



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

***JOB STRESS AND ITS DETERMINANTS AMONG ACADEMIC STAFF IN  
A MALAYSIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITY***

**NOR AMALINA BINTI MUHAMAD ZAKI**

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**JOB STRESS AND ITS DETERMINANTS AMONG ACADEMIC STAFF IN A  
MALAYSIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITY**

By

**NOR AMALINA BINTI MUHAMAD ZAKI**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra  
Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of  
Science**

**August 2016**

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in  
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## **JOB STRESS AND ITS DETERMINANTS AMONG ACADEMIC STAFF IN A MALAYSIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITY**

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**August 2016**

**Chair: Huda Zainuddin, PhD**  
**Faculty: Medicine and Health Sciences**

**Background:** Job stress occurs when there is a conflict between the workplace or workload and an individual's ability to cope with the situation. There are plenty of studies on job stress among academic staff were conducted, but most of the time, the higher education been neglected and ignored from the study. Academic staff of higher education were believed to be stress free, but recently, researchers found that there is increase of job stress level among academic staff of higher education. **Objective:** The objective of this study is to determine job stress and its determinants among academic staff in Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang. **Methodology:** This is a cross-sectional study and it was conducted in Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang. Systematic sampling method was used to select the subjects. A total of 421 permanent local lecturers participated in this study. Ethical approval was obtained from Ethics Committee for Research involving Human Subjects of Universiti Putra Malaysia (JKEUPM), and written consent was obtained from all participants. Selected lecturers were given NIOSH Generic Job Stress Questionnaire and The Workplace Stress Questionnaire; and were given 1 to 2 weeks to complete and return the questionnaire. **Result:** The study shows that 6.2% of the respondents had severe job-related stress and most of them (54.6%) reported moderate job-stress. There were 59.4% of the respondents who reported with job stress were female while 40.6% of the respondents who reported with job stress were male. Most (60.5%) of the respondents who reported with job stress were between 26 to 40 years old (60.5%). About 85.2% of the respondents who reported with job stress were married and 85.2% of them also reported to have children to be take care of. Most of the respondents with job stress (49.2%) reported to have to work between 45 to 60 hours per week. When tested singly, gender, hours of work, workload and responsibility at workplace, and social support from supervisor were significantly related with

job stress where  $p < 0.05$ . The Binary logistic regression showed that hours of work AOR (45 to 60 hours per week = 2.339; >60 hours per week = 1.174), 95% CI lower (45 to 60 hours per week = 1.287; >60 hours per week = 0.680), 95% CI upper (45 to 60 hours per week = 4.253; >60 hours per week = 2.029), workload at workplace and responsibility at workplace (AOR = 1.190, 95% CI lower = 1.098, 95% CI upper = 1.291) are significantly related to job stress. **Conclusion and recommendation:** Hours of work, workload and responsibility at workplace are the determinants of job stress among academic staff in Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang. University management should plan stress prevention program for lecturers. Further studies investigate further on these determinants. A cohort study recommended for a more conclusive result.

Keywords: Job stress, Academic staff, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Cross-sectional, Determinants

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia  
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Sarjana Sains

## TEKANAN PEKERJAAN DAN PENYEBABNYA DI KALANGAN TENAGA PENGAJAR DI UNIVERSITI AWAM MALAYSIA

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**Latar belakang:** Tekanan pekerjaan berlaku apabila wujudnya konflik di antara tempat kerja atau bebanan kerja dan kebolehan seseorang untuk mengawal situasi. Banyak kajian ke atas tenaga pengajar telah dijalankan, akan tetapi, tenaga pengajar di peringkat pengajian tinggi tidak dihiraukan dan dipinggirkan pada kebanyakan masa. Tenaga pengajar di peringkat pengajian tinggi dipercayai tidak mempunyai sebarang tekanan, akan tetapi, baru-baru ini beberapa pengkaji telah menjumpai kenaikan kadar tekanan pekerjaan di kalangan tenaga pengajar di peringkat pengajian tinggi. **Objektif:** Objectif kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji tekanan pekerjaan dan factor yang berkaitan di kalangan tenaga pengajar di Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang. **Metodologi:** Ini adalah kajian keratan rentas dan dijalankan di Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang. Persampelan sistematik telah digunakan untuk memilih subjek. Seramai 421 orang tenaga pengajar kekal mengambil bahagian di dalam kajian ini. Kelulusan etika telahpun didapatkan dari Komuniti Etika dan Kajian melibatkan Manusia, Universiti Putra Malaysia (JKEUPM), dan kebenaran bertulis telahpun didapatkan dari peserta. Tenaga pengajar yang terpilih diberikan set kaji selidik, 'NIOSH Generic Job Stress Questionnaire' dan 'The Workplace Stress Questionnaire'; dan diberi masa selama 1 hingga 2 minggu untuk melengkapkan borang kaji selidik tersebut dan memulangkan kembali kepada penyelidik. **Keputusan:** Data yang normal ini akan dikaji menggunakan 'chi-square test' atau 't-test' dan kemudiannya akan dikaji semula menggunakan 'binary logistic regression'. Keputusan kajian ini menunjukkan 6.2% daripada responden mengalami tekanan pekerjaan yang

teruk manakala kebanyakan dari mereka (54.6%) mengalami tekanan pekerjaan yang sederhana. Dilaporkan sebanyak 59.4% daripada responden yang mengalami tekanan pekerjaan adalah wanita manakala 40.6% darinya adalah lelaki. Kebanyakan responden yang mengalami tekanan pekerjaan (60.5%) adalah berusia di antara 26 sehingga 40 tahun. Sebanyak 85.2% daripada responden yang mengalami tekanan pekerjaan adalah telah berkahwin dan 85.2% daripada responden mempunyai anak untuk dijaga. Kebanyakan responden (49.2%) yang mengalami tekanan pekerjaan dilaporkan bekerja di antara 45 hingga 60 jam seminggu. Apabila diuji secara berasingan, jantina, jumlah masa bekerja, bebanan kerja, dan sokongan sosial dari penyelia adalah berkaitan dengan tekanan pekerjaan di mana  $p < 0.05$ . 'Binary logistic regression' menunjukkan jumlah waktu bekerja AOR (45 hingga 60 jam seminggu = 2.339, lebih 60 jam seminggu = 1.174), 95% CI bawah (45 hingga 60 jam seminggu = 1.287; lebih 60 jam seminggu = 0.680), 95% CI atas (45 hingga 60 jam seminggu = 4.253; 60 jam seminggu = 2.029), bebanan kerja dan tanggungjawab di tempat kerja adalah berkait dengan tekanan pekerjaan (AOR = 1.190, 95% CI bawah = 1.098, 95% CI atas = 1.291) di mana nilai p adalah rendah dari 0.05. **Kesimpulan dan cadangan:** Masa bekerja, beban kerja di tempat kerja dan tanggungjawab di tempat kerja merupakan penyebab tekanan pekerjaan di kalangan tenaga pengajar di Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang. Pihak pengurusan universiti perlu merancang program pencegahan tekanan di kalangan penyarah. Kajian lanjut diperlukan untuk mengkaji penyebab – penyebab ini. Kajian kohort disyorkan untuk mendapatkan keputusan yang lebih muktamad.

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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 1 August 2016 to conduct the final examination of Nor Amalina binti Muhamad Zaki on her thesis entitled "Job Stress and its Determinants among Academic Staff in a Malaysian Public University" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Master of Science.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

There may be a preamble at the beginning of a chapter. The purpose may be to introduce the themes of the main headings.

#### 1.1 Background study

Job stress is the most common condition experienced by workers (Ongori & Agolla, 2008). Job stress occurs when there is a conflict between the workplace, workload and individual's ability to cope with the situation (Ongori & Agolla, 2008). There are 33% of people in United States reported to live under extreme stress related to work ("Stress Statistics," 2015). France, in 2012 reported with a big proportion of telecom staff who commits suicide due to implications of job stress ("Why Stress at Work Matters," 2012). Studies in Malaysia reported prevalence of job stress grew day by day and gave a greater effect on chronic health problems (Rusli, Edimansyah & Naing, 2006). There are numerous factors that cause stress including workload, extra working hour, hazardous working environment, isolation, negative relationship among workers and management, bullying, harassment, and also lack of job satisfaction (Colligan & Higgins 2006; Buyukhatipoqlu, Kirhan, Vural, Taskin, Sezen, Daq, Turan, & Aksoy, 2010).

People who work as correctional officers in prison were reported to have one of the most stressful job (Schaufeli & Peeters, 2000). A study among correctional officers between United States, Netherlands and Sweden showed correctional officers who work in prison in United States were the most stressful compared to correctional officers who work in Netherlands and Sweden (Schaufeli & Peeters, 2000). A study conducted on cancer care workers (physicians, allied health professionals, and support staff) showed that high job stress was strongly related with workload, inadequate staffing and long working hours (Grunfeld, Whelan, Zitzelsberger, Willan, Montesanto & Evans, 2000). An article reported that almost all job is stressful and academicians had one of the most stressful job among all (Gouveia, 2014).

#### 1.2 Problem statement

Job stress cases were recorded as most serious issues among workers over decades all around the world (Mossink & De Greef, 2002). In Ireland, study by Mossink and De Greef reported high number of workplace accidents and

illnesses caused by work pressure (Mossink & De Greef, 2002). Workload for economic workers and industrial workers are different, workload for economic workers and their job stress are blurred and hard to explain compared to industrial workers (Rosenstock, Cullen & Fingerhut, 2006). Academicians were recorded to have a more stressful job compared to accident and emergency (A&E) staff who deals with a substantial amount of ongoing occupational stress (Barkhuizen & Rothman, 2008; Kinman, 2001). Previous studies reported medium to high incidences of job stress among lecturers (Huda, Rusli, Naing, Tengku, Winn & Rampal, 2004). The stressful circumstances in the workplace lead to distress, low productivity, negative impact on a person's family's life, negative behavioral and chronic health problems (Rusli, Edimansyah & Naing, 2006; Gillespie, Walsh, Winefield, Dua & Stough, 2001). In Malaysia, previous studies showed Malaysian academics face high job stress due to continuous development of Malaysian tertiary education sector. As a result, role conflicts and role ambiguity led into strain and the strain was negatively related to the organizational commitment and efficiency (Zafir & Sheikh Muhamad Hizam, 2013; Idris, 2009). One previous study showed that Malaysian academics experienced the stress-related situations in their daily routine (Safaria, 2013). Research done in Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia showed that 60% workload of lecturers came from research (Masturah, Nasrul Amir, Ahmad Kamal, Dzuraidah, Hafizah & Nur Farah Liza, 2012). Research university perceived as more stressful among lecturers compared with other university (Masturah et.al., 2012). The management was not aware of job related stress issue among lecturers. The management of research university likely to give more pressure to the lecturers to compete with other research university (Arma & Noor Hassim, 2016). Universiti Putra Malaysia is one of the research universities in Malaysia. Study in Universiti Putra Malaysia among staff (including lecturers) showed 21% of the respondents claim to have job-related stress (Mukosolu, Faisal, Rampal, & Normala, 2015). Study on occupational stress and respiratory symptoms among lecturers in Universiti Putra Malaysia in 2012 showed 26.2% of the lecturers have high level of job stress (Nur Aqilah & Juliana, 2012).

### **1.3 Significance of study**

This similar study was never conducted before at Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang. This study focuses on the job stress determinants and stressors among lecturers in Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang. This study could assess the level of job stress among the local academician at Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang. The stressors were identified and were relate to the level of job stress. This study also assesses the socio-demographic factors associated with job stress. The findings of this study provide information on the prevalence of job stress and the associated factors among academic staff in Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang. The main determinants of job stress among the academician at Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang have been identified. The information obtained can be used as baseline by the university management, hence, can be used as a basis for intervention strategies to prevent and control job stress among academic staff.

## **1.4 Objective**

### **1.4.1 General objective**

To determine job stress and its associated factors among lecturers at Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang.

### **1.4.2 Specific objectives**

**1.4.2.1** To determine the socio-demographic characteristics of academic staff in Universiti Putra Malaysia.

**1.4.2.2** To determine the level of work factors (hours of work, workload and responsibility at workplace, physical environment at workplace, social support at workplace, job satisfaction) among academic staff.

**1.4.2.3** To determine the prevalence of job stress among academic staff.

**1.4.2.4** To determine the association between socio-demographic factors (gender, age, marital status, child availability) and job stress among academic staff.

**1.4.2.5** To determine the association between work factors and job stress among academic staff.

**1.4.2.6** To identify the determinants of job stress among academic staff.

## **1.5 Hypothesis**

**1.5.1** There is association between socio-demographic factors (gender, age, marital status, child availability) and job stress among academic staff.

**1.5.2** There is association between work factors (hours of work, workload and responsibility at workplace, physical environment at workplace, social support at workplace, job satisfaction) and job stress.

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