model supports the research framework of this study.





## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter describes on how this research is conducted. It begins with the framework of the study, the hypothesis development, the operational definition, the measurement, sampling method and analysis of data. The reliability and validity of the instrument are also reported. Through this chapter, the way the data were collected, how the reliability was determined and how they were analyzed were explained.

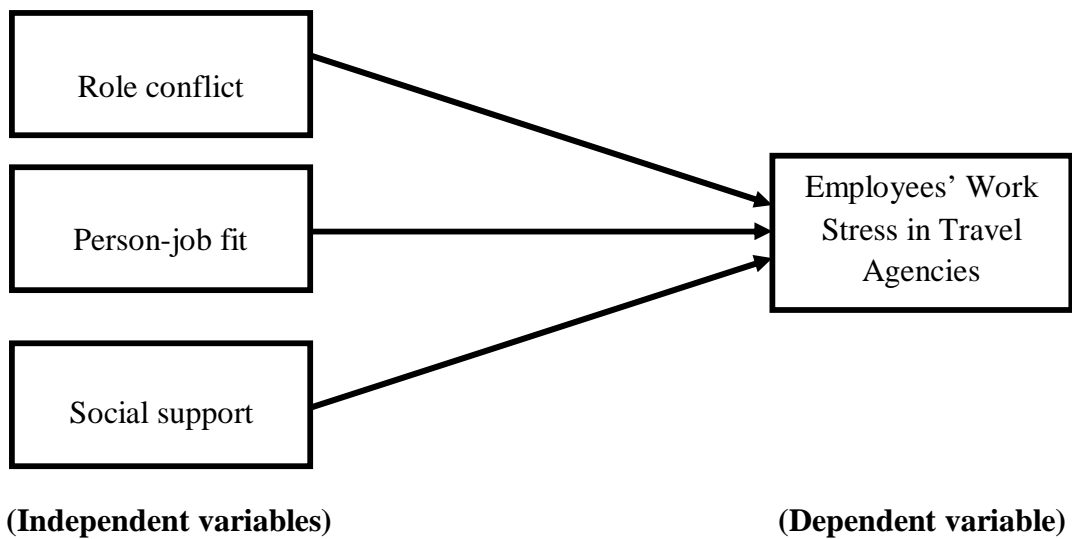


**UUM**  
Universiti Utara Malaysia

#### **3.1 Framework of the study**

This study is specifically analyzing the relationship between work stress among employees in travel agencies as a dependent variable and role conflict, person-job fit and social support as the independent variables.

Figure 3.1  
*Framework of stress among employees in travel agencies*



### 3.2 Hypotheses

Referring to the research framework and objectives of the study, the following hypotheses are tested:

H1: There is a significant relationship between role conflict and work stress among employees in travel agencies.

H2: There is a significant relationship between the person-job fit and work stress among employees in travel agencies.

H3: There is a significant relationship between social support and work stress among employees in travel agencies.

H4: There is a difference between male and female employees of travel agency in experiencing work stress.

### 3.3 Research Design

A research design should be directed towards solving the central problem of a research (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001). Research design has two basic approaches which are the qualitative and quantitative approach. The quantitative approach collects quantitative data in numeric form and is used directly to represent the characteristics of sampling. Then, these data was analysed using statistical analysis as they are in the form of numbers (Hair et al., 2007).

On the other hand, the qualitative approach utilizes qualitative data, which represents the descriptions of things that are made without directly using the number. The data are collected using unstructured interviews or observations through specific methods such as recording words, phrases and also pictures. Leedy and Ormrod (2001) stated that quantitative method is best to be used when the researcher intends to do research on relationships amongst measured variables by explaining, predicting and controlling phenomena. The qualitative research is best to be used when the researcher are studying on the nature of a phenomenon, in which it requires the point of views from participants.

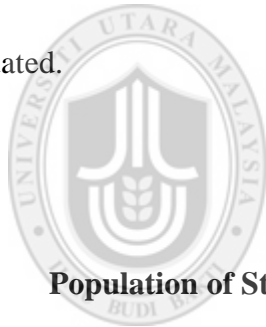
This study used quantitative research. This approach is more suitable as the hypothesis can be tested to examine relationship among variables. This study is based on the cross-sectional research design in which data is collected at a single point in time.

The study examines specific variables that influence work stress among employees in travel agencies which are; the role conflict, person-job fit and social support. This study focused on analyzing the correlation between dependent variable (DV) which

represents by work stress and independent variables (IV) which are the role conflict, person-job fit and social support. The study also used descriptive analysis to gain some information related to the demographic aspect.

### **3.4 Unit of Analysis**

The data were collected from the employees of the travel agents companies that seem to be concentrated in Kota Setar district, Kedah. These companies have registered with the Tourism Office of Kedah. The chosen travel agencies were located at Kota Setar as it is a district in Kedah where the state capital Alor Setar is situated.



**UUM**  
Universiti Utara Malaysia

### **3.5 Population of Study**

Population refers to the total group of individuals in a specific frame or boundary which is identity by the researcher on the subject of interest. With regard to this study, since the total population of travel agencies located in Kota Setar is only 151, the researcher had decided to include all of them for the purpose of achieving good response rate. Hence, in this study, the process of selective respondents through specific sampling technique is not conducted.

The process of the travel agencies selection is based on the list provided by the Office of Tourism Kedah. There are a total of 34 travel agencies with a total population of 151 employees. A total of 151 questionnaires were distributed to the

respondents and out of these numbers, 140 were returned accordingly. This represents a response rate of 93%. The list of travel agencies that participated in this study is listed in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1  
*Target population*

<b>TRAVEL AGENCIES</b>	<b>TOTAL QUESTIONNAIRES DISTRIBUTED</b>
Comfort Tours	5
Antar Holiday and Convention	10
Sas Malaysia Tours and Travel	6
V.I.P. Travel and Tours	2
Agensi Pengembaraan Asari Murni	10
Jafila Travel and Tours	6
Jagong Mas Travel	6
Dasree Travel and Tours	6
Budiman Travel and Tours	2
Artists Holidays	3
Al-Nile Tours and Travel	4
Al-Farhan Travel and Tours	4
Pancaran Matahari Travel and Tours	3
Razihan Holidays	3
Impian Sejati Travel and Tours	3
Aisar Travel and Tours	3
Persona Holidays	5
Sireh Travel and Tours	5
CT Global Travel and Tours	5
LH Lambaian Holiday Travel and Tours	4
NKE Travel and Tours	5
Intercity Travel and Tours	4
Palma Holidays	4
Raza Holidays	4
Ummi Balkis Travel and Tours	3
Al-Murtajiz Travel	2
Al-Zahabi Travel	4
Bintong Travel and Tours	8
Rayhar Travel and Tours	3
KRS Travel	3
Let's Go Vacation	6
Go True Travel	2
Zafissa Travel	6
ARJ Vacation	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>N= 151</b>

### **3.6 Questionnaire**

The researcher used primary data obtained from survey questionnaires. This is done through self-administered survey questionnaires. The questionnaires were distributed among employees in the travel agencies located in Kota Setar, Kedah. During the data collection process, the researcher ensures the respondents felt comfortable to answer questions without any pressure. This help to obtain reliable and relevant information while they are completing the questionnaire. The collected data are analyzed using specific software.

The research instrument used in this study is the closed-ended questionnaire. The questionnaires are adapted from several previous researches (details of the instrument used are discussed in the sub-section 3.8). The questionnaire is divided into five parts which are Part A, Part B, Part C, Part D and Part E. The scale used in this study is the Five-point scale. It has five options which are Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, and Strongly Agree. The following are the various sections of the questionnaire:

Part A : Demographic

Part B: Work Stress

Part C: Role conflict

Part D: Person-job fit

Part E: Social support

### 3.7 Operational definition and Measurement

Work stress can be defined as the reaction that people have when the pressure or certain demands placed on them. In this study, the work stress is measured in terms of 1) psychologically and 2) physically. The examples of questions asked related to psychologically are “I feel emotionally exhausted because of my work”, “Lately I feel lack of patience” and “Critics almost same as to attack me”. For the physical measure, the example of questions are I feel exhausted at the end of a work day”, “I feel tired when I wake up in the morning and have to put up with another work day” and “I easily get tired at work”.

The role conflict can be defined as the incompatibility of the job demands with the employees’ ability, goal, value and belief (Arif. M, 2013). In this study, the role conflict is focussing on three aspects which are 1) the policies and guideline by the company, 2) job scope and 3) upper management.

For the policies and guidelines, the example of the questions are, “I often work under incompatible policies and guidelines”, “I often have to buck a rule or policy to carry out an assignment” and “There is limited guidelines to help me accomplishing my work”. Example questions for the job scope are “I know what my responsibilities are”, “I feel certain about how much authority I have” and “The quantity of assignments undertaken by me right now is adequate”. For the upper management, the example of questions are “I am confident on how my performance being rated by my supervisor for salary increases and promotion”, “I always get opposite instructions of more than one supervisor” and “I always manage to do a job that can be accepted by one supervisor but not from another supervisor”.

The person-job fit is the congruency of the requirements of the job and the inducements provide to perform (Bretz, 1993). Without a good fit between the demands is the job and the KSAs of the person, the employees will become more stress with the work. In this study, the measures for person-job fit are; 1) skills and abilities of the employees, and 2) knowledge of employees. The example of questions for skills and abilities are, “I possess the skills and abilities to succeed at this organization”, “I believe my skills and abilities ‘match’ those required by this organization in general”, “My ability matches the characteristics of the business” and “I have the right skills and abilities to perform in my job”. For the knowledge measure, the questions are, “I have knowledge and skills that meet the company’s demands” and “My personal abilities and education provide a good match with the demands that my job places on me”.

Social support can be defined as the existence of helping relationship and the quality of the provided relationships (Leave, 1983). In this study, the measure of social support is from both; 1) supervisor and 2) co-workers. Examples of questions to measure supervisor support are, “supervisor appreciates the staff and shows consideration for the individual”, “supervisor makes sure that the individual member of staff has good development opportunities” and “supervisor gives high priority to further training and personnel planning”. For the co-workers support, the questions are, “How often do your colleagues talk with you about how well you carry out your work”, “There is a good co-operation between the colleagues at work” and “there is a good atmosphere between you and your colleagues”.



### **3.8 Instrumentation**

The details of each part are as following:

#### **Section A (Demographic)**

Section A comprises questions on respondent's background information. There are six questions in this section which are respondent's gender, age, marital status, race, length time of services and language proficiency.

#### **Section B (Work Stress)**

Section B consists of questions on the work stress perceived by the employees as dependent variable of the study. It consists of 18 questions and adopted from Jesus and Conboy (2001), Kim et. al. (1996) and Occupational Stress and Inventory Revised Edition (OSI-R) by Osipow (1998).

#### **Section C (The effect of role conflict)**

Section C consists of questions to determine whether the role conflict affecting the employees' stress in the workplace. It consists of 17 questions adopted from Rizzo, House and Lirtzman (1970).

#### **Section D (The person-job fit)**

Section D comprises of questions regarding the personality that is suitable with the nature of work in travel agencies. The questions relate to the personality with the work stress perceived by the employees. There are 10 questions in this part adopted from Lauer and Kristof-Brown (2001) and Cable and DeRue (2002).

## **Section E (The effect of social support)**

Section E consists of questions regarding whether the lacking of social support is affecting the level of stress among employees. It consists of 14 questions and adopted from Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire (COPSOQ; Kristensen, 2000; Kristensen, Hannerz, Hogh, and Borg, 2005)

### **3.9 Data Collection**

Two types of data could be used for research purpose which is primary data and the secondary data. The primary data are acquired directly from the individuals or groups whereas the secondary data was received from the organization record, government distribution or from the site (Sekaran, 2003). In this study, the data used is the primary data derived from the questionnaires distributed to the respondents who worked in travel agencies in Kota Setar, Kedah.

As mentioned earlier, the details of travel agencies that involved in this study obtained from the Office of Tourism Kedah in Kota Setar, Kedah. There are several travel agencies that also have been listed out by the Office of Tourism but were seem to be no longer in operation. The Office of Tourism Kedah is an organization that manages the license application of travel agencies, tour guides, excursion buses and tourism training institute. It is also responsible for promoting Kedah as a tourism destination.

### **3.9.1 Data Collection Procedure**

Firstly, the list of travel agencies in Kedah was provided (on researcher's request) by the Office of Tourism Kedah. After that, the data collection process began once the permission to conduct the study is granted from all of the Travel Agency companies that have been listed. The researcher gained prior permission from the authorised person of the travel agencies to ensure that the organization under study will participate in the study and provide the needed data. Additionally, the companies were also being informed about the purpose of the study and the process of data collection that are conducted ethically (with confidential assurance).

For this study, the distribution of the questionnaire was done directly where each respondent was first briefed about the purpose of the survey. Respondents were assured that all the information given will remain confidential at all times and only be used for the study only. They were not requested to identify themselves and not to put their names on the survey questionnaires.

Respondents were given a week to complete the forms. After a week, a follow-up of telephone call was made to remind respondents about returning the questionnaire.

Then, the researcher collected the data from the respondents.

### **3.10 Pre Test**

Before the questionnaires distributed for the research purpose to the respondents (employees in travel agencies in Kota Setar), pre test was conducted. The questionnaires distributed among employees in Uniutama Travel and Tours which is located at Universiti Utara Malaysia. The pre test involved five employees of this agency whom understood about the questions asked in the questionnaires and gave positive feedback. The employees agreed that the items in questionnaires survey were appropriate and understandable.

### **3.11 Data Analysis Technique**

The data of this study were analyzed using quantitative method with Statistical Package for Social Science Version 22.0 (SPSS). The collected data were tested using SPSS and the focus was on the outputs in terms of descriptive statistics, frequency distribution and the correlation analysis using the reliability test.

Frequency distributions are used to describe the respondent personal data. The collected frequencies are computed for the analysis of the respondent's demographic factors of gender, age, marital status, race, and years of service. The means value for the work stress as the dependent variable was measured. It was done to examine the level of stress among employees in the researched travel agencies.

Cronbach's Alpha was used in this study to determine the consistency of the answer given by the respondents and this confirms the reliability of items (Hayes, 1989). In

addition, the correlation among variables also described the Cronbach's alpha. The Cronbach's alpha also calculated and computed the variables in the average intercorrelation among the items which measured each of the concepts. Table 3.2 represents the value of Cronbach's Alpha with level of realibility.

Table 3.2  
*Cronbach's Alpha Value with level of reliability*

<b>Cronbach's Alpha Value</b>	<b>Level of Reliability</b>
< 0.6	Weak
0.6 to < 0.7	Moderate / Received
0.7 to < 0.8	Good
0.8 to < 0.9	Very Good
> 0.9	Strong

Source: Sekaran, U. (2006)

The acceptable Cronbach Alpha values of 0.60 and above only can be used. The item with low Cronbach Alpha values which is less than 0.59 will not be used for the analysis process because it is not reliable.

Basically, regression analysis is used to test the relationship between the dependent variable and one or more than one independent variable in this research. The purpose of this analysis is to understand about the value of the dependent variable changes when any one of the independent variable is fluctuate but the other independent variable is used to be fixed.

In order to test each of the hypotheses, simple linear regression ( $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \epsilon$ ) is employed while multiple regressions is to determine the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables. In other words, it will help to

reveal the relative importance of each of the independent variables (Sekaran and Bougie, 2009).

Multiple regression is expressed as in the following equation:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_n X_n + \varepsilon$$

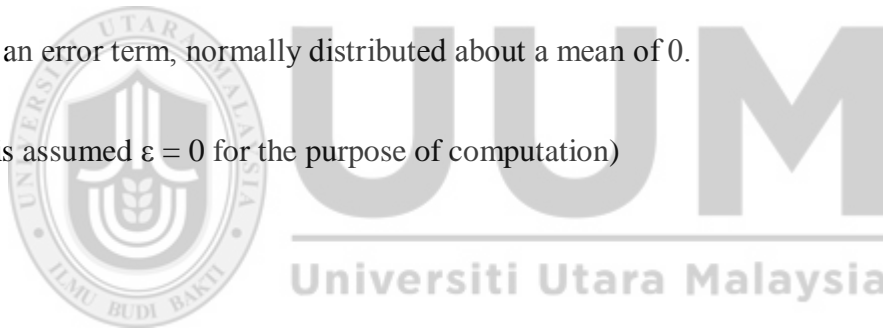
Where:  $\beta_0$  = a constant, the value of Y when all X values are zero.

$\beta_i$  = slope of the regression surface or response surface.

$\beta$  = represents the regression coefficient associated with each  $X_i$ .

$\varepsilon$  = an error term, normally distributed about a mean of 0.

(It is assumed  $\varepsilon = 0$  for the purpose of computation)



Due to the two or more independent variables used by the researcher to make a prediction towards dependent variables, the multiple regression analysis is appropriate and to be used. Multiple regression analysis was used to provide correlation results. The result of regression is the figures that determine whether independent variables have prediction power over dependent variable or not. Thus, it can be used to predict whether independent variables are able to influence the dependent variable.

t-test is used to measure the differences in experiencing stress, dependent variable, between two groups. In this study, the two groups being measured are the female and male employees. Based on the result obtained, it will predict whether there is a significant difference between female and male employees in experiencing work stress at travel agencies.

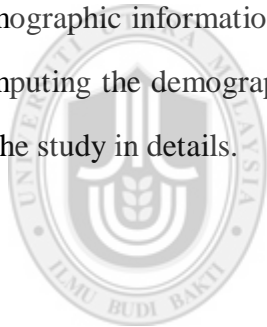


## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS

#### 4.0 Introduction

Data which were gathered from 140 employees of travel agencies (out of 151 who were selected as the respondents) were processed in accordance with the statistical requirements and eventually several informative findings were obtained. The process involved a series of analyses with the purposes of assessing the relationships of the role conflict, person-job fit and social support with work stress. While demographic information in the form of frequency and percentage were obtained by computing the demographic information. The following sections report the findings of the study in details.



UUM  
Universiti Utara Malaysia

#### 4.1 Demographic characteristics

##### 4.1.1 Gender

Respondents' gender is shown in Table 4.1. A majority of respondents are female with a frequency of 107 (76.4 per cent). There are only 33 (23.6 per cent) male respondents who had participated in this survey.

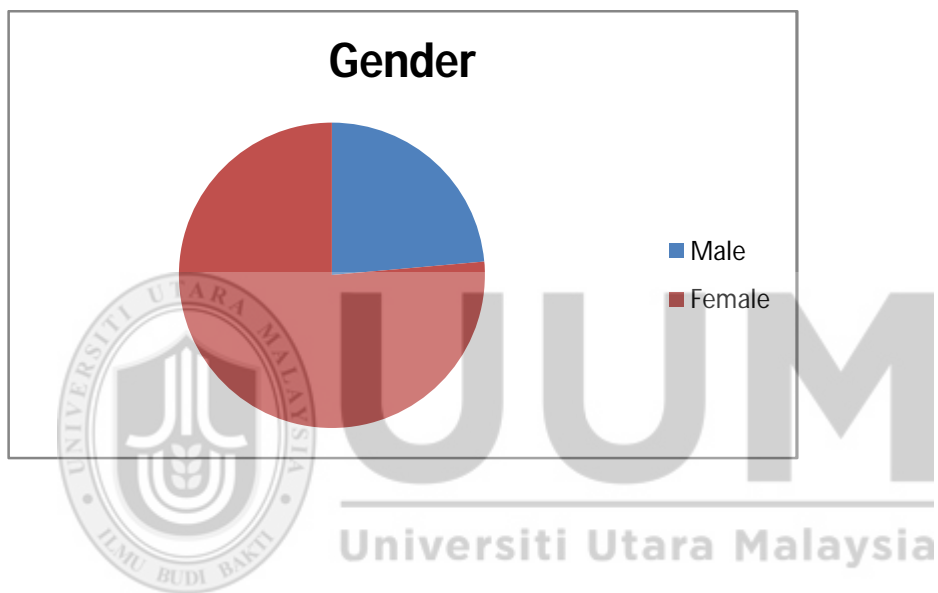
Table 4.1

*Respondents' gender*



	Frequency	Percent
Male	33	23.6
Female	107	76.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Figure 4.1  
Gender (percentage)



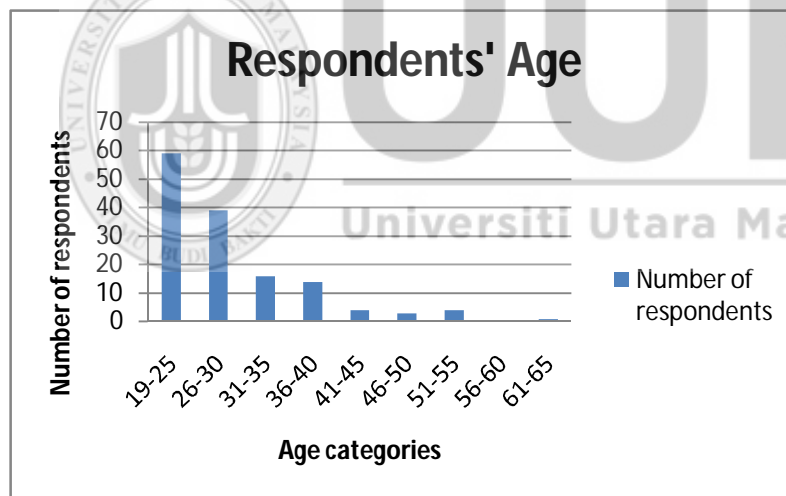
#### 4.1.2 Age

Respondents' age category is shown in Table 4.2, in which the majority of the respondents are with the age range of 19 to 25 with 42.1 per cent. The second major category is the age of 26-30 years old which comprises 27.9 per cent. The next category is age of 32 to 35 with 11.4 per cent. The age category of 36 to 40 has frequency of 14 respondents which is 10 per cent of total respondents. While those aged of 46 to 65 per cent only comprises 5.7 per cent from total respondents.

Table 4.2  
*Respondents' age categories*

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
19-25	59	42.1
26-30	39	27.9
31-35	16	11.4
36-40	14	10.0
41-45	4	2.9
46-50	3	2.1
51-55	4	2.9
60-65	1	0.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>N= 140</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Figure 4.2  
*Age of respondents*



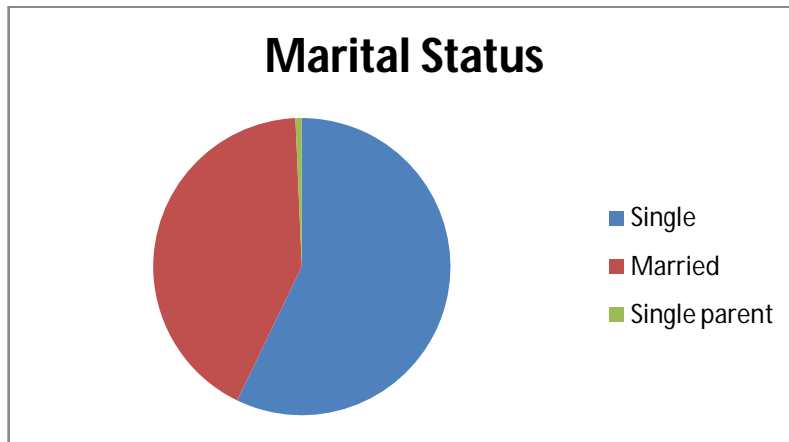
### 4.1.3 Marital Status

With regard to respondents' marital status, as is shown in Table 4.3, there are three categories of status namely single, married and single parent. Most of the respondents are single with frequency of 80 or 57.1 per cent of the total respondents. There are 59 (42.1 per cent), respondents under the category of married and only one (0.7 per cent), respondent is a single parent.

Table 4.3  
*Respondents' marital status*

	Frequency	Percent
Single	80	57.1
Married	59	42.1
Single Parent	1	0.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Figure 4.3  
*Marital Status (percentage)*



#### 4.1.4 Race

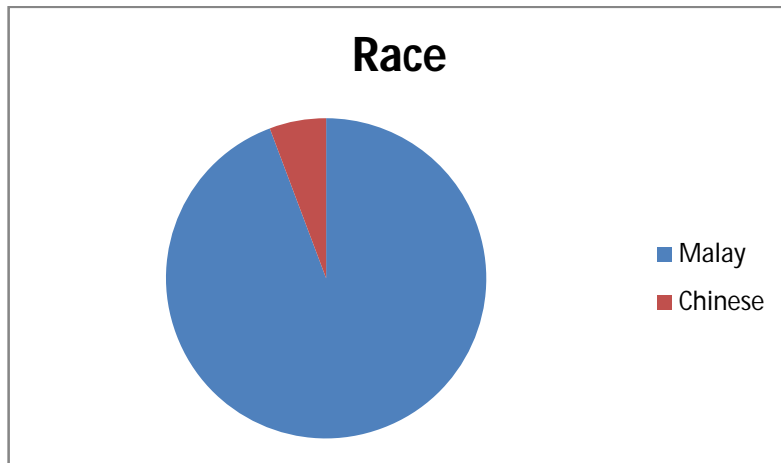
The race of respondents is shown in Table 4.4. From the table, it is very obvious that 132 (94.3 per cent) of respondents are Malay. While only 8 (5.7 per cent), respondents are Chinese.

Table 4.4  
*Respondents' race*

	Frequency	Percent
Malay	132	94.3
Chinese	8	5.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Figure 4.4

*Race (percentage)*



**UUM**  
Universiti Utara Malaysia

#### **4.1.5 Years of service**

The years of service is represented in Table 4.5. Fifty-five respondents (39.3 per cent) stated that they have been working for less than one year. Fifty-seven (40.7 per cent) respondents have been working between one to five years. While there are 22 (15.7 per cent) respondents worked six to ten years and five respondents (3.6 per cent) between 11 to 15 years. There is only one respondent who is in the service for more than 15 years.

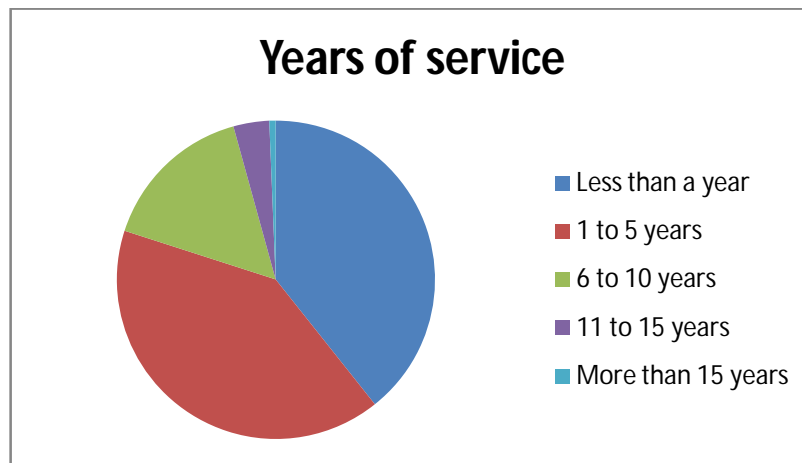
Table 4.5

*Respondents' year of services*

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Less than a year	55	39.3
1 to 5 years	57	40.7
6 to 10 years	22	15.7
11 to 15 years	5	3.6
More than 15 years	1	0.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Figure 4.5

*Years of service (percentage)*



#### 4.1.6 Descriptive Frequency of Variable

Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were obtained for the interval scale for independent and dependent variables. From the results, the means and standard deviations for all variables used in this study are indicated in Table 4.6 with all variables measured on a 5-point scale.

Table 4.6

*Descriptive Statistics of Variables*

<b>Variable name</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Work stress	140	2.239	0.584
Role conflict	140	3.315	0.473
Person-job fit	140	3.806	0.517
Social support	140	2.854	0.505

Mean is the average that measure offers a general picture of the data without unnecessarily changing one with each of the observations in the data set. While the standard deviation measures the dispersion for interval and ratio scale data, offers an index of the spread of a distribution or the variability in the data. Table 4.6 shows the involvement of 140 respondents or sample (N), the mean and standard deviation for the dependent variable work stress are 2.239 and 0.584 respectively, followed by mean and standard deviation for independent variable role conflict are 3.315 and 0.473. Next independent variable is person-job fit with mean value of 3.806 and

standard deviation 0.517, and social support with mean value of 2.854 and standard deviation 0.505.

Table 4.7

*Distribution of Data*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Skewness</b>	<b>Kurtosis</b>
Work stress	140	0.033	-0.617
Role conflict	140	1.242	6.727
Person-job fit	140	-0.300	0.927
Social support	140	-0.676	2.514

Figure 4.6

*Histogram of work stress*

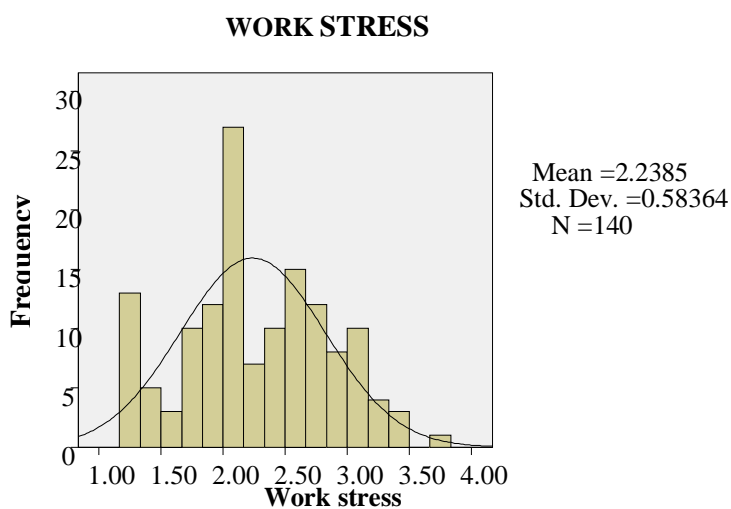




Figure 4.7

*Histogram of role conflict*

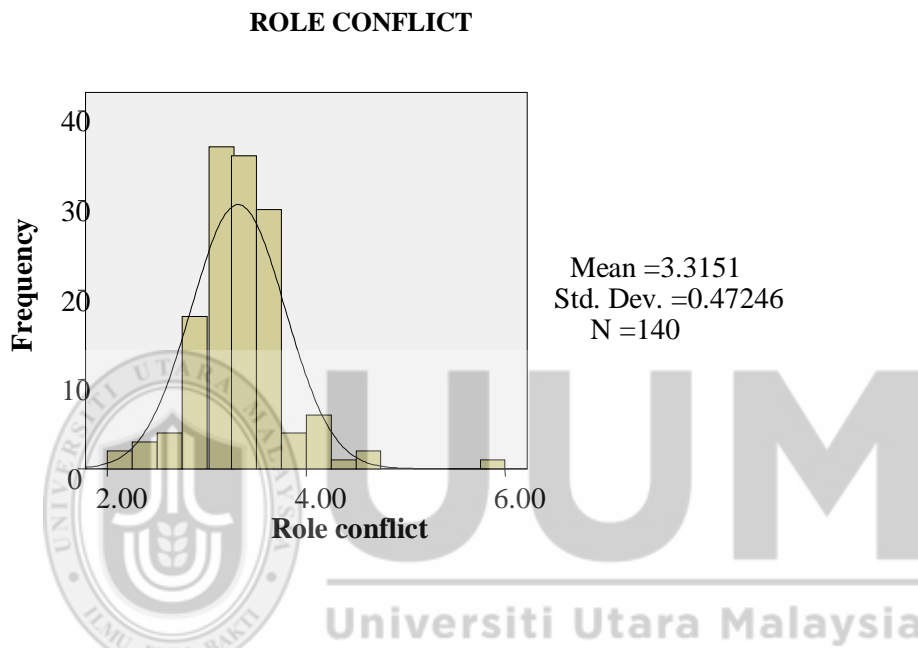


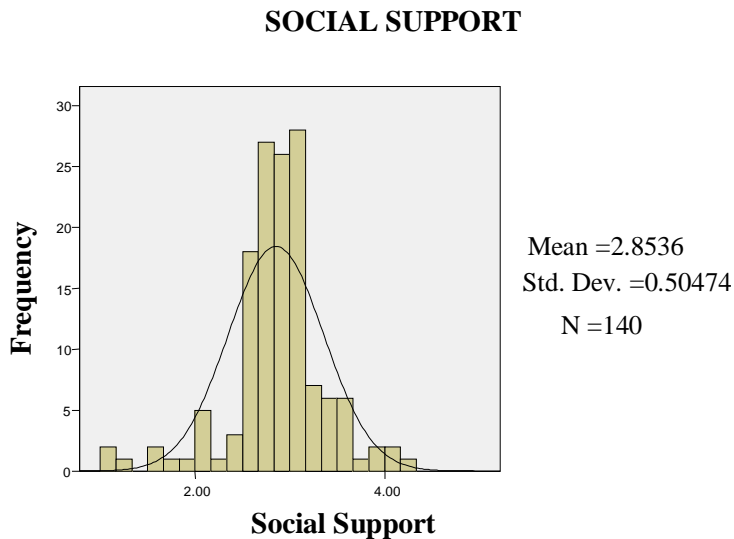
Figure 4.8

*Histogram of person-job fit*



Figure 4.9

*Histogram of social support*



With reference to Table 4.7, the dependent variable, the work stress, it has skewness of 0.033, with -0.617 kurtosis as shown in the Figure 4.6 above. The role conflict variable is one of the independent variable as can be seen from Figure 4.7 is skewed with a 1.242 and higher peak with 6.727 kurtosis. For the person-job fit which is the independent variable, the skewness is -0.3 with kurtosis 0.927. Lastly, the social support as independent variable is moderately -0.676 skewness with high peak 2.514. The kurtosis of both person-job fit and social support can be seen from Figure 4.8 and 4.9 respectively. Thus, the assumption of normality is not violated.

The above argument on the normality assumption is supported by the histograms as shown in Figure 4.7, Figure 4.8 and Figure 4.9. As what can be seen in these three histograms, the scores appear to be normally distributed. Besides that, to further determine the non-existence of normality violation, the researcher had also inspected

the normal probability plots (Q-Q plot), in Figure 4.10 and Detrended Normal Q-Q plot in Figure 4.11. A reasonably straight line in all of the Q-Q Plots and the most of the points collecting around the zero line in all of the Detrended Normal Q-Q Plots suggest a normal distribution.

The Q-Q plot and Detrended Normal Q-Q Plots done for all the variables used in the study. Figure 4.10 and 4.11 is for the work stress, the dependent variable. For another three independent variables, can be referred to Appendix 5.



Figure 4.10

*Q-Q Plot*

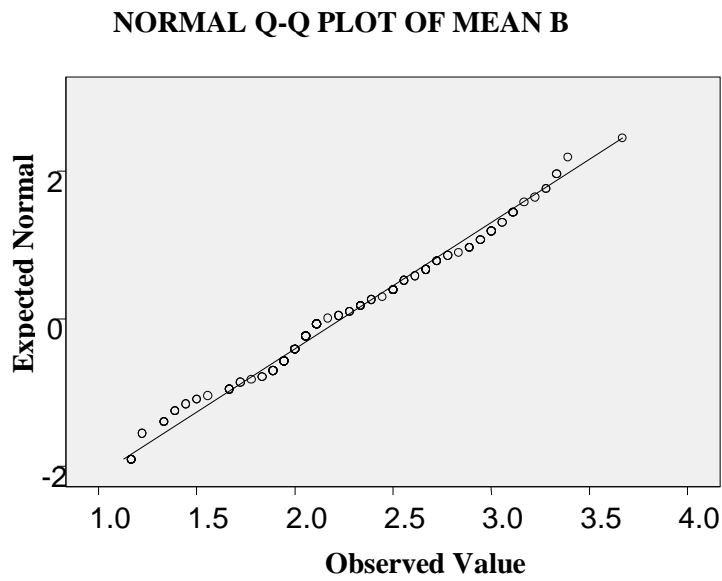
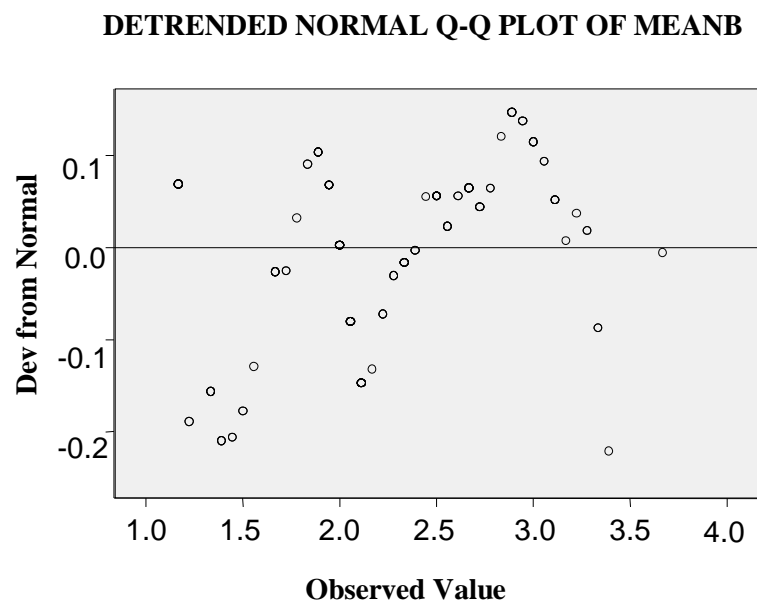


Figure 4.11

*Detrended Normal Q-Q Plots*

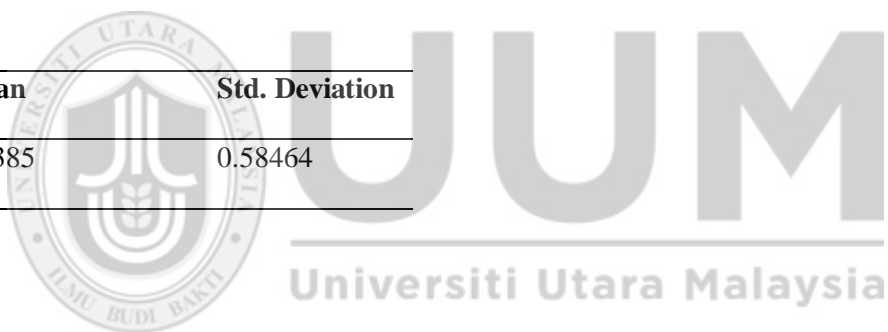


## 4.2 Level of Work Stress

The level of work stress is determined by the value of means obtained from the answers given by the respondents. Based on the Table 4.8 below, the mean value is 2.2385. It can be concluded that the work stress level of the employees are at moderate level.

Table 4.8

*Mean value of work stress*



Mean	Std. Deviation
2.2385	0.58464

## 4.3 Reliability test

Reliability is done to ensure the measures are free from errors and will yield a consistent result. The reliability coefficient which was used in this study is Cronbach's alpha. As what being mentioned earlier in this report, the best value for Cronbach alpha is closer to one and values above 0.6 could be used. Table 4.9 summarizes the reliability test of the variables.

Table 4.9

*Result of Reliability Analysis*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Number of items</b>	<b>Cronbach Alpha</b>
Work stress	18	0.916
Role conflict	17	0.620
Person-job fit	10	0.908
Social support	14	0.794

As indicated in Table 4.9, the value of Cronbach's alpha for work stress is 0.916. This result demonstrated good internal consistency reliability for the scale. Next, the result of Cronbach's alpha for the role conflict is 0.62 which is quite low but still can be accepted as per Loewenthal (2001). Meanwhile, the Cronbach's alpha of person-job fit is 0.908 which also means that the person-job fit has strong reliability. Lastly, the Cronbach's alpha for social support is 0.794 which is considered as good level of reliability.

#### **4.4 Correlation test**

In a research project that includes several variables, beyond knowing the means and standard deviations of the dependent and independent variables, researcher would

often intends to know how a variable is related to another variable (Sekaran, 2003). The information can be obtained by a Pearson Correlation Matrix.

Pearson Correlation Matrix indicates the direction, strength and the significant of the bivariate relationships of all variables in the study. Three independent variables were tested at a five percent (5 percent) level of significant.

Table 4.10

*Relationship between role conflict and work stress*

<b>Correlations</b>			
		<b>Work stress</b>	<b>Role conflict</b>
<b>Work stress</b>	Pearson	1	0.366
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	140	140
<b>Role conflict</b>	Pearson	0.366	1
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	<b>140</b>	140

The result in Table 4.10 above shows the sample and correlation of the role conflict and work stress. The significant value  $p < 0.05$ , indicates that there is statistically

significant correlation between role conflict and work stress. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 which states that: "There is a significant relationship between role conflict and work stress", is supported.

Table 4.11

*Relationship between person-job fit and work stress*

<b>Correlations</b>			
		<b>Work stress</b>	<b>Person-job fit</b>
<b>Work stress</b>	Pearson	1	-0.099
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.244
	N	140	140
<b>Person-job fit</b>	Pearson	-0.099	1
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.244	
	N	140	140

The result in Table 4.11 above shows the sample and correlation of person-job fit and work stress. The significant value  $p > 0.05$ , indicates that there is no statistically significant correlation between person-job fit and work stress. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 which states that: "There is a relationship between person-job fit and work stress", is not supported.



Table 4.12

*Relationship between social support and work stress*

<b>Correlations</b>			
		<b>Work stress</b>	<b>Social support</b>
<b>Work stress</b>	Pearson	1	-.0288**
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.001
	N	140	140
<b>Social support</b>	Pearson	-.0288**	1
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	
	N	140	140

The result in Table 4.12 above shows the sample and correlation of social support and work stress. The significant value  $p < 0.05$ , indicates that there is a statistically significant correlation between social support and work stress. While  $r = -0.288$ , denotes that a moderate negative correlation between these variables exist. Therefore, hypothesis 3 which states that: "There is a relationship between social support and work stress", is supported. In this case it is an inverse relationship.

#### 4.5 Regression Analysis

Multiple Regression analysis is a procedure to analyze associate relationships between independent variables and dependent variable. This analysis is used in this study to determine whether the independent variables explain a significant variation in the dependent variable.

Zikmund (2003) mentions that the regression analysis technique is use to predict the values of a continuous, interval-scaled or ratio-scaled dependent variable from the specific values of the independent variable. According to Burns and Bush (2000), multiple regression analysis is an expansion of bivariate regression analysis in that more than one independent variable is used in the regression equation.

As it is known, there are three independent variables (namely role-conflict, person job-fit and social support), which have been investigated to determine their influence on the dependent variable (work stress). The details of the multiple regressions' outputs are explained appropriately in the following paragraphs.

Table 4.13

*Results of Multiple Regressions in Evaluating the Relationship of Role Conflict, Person-Job Fit and Social Support with Work stress*

<b>Standardized Beta Coefficients</b>	<b><math>\beta</math></b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Significant</b>
<b>Role Conflict</b>	0.390	5.091	0.000
<b>Person-job Fit</b>	-0.109	-1.1383	0.169
<b>Social Support</b>	-0.268	-3.455	0.001
<hr/>			
<b>Coefficient of Determination</b>	<b>Model 1</b>		
<b>R</b>	0.480		
<b>R square</b>	0.231		
<b>Adjusted R square</b>	0.214		
<b>Significant value</b>	0.000		
<b>F Value</b>	13.580		

As shown in Table 4.13, the value of coefficient of determination or R-square is 0.231. Thus, it means that 23 percent of variance in work stress is explained by role-conflict, person job job-fits and social support and it is significant as indicated by *F*-value of 13.580, *p* value is less than 0.05.

Regarding the *t* and Sig. values, as shown in the Table 4.13, the values of role conflict and social support are significant at 0.05, while on the contrary, person job-fit's value is not significant. These values (outputs) appear when all independent variables are used together to predict the dependent variable of work stress.

Specifically, in scrutinizing the Coefficient Table, the researcher is interested to make a comparison between the independents in terms of their contribution to work

stress. By referring to the standardized (Beta), it shows that the largest value is role conflict which is  $\beta$  0.390, which means that role conflict contributes most to the explanation of work stress. Next is followed by social support ( $\beta$  -0.109) and person job-fit ( $\beta$  -0.268).

Table 4.14

*Unstandardized Beta Coefficients*

Unstandardized B Coefficients	$\beta$
Work stress	1.993
Role conflict	.482
Person-job fit	-.123
Social Support	-.310

Referring to the unstandardized Beta coefficient in Table 4.14, the values listed in this table could enable the researcher to construct a regression equation as follows:

$$Y = a + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3$$

Thus,

$$Y = 1.993 + 0.482 X_1 - 0.123 X_2 - 0.310 X_3$$

Where,

a = constant

Y = dependent variable (Work stress)

X<sub>1</sub> = independent variable (Role Conflict)

$X_2$  = independent variable (Person-Job Fit)

$X_3$  = independent variable (Social Support)

Table 4.15

*Collinearity statistics of independent variables*

Collinearity Statistics		
Variables	Tolerance	VIF
Role Conflict	0.963	1.038
Person-job fit	0.909	1.100
Social support	0.943	1.061

While referring to Table 4.15, the collinearity statistics shows the value of tolerance for the three independent variables are more than 0.10, and likewise the value of Variance inflation factor (VIF) for these variables are below 10. Thus, the multicollinearity assumption is not violated.

#### **4.5 Difference between male and female of respondents in experiencing work stress**

To analyze the independent group t-test, the researcher needs to decide whether to use the result of independent t-test with equal variance assumed or equal variance not assumed. This can be done by referring to Levene's test in which this test indicates that the equal variance is assumed if  $p > 0.05$  (Cavana, Delahaye, and Sakaran, 2000). Hence, in the Table 4.16 below, since the Levene's test for equality of variances shows that the variances are approximately the same ( $p > 0.05$ ), the result for t-test with equal variances is used. In this case, it is found that the value is 0.02, which is significant at 0.05. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between male and female respondents in experiencing work stress at the travel agencies.

Table 4.16  
*Levene's Test*



		<b>Levene's Test for</b>				
		<b>Equality of</b>		<b>t-test for Equality of Means</b>		
		<b>Variances</b>				
MeanB	Equal variances assumed	.280	.598	-2.443	138	.016
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.477	54.429	.016

In relation to this, as shown in Table 4.17, there is a slightly difference in terms of mean between male and female respondents. Female respondents are seemed to

experience more work stress (mean 2.3043) as compared to their male colleagues (mean 2.0253)

Table 4.17

*Comparison of work stress experienced by Female and Male*

	<b>Sex</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Std. Error Mean</b>
MeanB	Male	33	2.0253	.56213	.09785
	Female	107	2.3043	.57686	.05577



#### **4.6 Summary**

The finding is summarised based on the analysis result. The level of work stress among respondents was found to be at moderate level. Besides, there is a relationship between role conflict and work stress among employees and the inverse relationship is found between social support and work stress. On the contrary there is no relationship between person-job-fit and work stress among the respondents. Additionally, it is interesting to know that women staff are indeed suffer higher work stress than their colleagues. These findings are discussed further in the following chapter. Table 4.18 summarise the findings of this research.

Table 4.18

*The outcome of the tested hypotheses*

<b>Hypotheses</b>	<b>Analyses</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>Supported/ Not supported</b>
<b>Hypothesis 1</b> There is a moderate level of work stress among employees	Mean value	2.238	Supported
<b>Hypothesis 2</b> There is a relationship between role conflict and work stress among employees	Pearson correlation matrix	$p < 0.05$ (significant)	Supported
<b>Hypothesis 3</b> There is a relationship between person-job fit and work stress among employees	Pearson correlation matrix	$p > 0.05$ (not significant)	Not supported
<b>Hypothesis 4</b> There is a relationship between social support and work stress among employees	Pearson correlation matrix	$p < 0.05$ (significant)	Supported
<b>Hypothesis 5</b> There is a difference between male and female employees in experiencing stress	t-test	$p < 0.05$ (significant)	Supported



## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter further discusses about the findings generated from the study and the recommendations to the travel agencies (not only confine to Kota Star District), but to all travel agencies in Malaysia for their management improvement especially in terms of human resource management. These discussions are based on the objectives of the study which are stated at the beginning of this report. Apart from that, limitations and suggestions for future research are also included in this chapter and finally it ends with the overall conclusion of the study.

#### **5.1 First Objective: Level of Work Stress**

First objective of the study is to examine the level of work stress among employees in travel agencies. From the finding, it indicates that the level of work stress is at moderate level.

From previous finding by Elizabeth (2015), the study focusing on the level of work stress experienced by the employees at public sector banks and private sector banks.

The results indicates that the employees at private sector banks have a higher level of stress that employees at public sector banks due to different work environment.

Based on the above discussions, it is believed that this may be due to the fact that the travel agencies which were selected for the purpose of this study operating in the state of Kedah in which its development is not as aggressive as other states, such as Penang, Selangor and Johor. Thus, this less challenging situation might have somehow avoided the level of stress among employees in the agencies from reaching at profound level.

## **5.2 Second Objective: Relationship between Role Conflict and Work Stress**

Second objective is to examine the relationship between role conflict and work stress among employees in travel agencies. From the finding, it is indicated that role conflict gives the strongest stressor among the employees. It can be concluded that there is a positive relationship between role conflict and work stress as the correlation value is 0.366 at 0.05 significant level (refer Table 4.10, Chapter 4).

The finding of this study is consistent with several previous findings such as a finding by Sylvia (1995), on work stress among nurses reveals that they need to fulfil the demands from both the patients and also their standard. Consequently, what can be concluded is that the role conflict gives a positive relationship to work stress among nurses. Besides, there is also a consistency of the finding of this study with the study by Bettina (2006), who also found that role conflict being a contributor to emotional exhaustion among health care staff.

Based on the finding as discussed above, the management needs to rectify the role conflicts among employees that occur in their respective companies. In the first place

the managers or owners need to comprehend the actual roles that should be assigned to the staff. These are specific (or core), roles or jobs which become the staff's responsibility to perform in accordance to the company's rules and procedures. Other than the specific roles (that is non-core roles), these roles must not be made as a mandatory to the staff otherwise it could not only cause work stress to them but also might has legal implications. However, these roles can be assigned to the staff if they are willing to take them (the roles) on voluntary basis.

### **5.3 Third Objective: Relationship between Person-Job Fit and Work Stress**

The third objective of the study is to investigate the relationship between person-job fit and work stress among employees in travel agencies. Based on the finding, the person-job fit has no relationship to work stress.. It is proven by the correlation value obtained in previous chapter of -0.099 (refer Table 4.11, Chapter 4).

The finding is inconsistent with previous findings such as Jiajin et.al (2013), finding in which they found that the person-job fit is related to burnout and the finding by Lu-Mingand Tsu-Wei Yu(2016), which shows that the poor person-job fit would increase sales people's intention to quit. The misfit of person and job will leads to dissatisfaction and eventually to burnout.

This finding clearly shows that job-fit is not a matter in the context of employees of travel agency in Kedah. This could be due to the nature of the job which is not critical (especially in terms of safety and health), in performing the tasks.

Be that as it may, it is still important for the management of travel agency to select an employee who fit with the job to be employed to ensure the work stress could at least be lowered if not avoided.

#### **5.4 Fourth Objective: Relationship between Social Support and Work Stress**

The fourth objective of the study is to examine the relationship between social support and work stress among employees. The social support has negative relationship with work stress as indicates in the result of correlation value of -0.288 (refer Table 4.13, Chapter 4). It can be concluded the lower the social support among employees, the work stress would be increased.

According to Anderson et. al (2002) and Carlson and Perrewe (1999), the supervisors' support may help to make one to be less stressful by providing emotional support, greater control over one's situation and instrumental aid. Thus, social support has been found by previous study to lower the work stress among employees.

In addressing the issue of social support among the important things that need to be highlighted is the creation of sense of caring. Caring society that has been promoting by the government all the while should be adopted in workplace environment. This is because the behavior of caring that an individual possesses such as empathy, consideration and other caring behavior could enhance the quality of life and well being among employees.

## **5.5 Fifth Objective: Relationship between Gender Differences in Experiencing Work Stress**

The last objective of this study is to examine the relationship between gender and work stress among employees. The researcher found that there is a significant difference between genders towards work stress. Based on the analysis result, it can be concluded the work stress experienced by the female and male respondents were significantly different. As the means value of female respondents is higher than the male respondents, it reveals that the female respondents are more stressful than male respondents (refer means value in Table 4.17, Chapter 4).

The same finding is shared by Ritsa and Cary (2003), who report that there were significant differences according to gender in mental health, physical health and job satisfaction. The female employees feel more stressful than male employees as they encounter problems at the home and work interface. In reality, it can be said that female employees (especially married), shoulder more household responsibility and this caused them to be more stressful at work rather than their male colleagues. In relation to this, appropriate action should be taken by the management in order to balance work demand of workplace and home demand faced by their female employees.

## **5.5 Limitations**

There are some limitations in this study. One of them is the scope of the study is rather small and this may somehow affects the generalization if the findings. The bigger the sample size, the higher the ability of generalization will be. In this regard, the study will become more valid if all travel agencies registered in Malaysia participate in the study. However, time constraint had deprived this study to widen its scope.

In addition, another limitation that can be seen is in terms of the unwillingness of the employees to answer all the questions given. This happened due to their busyness as they need to prioritize other important tasks especially serving the customer. Perhaps some of them, because they do not want to dishearten the researcher, had answered the questions, but may simply mark without even read in the research questions. Therefore it might affect the accuracy of information.

Finally, in discussing the limitations of the study, the misinterpretation of the survey questions by the employees is another issue. Respondents have varied of education background. Even though the questionnaires were posed in both Malay and English, some respondents misunderstood or even did not understand the questions. This may also affect the accuracy and validity of the results.

## **5.6 Suggestions for future research**

For future study, it will be interesting to study the issue of social support based on different perspectives. Since this study only focused on social support from the supervisors and co-workers, future research should encompass a detail study on others type of social support such as the spouses and family. Future study can also be

done to investigate whether or not social support has a moderating effect on the relationship between the independent variable/s and dependent variable of work stress.

Lastly but not least, the scope of study on the issue of stress among employees should be widen so that it will cover more geographical areas. The involvement of the areas such as Penang, Klang valley, Shah Alam, Johor Bahru and others will be more interesting as these areas besides being densely populated, they are known for their active business activity. Thus, any businesses operating in these areas will face more challenge and this may cause their employees prone to stress.



As a conclusion, the study indicated that there was a significant correlation between role conflict, and social support with work stress among employees in travel agencies. However, the role conflict has the strongest impact on work stress among employees. On the other hand, the independent variable of person-job fit is not significant to work stress among employees. Accordingly, this study through the establishment of its theoretical framework has contributed to the knowledge world by filling the literature's gap as research pertaining to the issue of work stress among employees of travel agency is still minimal.

In terms of practical significance, this study may make the owner and management of travel agency to realize the necessity to recognize factors of work stress among

employees as this psychological phenomenon may affect their performance and productivity. By recognizing the stressors, a suitable training and guidance could be given to the selected employees and the work environment also could be improved in order to help employees to have a better workplace.

On top of that, this study is able to provide information that female employees at the travel agencies experienced more stress as compared to their male coworkers. The managers and the owners of the companies should consider in terms of how to minimize the occurrence of stress amongst this group of employees especially in the current workforce landscape whereby the numbers of female workers are tremendously increased.

Suitable training on motivation, stress management, self-development, to name few is among the alternatives that can be taken into account.

Hopefully, this study would be able to help service oriented companies especially travel agencies in heightening their level of performance through their employees' work quality enhancement. In a developing country such as Malaysia, tourism industry plays a vital role to help improving Malaysia's economy. It is essential to focus on employees well being as they are the one who will help to accentuate Malaysia's reputation in terms of world tourist destination.



## REFERENCES

- Aktaş, M. (2014). Moderating effect of idiocentrism and allocentrism on person-organization person-job fit and work attitudes relationship. *Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal*, 21(3), 290–305.
- Anderson, S. E., Coffey, B. S., and Byerly, R. T. (2002). Formal Organizational Initiatives and Informal Workplace Practices: Links to Work-Family Conflict and Job-Related Outcomes. *Journal of Management*, 28(6), 787-810.
- Andereck, K. L., Valentine, K. M., Knopf, R. C., and Vogt, C. A. (2005). Residents' perceptions of community tourism impacts. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 32(4), 1056–1076.
- Ap, J., and Wong, K. K. F. (2001). Case study on tour guiding: Professionalism, issues and problems. *Tourism Management*, 22(5), 551–563.
- Battour, M. M., Battor, M. M., and Ismail, M. (2012). The mediating role of tourist satisfaction: A study of Muslim tourists in Malaysia. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, 29(3), 279–297.
- Beehr, T. A., and Newman, J. E. (1978). Job Stress, Employee Health, And Organizational Effectiveness: A Facet Analysis, Model, And Literature Review. *Personnel Psychology*, 31(4), 665–699.
- Blau, G. J. (1987). Using a person-environment fit model to predict job involvement and organizational commitment. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 30(3), 240–257.
- Boles, J. S., and Babin, B. J. (1996). On the front lines: Stress, conflict, and the customer service provider. *Journal of Business Research*, 37(1), 41–50.
- Bretz, J., Robert D., Rynes, S. L., and Gerhart, B. (1993). Recruiter perceptions of applicant fit: Implications for individual career preparation and job search behavior. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 43(3), 310–327.
- Buhalis, D. (2001). Tourism Distribution Channels: Practices And Processes. *Tourism Distribution Channels: Practices, Issues And Transformations*, 7-32.
- Cable, D. M., and DeRue, D. S. (2002). The Convergent And Discriminant Validity Of Subjective Fit Perceptions. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87(5), 875-884.
- Caplan, R.D., Cobb, S., French, J.R.P., Van Harrison, R. and Pinneau, SR. (1975). Job Demands and Worker Health. *HEW Publication No. (NIOSH)*, 75-160, Washington D.C.

- Carlson, D. S. (1999). The role of social support in the Stressor-Strain relationship: An examination of work-family conflict. *Journal of Management*, 25(4), 513–540.
- Choi, H. C., and Sirakaya, E. (2006). Sustainability indicators for managing community tourism. *Tourism Management*, 27(6), 1274–1289.
- Chung, B. G., and Schneider, B. (2002). Serving multiple masters: Role conflict experienced by service employees. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 16(1), 70–87.
- Christodoulidou, N., Connolly, D. J., and Brewer, P. (2010). An Examination Of The Transactional Relationship Between Online Travel Agencies, Travel Meta Sites, And Suppliers. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 22(7), 1048–1062.
- Cobb, S. (1976). Presidential address-1976. Social support as a moderator of life stress. *Psychosomatic medicine.*, 38(5), 300–14.
- Cohen, S., and Wills, T. A. (1985). Stress, Social Support, And The Buffering Hypothesis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 98(2), 310–357.
- Cooper, C. L., Rout, U., and Faragher, B. (1989). Mental Health, Job Satisfaction, And Job Stress Among General Practitioners. *BMJ*, 298(6670), 366–370.
- Cooper, C. L., and Marshall, J. (1976). Occupational Sources Of Stress: A Review Of The Literature Relating To Coronary Heart Disease And Mental Ill Health. *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, 49(1), 11–28.
- Dana, L.P. and Vignali, D. (1999). British Airways plc. *International Marketing Review*, 16 (4/5), 278-90.
- Deery, M., Jago, L., and Fredline, L. (2012). Rethinking Social Impacts Of Tourism Research: A New Research Agenda. *Tourism Management*, 33(1), 64–73.
- Dewe, P. J., O’Driscoll, M. P., and Cooper, C. L. (2012). Theories of Psychological Stress at work. *Handbook of Occupational Health and Wellness*.
- Duffy, A. (2015). Friends and fellow travelers: Comparative influence of review sites and friends on hotel choice. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology*, 6(2), 127–144.
- Dunkel-Setter, C. and Benett T. L. (1990). Differentiating the Cognitive and Behavioral Aspects of Social Support. *Social Support: An International View*. New York: Wiley, 267-96
- Edwards, J.R. (1991). Person-job fit: A conceptual integration, literature review, and methodological critique. In *International Review of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*; Cooper, C.L., Robertson, I.T., Eds.; John Wiley and Sons Ltd: New York, NY, USA, 6, 283–357.

Edwards, J.R. (1996). An examination of competing versions of the person-environment fit approach to stress. *Academy of Management Journal*, 39, 292-339.

Elloy, D. F., and Smith, C. R. (2003). Patterns of stress, work-family conflict, role conflict, role ambiguity and overload among dual-career and single-career couples: An Australian study. *Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal*, 10(1), 55-66.

Fallah Ebrahimi, Z., Wei Chong, C., and Hosseini Rad, R. (2014). TQM practices and employees' role stressors. *International Journal of Quality and Reliability Management*, 31(2), 166-183.

Flin, R. H. (1996). *Sitting In The Hot Seat: Leaders And Teams For Critical Incident Management*. New York: Wiley, John and Sons

Flin, R., Salas, E., Strub, M. and Martin, L. (1997). *Decision Making Under Stress*. Ashgate, Aldershot

Ganster, D.C., Schaubroeck, J. (1991). Work Stress And Employee Health. *Journal of Management*. 17, 235-271.

Grandey, A. A., Dickter, D. N., and Sin, H.-P. (2004). The Customer Is Not Always Right: Customer Aggression and Emotion Regulation of Service Employees. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 25(3), 397-418.

Grol, R., Mokkink, H., Smits, A., Van Eijk, J., Beek, M., Mesker, P., and Mesker-Niesten, J. (1985). Work Satisfaction of General Practitioners And The Quality Of Patient Care. *Family Practice*, 2(3), 128-135.

Han, H., and Hyun, S. S. (2012). An Extension of The Four-Stage Loyalty Model: The Critical Role Of Positive Switching Barriers. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, 29(1), 40-56.

Haralambopoulos, N., and Pizam, A. (1996). Perceived Impacts Of Tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 23(3), 503-526.

Hennig-ThurauThorsten (2004). Customer Orientation of Service Employees. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 15(5), 460-478.

House, J. S. (1974). Occupational Stress And Coronary Heart Disease: A Review And Theoretical Integration. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 15(1), 12.

House James S. and Robert L.Kahn. (1985). Measures and Concepts of Social Support. *Social Support and Health*, Orlando, FL:Academic Press, 83-108.

Hurrell, J.J. Jr and Murphy, L.R. Psychological job stress. (1992) W.N. (Ed.), *Environmental and Occupational Medicine*, 2nd ed., Little Brown and Company, Boston, MA.

Kahn, R. L. (1964). *Organizational Stress: Studies In Role Conflict And Ambiguity*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Karasek, R. A., and Theorell, T. (1990). *Healthy Work: Stress, Productivity, And The Reconstruction Of Working Life*. New York: Basic Books.

Katircioglu, S. T. (2009). Revisiting The Tourism-Led-Growth Hypothesis For Turkey Using The Bounds Test And Johansen Approach For Co integration. *Tourism Management*, 30(1), 17–20.

Kerry Fairbrother James Warn, (2003). Workplace dimensions, stress and job satisfaction. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 18(1), 8 – 21.

Khattak, M. A., ain, Q., and Iqbal, N. (2013). Impact of role ambiguity on job satisfaction, mediating role of job stress. *International Journal of Academic Research in Accounting, Finance and Management Sciences*, 3(3), 771-722.

Kim, S.W., J.L. Mueller, C.W. and Watson, T.W. (1996). The Determinants of Career Intent among physicians at a US Air Force Hospital. *Human Relations*. 49, 947-76.

Klein, G. (1996). The effect of acute stressors on decision making'. J. and Salas, E. (Eds), *Stress and Human Performance*, Lawrence Erlbaum, Hillsdale, NJ.

Koo, C., Chung, N., Kim, D. J., and Hlee, S. (2016). The Impact Of Destination Websites And Cultural Exposure: A Comparison Study Of Experienced And Inexperienced Travelers. *International Journal of Tourism Cities*, 2(1), 1–16.

Krejcie R. V. and Morgan D.W. (1970). Determining Sample Size For Research Activities. *Educational And Psychological Measurement*, 30, 607-610.

Krohne, H. W. (2001). Stress and Coping Theories. *The International Encyclopedia of The Social And Behavioral Sciences*, 22, 15163-15170.

Kristensen, T. S., Hannerz, H., Høgh, A., and Borg, V. (2003). The Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire—a tool for the assessment and improvement of the psychosocial work environment. *Scand J Work Environ Health*, 31(6):438–449.

Kumar Madupalli, R., and Poddar, A. (2014). Problematic customers and customer service employee retaliation. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 28(3), 244–255.

Lauver, K. J., and Kristof-Brown, A. (2001). Distinguishing between employees' perceptions of person-job and person-organization fit. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 59,454–470

Law, R., Leung, R., Lo, A., Leung, D., and Fong, L. H. N. (2015). Distribution Channel In Hospitality And Tourism. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 27(3), 431–452.

Lazarus, R.S. and Folkman, S., (1984). *Stress, Appraisal, and Coping*. Springer Publishing Company. New York, NY.

Leavy, R.L. (1983). Social Support And Psychological Disorder: A Review. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 11(1), 3-21.

Leedy, P. D., and Ormrod, J. E. (2001). *Practical research: Planning and design*. 7th ed.. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.

Lim, V. K. G., and Teo, T. S. H. (1996). Gender Differences In Occupational Stress And Coping Strategies Among IT Personnel. *Women in Management Review*, 11(1), 20–28.

Loewenthal, K.M. (2001). *An Introduction to Psychological Test and Scales*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.. Psychological Press, London.

McGehee, N., Andereck, K. and Vogt, C. (2002). An Examination Of Factors Influencing Resident Attitudes Toward Tourism In Twelve Arizona Communities. *33rd Annual Travel and Tourism Research Association Conference, Arlington, VA*.

McNeely, S. (1995). Stress And Coping Strategies In Nurses From Palliative, Psychiatric And General Nursing Areas. *Employee Counselling Today*, 7(5), 11–13.

McShane, S. L., and Von Glinow, M. A. (2003). *Organizational Behavior And Management: Emerging Realities For The Workplace Revolution*. 2nd Ed., New York: McGraw Hill.

Mellor, N., Mackay, C.J., Packham, C., Jones, R., Palferman., D., Webster, S. and Kelly, P. (2011). Management Standards' And Work-Related Stress In Great Britain: Progress On Their Implementation. *Safety Science Journal Special Issue*, 49 (7), 1040-6.

Nasurdin, A. M., Ramayah, T., and Beng, Y. C. (2006). Organizational structure and organizational climate as potential predictors of job stress: Evidence from Malaysia. *International Journal of Commerce and Management International Journal of Commerce and Management*, 16(2), 116-129.

Nelson D.L., and Simmons B.L. (2003). Health Psychology and Work Stress: A more positive approach. In J. C. Quick and L. Tetrick (Eds.). *Handbook of Occupational Health Psychology*. Washington DC, 92-117.

Nur Iplik, F., Can Kilic, K., and Yalcin, A. (2011). The Simultaneous Effects Of Person-Organization And Person-Job Fit On Turkish Hotel Managers. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 23(5), 644–661.

Nusair Khaldoun, Hua, N., and Li, X. (2010). A Conceptual Framework Of Relationship Commitment: E-Travel Agencies. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology*, 1(2), 106–120.

- O'Driscoll, M. P., and Beehr, T. A. (1994). Supervisor behaviors, role stressors and uncertainty as predictors of personal outcomes for subordinates. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 15(2), 141–155.
- Odio, M. A., Walker, M., and Kim, M. (2013). Examining the stress and coping process of mega-event employees. *International Journal of Event and Festival Management*, 4(2), 140–155.
- Orasanu, J. and Backer, P. (1996). Stress and military performance. J. and Salas, E. (Eds), *Stress and Performance*, Lawrence Erlbaum, Hillsdale, NJ.
- Osipow, S. H., and Spokane, A. R. (1998). Occupational stress inventory-revised. *Odessa, FL: Psychological*, 1-15.
- Öz, M. (2015). Social Media Utilization Of Tourists For Travel-Related Purposes. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 27(5), 1003–1023.
- Pastiu, C., Muntean, A., Moisa, C., and Maican, S. (2014). The Role Of Travel Agencies In Tourism Scientific paper. *Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management in Opatija*. 327–337.
- Rizzo, J. R., House, R. J., and Lirtzman, S. I. (1970). Role conflict and ambiguity in complex organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 15(2), 150.
- Sanchez-Cañizares, S., and Castillo-Canalejo, A. M. (2015). A Comparative Study Of Tourist Attitudes Towards Culinary Tourism In Spain And Slovenia. *British Food Journal*, 117(9), 2387–2411.
- Sahadev, S., Seshanna, S., and Purani, K. (2014). Effects of competitive psychological climate, work-family conflict and role conflict on customer orientation. *Journal of Indian Business Research*, 6(1), 70–84.
- Schuler, R. S. (1980). Definition and Conceptualization of Stress In Organizations. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 25(2), 184–215.
- Sekaran, U. (2003). *Research Methods for Business. A Skill Building Approach*. 4th ed.. NY: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
- Sekaran, U. S., Cavana, R. Y., Delahaye, B. L., and Delahaye., B. L. (2001). *Applied business research: Qualitative and quantitative methods*. United States: John Wiley and Sons.
- Selye, H. (1976). *Stress in Health and Disease*, Butterworths, London.
- Sutherland, V. J. (1995). Stress and The New Contract For General Practitioners. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 10(3), 17–28.
- Svari, S., and Erling Olsen, L. (2012). The Role of Emotions in Customer Complaint Behaviors. *International Journal of Quality and Service Sciences*, 4(3), 270–282.

Tamara, G., Bojana, K., and Mirjana, P. (2014). Employees' Satisfaction in Travel Agencies. *African Journal of Business Management*, 8(14), 540–550.

Tseng, L.-M., and Yu, T.-W. (2016). How Can Managers Promote Salespeople's Person-Job Fit? *The Learning Organization*, 23(1), 61–76.

Turan Katircioglu, S., Mehtap-SmadiSalime, Kiliç, C., and Ünlücan, D. (2012). Service Quality and University Students' Satisfaction on the Travel Agencies. *International Journal of Quality and Service Sciences*, 4(3), 299–311.

Varca, P. E. (1999). Work Stress and Customer Service Delivery. *Journal Of Services Marketing*, 13(3), 229–241.

Westman, M. (1992). Moderating effect of decision latitude on stress-strain relationship: Does organizational level matter? *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 13(7), 713–722.

Westman, M., and Eden, D. (1992). Excessive Role Demand and Subsequent Performance. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 13(5), 519–529.

World Tourism Organization Part I Designing the Tourism Satellite Account (Tsa). (2002).

(UNWTO). (2009). Understanding Tourism: Basic Glossary. *World Tourism Organization*, 1–17.

Wu, C. H., Ho, G. T. S., Lam, C. H. Y., Ip, W. H., Choy, K. L., and Tse, Y. K. (2016). An online niche-market tour identification system for the travel and tourism industry. *Internet Research*, 26(1), 167–185.

Yagil, D., Luria, G., and Gal, I. (2008). Stressors and resources in customer service roles. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 19(5), 575–595.

Zhang, Z. (2004). Organizing customers: Japanese travel agencies marketing on the Internet. *European Journal of Marketing*, 38(9/10), 1294–1303.