Asian Journal of Social Science Research (e-ISSN: 2600-9706)
Volume 5, Issue 1, 2023
DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8088965

WORKPLACE CONDITION AND OCCUPATIONAL STRESS: AN INVESTIGATION ON ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRIES

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Received Date: 13/03/2023 Accepted Date: 17/05/2023 Published Date: 30/06/2023

ABSTRACT

Stress at work is an escapable and normal phenomenon. In an uncertain environment, the working style is changing at a whirlwind speed which leads to job-related stress and poses a threat to the health of employees and the organization's reputation. This study is interested in examining the relationship between a heavy workload, lack of opportunity to grow and lack of recognition of occupational stress among the group of administrative staff from the 3-star hotels in Klang Valley. This study also examines which of the independent variables contribute most to occupational stress. The questionnaire, through Google form, was forwarded to 200 targeted respondents and only 131 were returned, equivalent to 65.5% response return rate. The raw data was analyzed through SMART PLS. This study found that only heavy workload ($p = 0.000$) and opportunity to grow ($p = 0.004$) have a significant relationship with occupational stress among these groups of respondents, whilst lack of recognition ($p = 0.707$) has no relationship with occupational stress. It was also found that heavy workload is the variable that contributed most to occupational stress. The findings show some differences from findings discovered by past researchers. It might be due to the differences in terms of culture and also to the number of respondents in the study. It is suggested that some form of reward and benefits should be given to motivate the employees. When employees have high motivation, they tend to feel happy and are more willing to work, be more committed and show more interest in their job function.

Keywords: workplace condition, hospitality, occupational stress, heavy workload, lack of opportunity to grow, lack of recognition.

INTRODUCTION

Stress can undermine the achievement of goals, both for individuals and the organization. A survey conducted by American International Assurance (AIA) Vitality in 2017 found that Malaysian employees are at risk of health problems and low productivity due to heavy workloads. The survey also indicated that 56% of the employees sleep less than seven hours. Malaysian employees reported that 53% of them have work-related stress and 12% have high levels of anxiety or depression (AIA, 2017). The Star Online (2017) Nadia reported 42% of Malaysian workers to sleep less because of work worries, 33% of the respondents worry about

losing their jobs and 32% lack confidence towards the sector where they are employed. Over the past twenty years, there has been a growing recognition in the literature that occupational stress can contribute to work-related ill health, with negative effects on both physical and psychological well-being (Dhaneesh, 2022; Anbazhagan, 2013). Occupational stress is a type of stress that is caused by work-related factors. It has been associated with reduced work output and can contribute to increased accidents, absenteeism, employee turnover and poor employee performance (Malik & Björkqvist, 2019). Additionally, workplace conditions play a crucial role in the development of occupational stress. A poor work environment, including factors such as excessive workload, lack of recognition and limited opportunities for growth and development can increase the risk of developing occupational stress. These outcomes of occupational stress can result in significant economic and social costs for both employers and employees (Narahari & Koneru, 2017; Khan et al., 2022). On the other hand, the hospitality industry is one of the sectors that face occupational stress issues. This industry is an essential sector of the global economy, providing services such as accommodation, food, and entertainment to millions of people every day. Workers in the hospitality industry often face heavy workloads and little recognition for their hard work, which can lead to burnout, job dissatisfaction, and mental health problems. Additionally, the lack of opportunity for professional growth and advancement can exacerbate these issues, leading to high turnover rates and a shortage of skilled workers. Therefore, the main objective of this study is to examine the relationship between workplace conditions on occupational stress in the hospitality industry and explore the potential solutions to mitigate this problem. From the general issues above, several specific objectives of the study are formulated. The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To examine the relationship between heavy workload and occupational stress among administrative staff in the hospitality industry.
2. To examine the relationship between lack of recognition and occupational stress among administrative staff in the hospitality industry.
3. To examine the relationship between lack of opportunity to grow and occupational stress among administrative staff in the hospitality industry.

To endeavor the aforementioned objectives and provide solutions to the research problem, the research questions are identified and formulated as follows:

1. Is there a relationship between heavy workload and occupational stress among administrative staff in the hospitality industry?
2. Is there a relationship between lack of recognition and occupational stress among administrative staff in the hospitality industry?
3. Is there a relationship between lack of opportunity to grow and occupational stress among administrative staff in the hospitality industry?

LITERATURE REVIEW

THE HOSPITALITY AND HOTEL INDUSTRIES

According to (Pradhan, 2022; Khan et al., 2017), occupational stress has negative effects on both the physical and mental of employees. Due to the pressure to deliver quality services versus fluctuating financial profits and tight margins, working in the hotel industry can be stressful. As a result, it is associated with unpredictable shifts, working long hours, few breaks,

mental and emotional demands, and heavy physical demands such as manual handling of heavy loads (Tantawy, Abbas, & Ibrahim, 2016; Caruso, 2019).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to the model of job stress by (La Torre et al.., 2019; Cooper, 1976), there are five categories of sources of stress in the workplace. The first category describes factors that could increase employees' complexity and difficulties, such as work overload. The second category consists of role ambiguity and role conflict which arises when there are unclear duties and expectations placed on the employees. The third category is career development. It encompasses the factors which could influence the employee in the future such as over-promotion, under-promotion, lack of job security and thwarted ambition. Meanwhile, the fourth category explains the interconnection between employee and their inferior, leader, supervisor and co-worker. The last category explains how the organization's structure affects the employee. This includes the participation of employees in decision-making, office politics, restriction on behavior and financial difficulties.

HEAVY WORKLOAD AND OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

Stressors produce feelings of unnatural work-related accomplishment, like structure government, inconvenience, limitation, difference of opinions, and workload role (Kanai et al., 2022; Hon, 2013). Job stress resulting from stressors, such as heavy workloads, as well as staff conflicts, and not enough resources were found to be one of the factors for decreases in job satisfaction among workers. The previous study has mentioned that a lot of researchers argue that one of the main factors of occupational stress among staff is because of the work overload that they have to take responsibility for. The development of the business leads to an increased workload. Because of the fast development, the organization simply passes the task or workload to staff without asking for the availability of the staff to carry out the task given. Most of the staff feel stressed because of their workload increasing. Therefore, the workload increase in any organization should correspond with the availability of the workforce. Work overload has increased pressure in the workplace (Kazmi, Amjad & Khan, 2008). Factors such as workload (either overload or underload) are one example that can cause stress among staff (Delisle 2020; Akanji, 2013).

H1: There is a significant relationship between the heavy workload on occupational stress among hotel administrative staff.

LACK OF OPPORTUNITY TO GROW AND OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

Lack of career development opportunities among staff has been identified as a significant emphasis and the presence of organizational stress consistently predicts higher emotional exhaustion in this study (Anasori et al., 2020; Jasperse et al., 2014). The possibilities for job development are necessary buffers against current stress, with beneath promotion, lack of promotion, coaching and job insecurity being disagreeable (Shin & Hur, 2019; Malik, 2011). Management processes appearance at how subject performance is appraised, how they get promoted or progress and their influence over these (Antoniou, 2013). The frustration of having reached one's career ceiling or not having been promoted can result in extreme stress (Dodanwala, 2022; Manshor et al., 2003). Malik et al., (2017) said in their study that most general staff were only dissatisfied with the lack of promotion opportunities. From the statement, it can

be concluded that dissatisfaction feeling also causes stress among employees. Faiz, Safdar & Mubarak (2022) said professional career development is one of the most serious stressors relating to planning and career advancement. This includes job insecurity or job security, desire for promotion, getting a higher position in the organization, moving to a less attractive position and loss or lack of opportunities for professional career development.

H2: There is a significant relationship between the lack of opportunity to grow on occupational stress among hotel administrative staff.

LACK OF RECOGNITION AND OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

A study conducted by Vashisht, Singh, & Sharma (2018) found general practitioners to be less satisfied with their job due to unsatisfactory recognition received for good work. Less attention was given to employee development and satisfaction. The recognition and reward system was not tied to achieving quality goals. There was no incentive system to reward employees for participating in quality improvement activities. Employees were not recognized for improving quality. This has de-motivated employees and inhibited them from putting effort into the quality management program as they did not see the value of such work. As a result, employees' job satisfaction was low. Employees were least satisfied with the recognition, promotion, working conditions, organizational policies, and job security. The outcome of top management policies created a stressful environment for employees. Inadequate pay, inequity at work, lack of recognition, lack of promotion prospects, lack of job security, time pressure, inadequate equipment, too much work, staff shortage, and lack of management support were the main stressors for employees (Agarwal, 2021; Khan & Ali, 2013).

H3: There is a significant relationship between the lack of recognition of occupational stress among hotel administrative staff.

METHODS

The research design employed for this study is quantitative, in particular, correlation due to its interest in investigating the relationship between workplace conditions on the occupational stress stipulated in the study. The study population consisted of administrative staff from 3-star hotels in the Klang Valley area. A total of 200 respondents were selected using stratified random sampling, but the return rate is only 65.5% which is equivalent to 131 respondents. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire via online that consisted of two parts. The first part contained demographic information such as age, gender, education, and job tenure, while the second part contained questions on workplace conditions and occupational stress. The questionnaire was pilot tested among a few administrative staff members to ensure its validity and reliability. The reliability of the questionnaire was measured using Cronbach's alpha, and a score of 0.70 was considered acceptable. Data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and SMART-PLS.

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RESULTS

The finding presented the relationship between heavy workload, lack of opportunity to grow and lack of recognition of occupational stress among hotel administrative staff in Klang Valley. This study targeted 200 respondents out of which only 131 respondents participated, resulting in 65.5% of the response return rate. This study used PLS-SEM to analyze the data. It is similar to using multiple regression analysis. PLS-SEM is an alternative method to confirm the structural equation modelling and to evaluate the data quality based on measurement model characteristics.

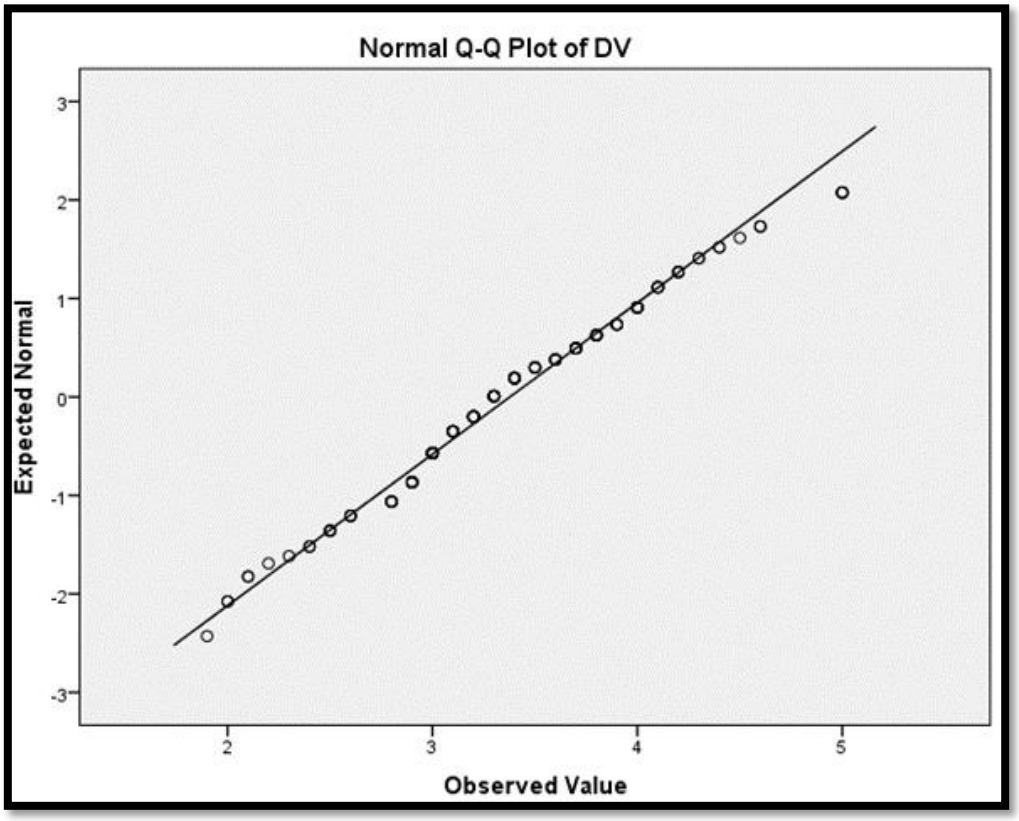


Figure 1. Normality test (Q-Q Plot).

To determine the normality test by using graphically, the output of a normal Q-Q plot can be used. Figure 1 above indicates the accessing normality of the dependent variable (occupational stress) by using the normal Q-Q Plot. Since the points are close to the diagonal line, the data is normally distributed.

Table 1. Factor Loading Analysis

Variable	Items	ECP	CR	AVE	VIF
Lack of recognition	SB_LOR1	0.63	0.941	0.642	1.761
	SB_LOR2	0.718			2.472
	SB_LOR3	0.839			3.258
	SB_LOR4	0.812			2.431
	SB_LOR5	0.817			2.611
	SB_LOR6	0.844			3.503
	SB_LOR7	0.836			3.171
	SB_LOR8	0.835			3.062
	SB_LOR9	0.853			2.953
Opportunity to grow	SB_OTG1	0.853	0.950	0.681	2.977
	SB_OTG2	0.725			2.177
	SB_OTG3	0.829			3.396
	SB_OTG4	0.791			2.505
	SB_OTG5	0.875			3.897
	SB_OTG6	0.856			3.527
	SB_OTG7	0.864			3.924
	SB_OTG8	0.747			2.318
	SB_OTG9	0.872			4.025
Heavy workload	SB_WO1	0.632	0.927	0.586	1.562
	SB_WO2	0.755			2.077
	SB_WO3	0.775			2.258
	SB_WO4	0.84			2.834
	SB_WO5	0.807			2.598
	SB_WO6	0.829			2.94
	SB_WO7	0.822			3.083
	SB_WO8	0.773			2.256
	SB_WO9	0.626			1.744
Occupational Stress	SC_OS10	0.671	0.906	0.548	1.774
	SC_OS2	0.725			1.776
	SC_OS3	0.715			1.734
	SC_OS4	0.794			2.376
	SC_OS5	0.809			2.905
	SC_OS6	0.766			2.38
	SC_OS8	0.728			1.712
	SC_OS9	0.705			1.790

Composite Reliability (CR) is measuring the internal consistency of each item. It is considered consistent and reliable when the value of the items is greater than 0.7. As indicated in the table above, CR for each item is 0.941, 0.950, 0.927 and 0.906. Thus, the items used in the study are reliable. Meanwhile, for Average Variance Extracted (AVE), the value must be greater than 0.5. Since AVE for each variable is greater than 0.5, it meets the criteria and is considered solid.

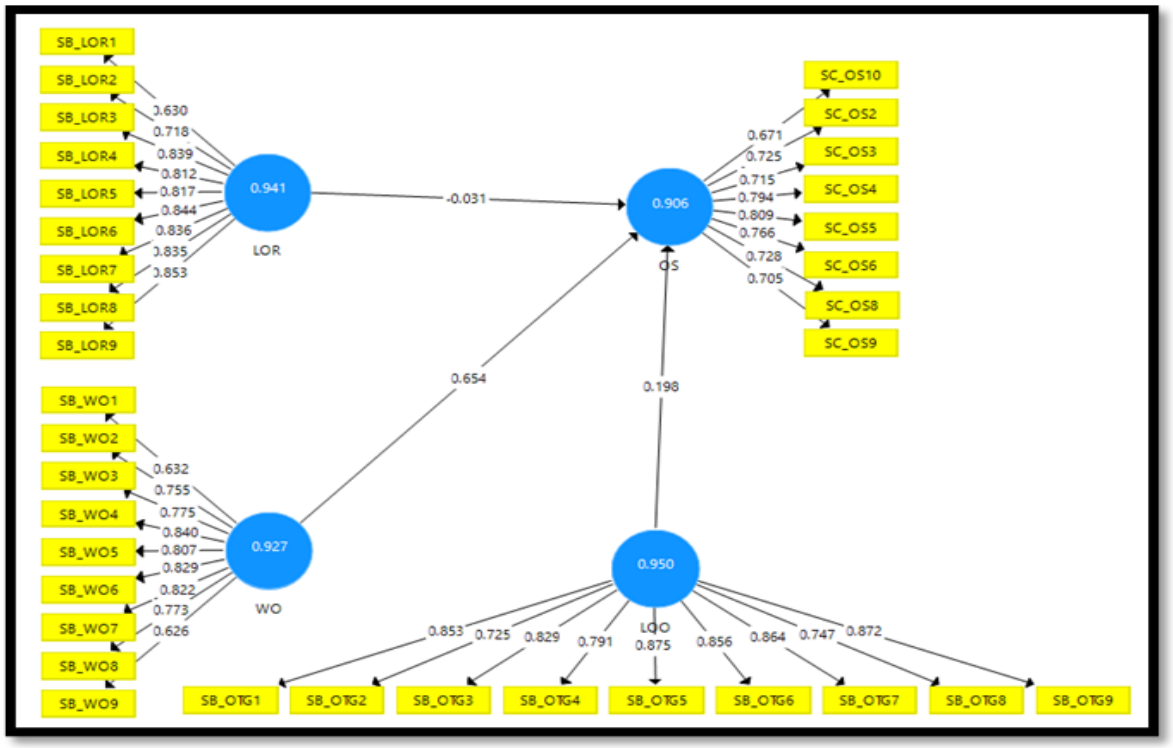


Figure 2. Framework

As indicated in Figure 2 above, there are four variables in the study consist Heavy Workload (WO), Lack of Opportunity to Grow (LOO), Lack of Recognition (LOR) and Occupational Stress (OC). There are two items under OC were deleted since it gives a value of less than 0.7. The remaining have no issues since the value is acceptable and solid.

Table 2. Discriminant validity

Variables	LOO	LOR	OS	WO
LOO	**0.825**			
LOR	0.719	**0.801**		
OS	0.287	0.216	**0.740**	
WO	0.171	0.160	0.683	**0.766**

Table 2 above shows the discriminant validity of the study. An indicator's outer loadings on a construct should be higher than all its cross-loadings with another construct. The data shows no issues regarding the value in the discriminant validity.

Table 3. Path Coefficient parameters of the structure model

IV-DV	Beta value	Standard Deviation	t-Value	p-Values	R2	F2	Q2
LOO -> OS	0.198	0.096	2.059	0.004	0.497	0.037	0.252
LOR -> OS	-0.031	0.083	0.376	0.707		0.001	
WO -> OS	0.654	0.063	10.457	0.000		0.822	

Table 3 above depicted the relationship between the independent variables towards the dependent variable. Below the standardized coefficients column, it indicates that heavy workload (WO) has the largest beta coefficient with a value of 0.654. Thus, it explained that heavy workload is the strongest variable which makes the most contribution to occupational stress in this study. It was followed by a lack of opportunity (LOO) to grow with a beta coefficient value of 0.198 and the least contribution towards occupational stress is the lack of recognition (LOR) with a beta coefficient value of -0.031. This also indicates that there is no significant relationship between the lack of recognition and occupational stress since the Sig. The value is greater than 0.05.

DISCUSSION

DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The study lists several factors that might influence the occupational stress among the hotel administrative staff in Klang Valley, comprising of which are lack of recognition, heavy workload and opportunity to grow. This study found that only heavy workload and opportunity to grow have a significant relationship on occupational stress among the hotel administrative staff in Klang Valley whilst lack of recognition does not have any influence on the occupational stress among these groups of employees. The findings show some differences from findings discovered by past researchers. It might be due to the differences in terms of culture and also to the number of respondents in the study.

DISCUSSION ON THE HYPOTHESIS FINDINGS

Based on the findings, since only heavy workload and lack of opportunity to grow have significance on occupational stress among hotel administrative staff, H01 and H02 are rejected whilst, for the lack of recognition, H03 was accepted. This is according to the P-value given by each of the factors. It is significant if the P-value is below 0.05 but it is not significant when the p-value is greater than 0.05. The findings are shown in the Table below.

Hypotheses	P-Value	Results
Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant relationship between a heavy workload and the occupational stress among hotel administrative staff. Hypothesis (H1): There is a significant relationship between a heavy workload and the occupational stress among hotel administrative staff.	0.000	Failed to reject H1
Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant relationship between the opportunity to grow and the occupational stress among hotel administrative staff. Hypothesis (H_2): There is a significant relationship between the lack of opportunity to grow and the occupational stress hotel administrative staff.	0.004	Failed to reject H2
Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant relationship between the lack of recognition and occupational stress among hotel administrative staff. Hypothesis (H_3): There is a significant relationship between the lack of recognition and occupational stress among hotel administrative staff.	0.707	Reject H_3

CONCLUSION

The organization needs to understand the needs and problems that occur among the employees. Some rewards and benefits should be given as an incentive to the employees. Undoubtedly, motivation will affect the level of job stress among employees. When employees have high motivation, they tend to feel happy and are more willing to work, be more committed and show more interest in their job function. There will be a problem when an organization fails to provide a good working environment, especially in terms of employee performance. As a result, both employee and employer will bear the consequences of handling the stress issues. Stress is an important factor that can affect employee performance in any organization. It is normal when a hotel worker has to deal with hard deadlines, long working hours, shift work, unexpected interaction with guests or problems with superiors. Thus, the identification of the link between these factors would be helpful to boost employee performance in the hotel sector.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors thank UNITAR International University for the support of the publication of this research.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest regarding this manuscript.

CONTRIBUTION OF AUTHOR

All authors are participants in the data collection and analysis and writing and revising the manuscript.

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