

THE IMPACT OF WORK STRESS TO JOB BURNOUT AMONG EMPLOYEES IN THE MALAYSIAN CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES

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ABSTRACT

The impact of stress from factors such as absenteeism, work load, work-life balance, and work stress on job burnout among employee has been widely discussed. Job burnout can affect both physical and mental health which often leads to low productivity and job performance. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship and impact between absenteeism, work-load, work-life balance, and work-stress with job burnout. The objective includes assessing the model fit and statistically significant indicator detection. 123 construction companies were sampled using simple random sampling. Data were collected through questionnaires. Results showed adequate fit of a PLS-SEM model, and indicators of absenteeism and work stress were statistically significant on job burnout. The implications of this study is that burnout could affect employee productivity and performance. Burnout is also a serious concern within the healthcare industry as it could affect a person's mental and physical well-being.

Index Terms—Work Stress, Job Burnout, Construction Company, Absenteeism

I. INTRODUCTION

Burnout syndrome is one of the major issues existamong employees in workplacenowadays[1]. It is a psychological syndrome in response to chronic interpersonal stressors on thejob [2]. The original form of Maslach Burnout Inventory measures three dimensions of burnout. First, the basic individual stress dimension of burnout refers to the feelings of being overextended anddepleted of one's emotional and physical resources. Second, the interpersonal context dimension refers to a negative, callous, or excessively detached response to various aspectsof the job. Third, the self-evaluation dimension refers to feelings of incompetence and alack of achievement and productivity at work [2].According to the report of World Health Organization (WHO) in 2019, 264 millionemployeesworldwide diagnosedwith depression inorganizations. There are numerous studies focused on the negative impact of the burnout inorganizations,such as work stress and role conflict, occupational burnout on job performance, and so on[3].However, there is a lack of study about work stress and burnout that focus on construction organizations.Studies showed that high risk of burnout syndrome often occur at task-driven industry such as construction workplaces, and project managers can experience moderate burnout for project-based work [4]-[5].The objective of this study is to examine the relationship between absenteeism,work-load, work-lifebalance,and work-stress withjob burnout.Specifically, this study specifically focuses on employeesof constructionorganizations in Malaysia.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Burnout

Job burnout is a prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors in the workplace and has a negative effect on physical and psychological health [6]-[7]. Burnout often occurs because of being physical and mental exhaustion in a long time period, or being emotional at workplaces [8]-[9]. It is defined as a characteristic of

stress that outlines the response stressors at work [10]. Burnout is one of the most significant problems in the organization nowadays. It is causing employees unable to fulfil the requirements of work[1]. Burnout consist of three dimensions which are emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment [11]. The topic of burnout issue and employees' performance is often studied in organizational research [1]. Mental health among construction workers has been discussed a lot among researchers within the industry [12]. Results indicate strong negative correlation between burnout and work performance. The construction industry is complex and requires a lot of demands as it can be hazardous, dynamic and risky. These factors contribute stress to both contractors and employees [13]. World Health Organization (WHO) announced that pressure at the workplace became a radical threat to human health [14]. According to the report, pressure at workplace has become a radical threat to human health in 2020 [14].

B. Absenteeism

Company productivity is highly correlated with personnel work performance [15]. Absenteeism is one of the factors that affects personnel work performance. It is defined as when employees fail to report for or remain at work as scheduled [16]. Absenteeism can be described as “voluntary” and “involuntary” [17]-[18]. For instance, absence that results from a conscious decision made by the employee, and is used proactively to alleviate job strain symptoms such as fatigue and anxiety is “voluntary” absenteeism [17],[19]. Absence that results from a conscious decision made by the employee, and is used proactively to alleviate feelings of job frustration is also “voluntary” absenteeism [18]. Absence that beyond the control of the employee which caused by factor such as illness is “involuntary” absenteeism [17]. Absenteeism can impact the proficiency, profitability and control of an institution [10]. Moreover, it is one of the contributory factors that can increase the cost in organization, and fail to achieve performance goals [20]. The research of absenteeism often involves human resources (HR) management and organizational behavior [21]. Studies showed that high-rate frequency of absenteeism could lead to work stress and job burnout, where exist a positive association [22]. Factors such as being emotionally exhausted or having problems at workplace could cause absenteeism [22]. Eventually, it leads to employees' absence at work which can reduce the productivity and/or job burnout.

C. Workload

Workload is a construct that reflects the interaction between task demands which include cognitive, temporal, and performance demands, and subjective experience such as emotional demands [23]-[25]. Cognitive demands refer to the amount of mental and perceptual activity the task requires, and the decision-making aspects required by the job [23]. Temporal demands include aspects related to the number of tasks to do and how quickly it is completed[23]. Performance demands include both performance requirements and the job's level of responsibility [23]. The emotional demands dimension considers the degree to which a job makes the worker anxious or stressed [23] [26]. Excessive workload has an impact on workers' health and performance. Health issues include anxiety, exhaustion, and occupational stress, etc. Performance refers to delays in work, errors, and negative organizational behavior [23]. Workload affects well-being and safety, and it could negatively affects job satisfaction and contributes to high turnover [13],[23],[27]. Studies related to workload often involve employee's productivity and performance in organization. Results indicate that there is positive relationship between workload and stress and turnover intention. Moreover, burnout caused by high workload could also lead to high turnover intention, which directly affects employee's performance in organization [28]-[30]. It is crucial to create awareness of the impact of workload on work performance for the management in organizations [29].

D. Work-lifebalance

Work-lifebalance is related to employee's time management of personal time and in workplace. There are various definition of work-life balance [31]. For instances, it is defined as the state of equivalence of a person's work demands and personal life demands [32]. It was also referred to the state of non-existence of conflict between work life and family life [33]. Studies of work-life balance were often related to topics such as flexible work, family, demographic changes and rest time [34]-[35]. Majority of western organizations realize that the essential of balance between work-family and work-life such as the tension of working schedule is correlated with employee satisfaction [36]. Furthermore, work-lifebalance also has significant interaction with burnout. The increasing work-family conflict of work-lifebalance could lead to severe job burnout especially for construction professionals [4]. Eventually, burnout can negatively affect employee's time management and cause imbalance on work-lifeand family. Results indicated a positive correlation between supports of work-life balance practices and the productivity of employees [37]. The leader or colleague support is effective in work-life balance practices [38]. Moreover, work-life balance affects employee turnover, absenteeism and motivation in the organization [39] [40].

E. Work stress

Stress is a state, which is accompanied by physical, psychological or social complaints or dysfunctions and which results from individuals feeling unable to bridge a gap with the requirements or expectations placed on them [41]. Work-related stress is defined as the perception of a discrepancy between environmental demands (stressors) and individual capacities to fulfill these demands [42]. It is a structural problem that has influences on both employees and the entire performance of an organization [43]. The cost of work-related stress is very high in many organizations, and it reduce effectiveness at work and may cause ill health [41]. Stress-related problems include high absenteeism, high turnover, complaints by workers, or interpersonal conflicts [44]. Moreover, the conflict of interest, skill, knowledge and abilities can cause pressure for employees in organizations which leads to work stress [45]. The work environment also could cause exhaustion or chronic work stress. This stress is related to pressure factors in the work environment, greater demands than the capabilities, resources and needs of the worker [46]. According to the report of WHO, work stress often has impact on both individuals and organizations. Work stress can occur from a variety of interactions between employees, from working environment, or during tasks [47]. It will affect job performance and may lead to burnout [48]. Chronically persisting environmental and work-related stress can cause extreme psychosocial syndromes such as depression and burnout [49]. This has been one of the main reasons of incapacity and disease burden in contemporary society [49]. Organizations lack of attention to employee's need such as positive environment, training, empowerment and team work could also lead to work stress [50]. Hence, effective utilization of Human Resources is crucial for improving productivity and competency in organization [51].

F. Hypotheses

H1: There is significant relationship between absenteeism and burnout.

H2: There is significant relationship between workload and burnout.

H3: There is significant relationship between work-life balance and burnout.

H4: There is significant effect between work stress on job burnout

Job burnout is a psychological syndrome that develops and progresses due to long-term work-related stress. Work commitment and expectations could lead to worker stress. Work-life conflict can be very stressful. Absenteeism could contribute to stress, leading to burnout [52]. Chronically persisting environmental and work-related stress can lead to extreme psychosocial syndromes such as burnout and depression which are amongst the top reasons of incapacity and disease burden in contemporary society [53]. Heavy workload also contributes to worker stress. When a person reaches the burnout point, their productivity declines, increase in absenteeism and eventually to turnover [54].

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Data Collection

The aim of this study is to cover majority of the construction companies in Malaysia. Totally 1321 questionnaire invitations were sent through online survey. Simple random probability sampling approach was used to select 123 responses which was approximately 10% of the population.

B. Sample Size Estimation

Since insufficient sample size for statistical measurement may cause difficulty in finding significant relationship from data [55], A-priori sample size estimation for PLS-SEM model was conduct before the study. The calculation was set to have anticipated effect size of 0.15, α err probability at 0.05, power (1- β err probability) at 0.9, and 4 predictors. Result showed that a recommended minimum sample size was 108. This study managed to recruit 123 samples.

C. Questionnaire

A questionnaire with twenty-seven items was developed for primary data collection. First part of the items was designed to collect participants' demographic information. Second part of the items focuses on latent independent indicators (absenteeism, work-life balance, work-load, and work-stress) and latent dependent variable job burnout. There are ten five-points Likert-type items ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree for the latent independent indicators. For job burnout, there are seventeen five-point Likert-type items with selection of '1 =

never', '2 = rarely', '3 = sometimes', '4 = often', and '5 = always'. Maslach Burnout inventory [8] was adopted for determining burnout level. The content covers dimensions of aspect of job satisfaction, employee performance, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal accomplishment.

D. Procedures

The measurement model and structural model assessment were conducted in this study. For the measurement model assessment, internal consistency reliability was tested with Cronbach's Alpha coefficients and Jöreskog's composite reliability. The convergent validity was tested with Average Variance Extracted (AVE) indicator. The discriminant validity of the instrument was tested with heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) statistics and cross-loading of the items. For the structural model assessment, collinearity evaluation was conducted at first using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) statistics. At last, path analysis was interpreted which include the variance explained by the model and the results of the hypothesis tests. This study used Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) v25 and Smart PLS-SEM V3.2 for the analysis.

IV. RESULTS

A. Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were computed for internal consistency reliability, see Table 2. All of the items were above 0.7, indicating that all the items have good internal consistency reliability ($0.7 \leq \alpha < 0.9$) [27]. Moreover, the values of Jöreskog's [20] composite reliability showed that items have satisfactory to good internal consistency (0.7 to 0.9) [56]. To also ensure the reliability of data, other than the Cronbach's Alpha, rho_A, and composite reliability was also calculated, where both items also were greater than 0.7, indicating sufficient reliability. Average Variance Extracted was used to assess the convergent validity. The AVE measures the variance captured by the indicators relative to measurement error, and it should be greater than 0.5 to justify using a construct [57]. Result indicates that the instrument has high convergent validity. All the factor loadings exceeded the recommended value of 0.5 [58].

Table 2. Internal Consistency Reliability

Item(S)	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	AVE	Items
burnout	0.908	0.918	0.922	0.544	10 (16) ^a
absenteeism	0.916	0.953	0.934	0.701	6
workload	0.711	0.787	0.839	0.641	3 (5) ^a
work-life balance	0.814	0.818	0.89	0.730	3 (5) ^a
work-stress	0.888	0.904	0.918	0.692	5

Note: ^a Final items number (initial numbers)

B. Discriminant Validity

The discriminant validity of the measures the degree to which items differentiate among constructs or measure distinct concepts. Henseler et al. [59] proposed the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio of the correlations [60]. The HTMT is defined as the mean value of the item correlations across constructs relative to the mean of the average correlations for the items measuring the same construct [58]. Henseler et al. [59] propose a threshold value of 0.9 for structural models with constructs that are conceptually very similar. Value such as 0.85 suggests that constructs are conceptually more distinct and conservative [59]. As shown in Table 4, the value of HTMT between two constructs are lower than 0.9, and the rest are lower than 0.85.

Table 4. Discriminant Validity: HTMT Statistics

	A	B	WL	WLB	WS
A					
B	0.253				
WL	0.614	0.577			
WLB	0.636	0.575	0.887		
WS	0.117	0.868	0.454	0.442	

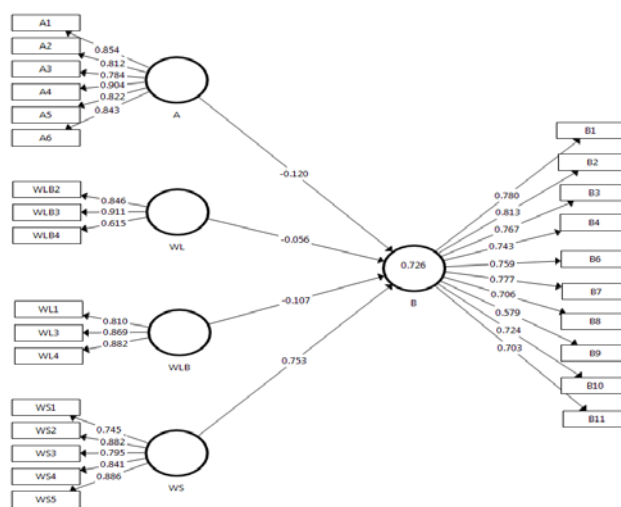
C. Collinearity Evaluation

Collinearity is the issue that two or more variables in a statistical model that linearly related to each other [61]. Collinearity is investigated before structural model assessment for the regression equations between constructs. This study detected collinearity using statistic of the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). VIF value is calculated with latent variable scores of the predictor constructs in a partial regression. Values of 5 or above indicate critical collinearity issue among the indicators of measured constructs [62]-[63]. Ideally, the VIF values should be close to 3 and lower [58]. As shown in Table 6, the overall items have VIF less than 4 which indicates no collinearity issues between the constructs in the model.

D. Structural Model Assessment

A path analysis was generated for assessing the structural model, see Figure 1. The R^2 value was 0.726 suggesting that 72.6% of the variance in extent of collaboration can be explained by absenteeism, work-load, work-life balance, and work-stress. The result of path analysis revealed that there is strong and substantial relationship within the model.

Figure 1. Result of the Path Analysis



The result of hypotheses testing is shown in Table 7. For Hypothesis 1, absenteeism is negatively associated with burnout. The hypothesis is supported ($\gamma = -0.12, p=0.037$). For Hypothesis 4, work-stress is positively associated with burnout. The hypothesis is also supported ($\gamma = 0.753, p < 0.01$). However, the hypotheses for the association between workload ($p = 0.235$) and work-life balance ($p = 0.089$) with burnout are not supported.

Table 7. Path Coefficient and Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Coefficient	t value	P	CI Bias Corrected		Decision
				5.00%	95.00%	
H1: A→B	-0.12	1.782	0.037	-0.223	0.001	YES
H2: WL→B	-0.056	0.723	0.235	0.176	0.076	NO
H3: WLB→B	-0.107	1.345	0.089	-0.021	0.021	NO
H4: WS→B	0.753	16.443	< 0.01	0.67	0.822	YES

V. DISCUSSION

This study investigated the influence of latent independent variables of absenteeism, workload, work-life balance, and work-stress on the latent dependent variable job burnout among the construction companies in Malaysia using the partial least techniques in testing hypotheses. Pearson correlation is conducted for the correlation coefficient of the independent variable and dependent variable. Results showed weak negative correlation between absenteeism between job burnout (-0.120). Workload has weak negative correlation between job burnout (-0.056). In addition, work-life balance also has weak negative correlation between job burnout (-0.107). Furthermore, the impact of work stress with job burnout has strong relationship (0.753). Moreover, this study also assessed the goodness of measure by looking at the validity and reliability estimates. The results showed that the measurement instrument

exhibited both convergent and discriminant validity. The Cronbach alpha and composite reliability were used for reliability assessment. Results indicate the measures in the model is reliable. The findings of this study indicates that there is statistically significant relationship between absenteeism and work stress toward job burnout, and no significant relationship between work load and work-life balance to job burnout. The absenteeism and work stress are the major issues that influences to job burnout among employee in Malaysia construction company.

The result of Hypothesis 1 that absenteeism can lead to job burnout aligns with previous studies [64]-[67]. The high rate of absenteeism due to lack of commitment to work can influence the employee productivity [68]. The absenteeism often occurs within both employee and organization [68]. The absenteeism caused by individual factors include history of education, personality and the abuse of alcohol and drugs. On the other hand, absenteeism caused by organization factors such as repetitive tasks, working environment conditions, demotivation and ineffective management where not having a humanistic prevention policy in hospitality. Hence, absenteeism has negative impact on job burnout [64].

Hypothesis 2 revealed that there was no significant relationship existing between workload and job burnout. There are studies suggested that the responsiveness of workers to their job where their knowledge of the job and the motivation cannot be inhibited by job demand [69]. The workplace environment is associated with job burnout rather than workload [70]. This indicates that workload have no significant effect on job burnout. Employees work towards the realization and achievement of organization goals. Therefore, increase or decrease on job may not lead to job burnout. On the other hand, there are also studies found out relationship between workload and job burnout and turnover intention [71]. Extreme level of workload can cause diminished performance to low level of productivity.

The findings of Hypothesis 3 indicate no significant relationship between work-life balance and job burnout. There are studies showed that work-life balance has relationship with burnout that has impact on both individuals and organizations [66],[72]. A better work-life balance can increase motivation, productivity, less stressed workforces, and reduced absenteeism. However, there are also studies suggest that no significant relationship of individuals' work-life balance with burnout because the neglect of organization's work-life balance among employee leads to negative consequences toward employee and organization [72].

The hypothesis 4 indicates there is significant relationship between the effect of work stress and job burnout. The result of this finding supports previous study [65]. Work stress can direct associate with job burnout among employee when they face a critical level of pressure in workplace. Therefore, a high level of stress leads to excessively consume the physical resources and emotional of employee which leads to job burnout [65].

In summary, the findings this study indicate that the latent independent variables have significant effects on job burnout in Malaysian construction industry. Absenteeism and work stress at workplace in construction can lead to job burnout. There is job burnout among employees because of the critical level of pressure in workplace. Burnout is one of the psychosocial risk factors of health issues in construction [73]-[74]. It has impact on both individuals and organizations.

VI. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The study of work-related stress in construction industry often involves factors of environmental, organization, work demand and work conflict [75]. The stress and job burnout in the construction organizations has raised concerns nowadays. This issue can cause negative impact on job performance and the career of construction workers [73]. The purpose of this study is to identify major contributors of stress and burnout in Malaysian construction industry. Results showed that employees experiencing pressure at workplace is significant. The work-related stress can lead to job burnout at workplace.

If we look at the individual level, the implications of this study is that burnout could affect employee productivity and performance. Burnout is also a serious concern within the healthcare industry as it could affect a person's mental and physical health [76]. Managers should be aware of burnout symptoms as to prevent it happening within their organizations. The impact of job burnout on organizational performance can be studied in the future. For instance, study showed that motivation and communication in organizations can improve employees' performance and productivity [77]. Having positive attitude and positive working environment with colleagues at workplaces can reduce absenteeism and increase responsibilities. Moreover, training and development programs for employees have impact on organizations' performance [76],[78]-[79]. Future study can investigate whether these factors have effect on job burnout for Malaysian construction industry.

The limitations of this study include insufficient sample size and lack of background information. First, according to the result of A-priori sample size estimation, the sample size is less than required amount. Studies with less sample size can be difficult to find significant relationships, and caution must be applied for interpretations [55]. Hence, future study should increase the sample size by involving more participants. Furthermore, different probability sampling methods can be used on the population, in order to achieve a better generalizability of the study. Second, there is a lack of research about job burnout at workplace of Malaysian construction industry. The purpose of this study is exploratory only. Future study could involve confirmatory research approach on this topic.

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