



## Research Paper

# IMPACT OF JOB STRESS ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

**Sharmilee Bala Murali**

MBA Graduate  
Lords Ashcroft International Business School  
Anglia Ruskin University, UK  
gothicrose1117@gmail.com

**Abdul Basit**

Lecturer  
School of Accounting and Business Management  
FTMS College, Malaysia  
abdulbasit9037@gmail.com

**Zubair Hassan**

Senior Lecturer  
School of Accounting and Business Management  
FTMS College, Malaysia  
Zubai7@gmail.com

## ABSTRACT

*Purpose of this study is to analyses the impact of job stress on employee performance. A causal research design was adopted to carry out the data collection. For this purpose employees from various sectors were chosen. A questionnaire with 26 items with Likert Scale (1: Strongly Disagree to 5: Strongly Agree) were developed and tested for its reliability and validity prior to the distribution of questionnaire via social media. 310 respondents were selected from various sectors in Malaysia using convenient sampling technique. The survey questionnaire was sent via Facebook inbox requesting to complete it. The questionnaire includes demographic information's and statements to measure four (4) independent variables of time pressure, workload, lack of motivation, and role ambiguity to measure level of stress. The dependent variable is employee performance. Only 136 completed questionnaires were returned (usable sample). Regression analysis was carried out to examine the impact of stress on employee performance using SPSS21. We found that time pressure and role ambiguity have significant and negative influence on employee performance. The other two factors of workload and lack of motivation do not have any significant influence on employee performance. Therefore we concluded that increasing time pressure and role ambiguity would reduce employee performance in all aspects. Therefore it is important for managers to ensure role ambiguity is minimized and clear roles are given and communicated to the employees if they wish to enhance employee performance. Also managers and supervisors are strongly recommended to discuss the time allotment and task completion dates and duration of the task with their subordinates to avoid time pressure. This would possibly enhance employee performance. Future research should consider a larger sample from leading sectors where job natures are similar. Analysis should be more rigorous, where Amos could be used for structural Equation Modelling.*

**Key Terms:** Job Stress, Employee Performance, Time Pressure, Workload, Lack of Motivation and Role Ambiguity

# 1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose of this research is to analyse the impact of job stress on employee performance. Numerous studies and research has been done on this subject in the last few years'. Most of the studies been conducted in countries that seek to develop to become advanced economically and socially. Job stress has become one of the most popular 'occupational diseases' of the century to mankind and it has affected individuals' physically and psychologically, causing such impactful pressure on employees' performance (Leka et al. 2004).Based on Euro found report (2013), role ambiguity, organisational change, job demands, bullying and violence are some of the common stress factors happening in the workplace today. Another study published indicated that during economic crisis or downturn has supplemented an increase in suicidal cases and that has brought about 0.79% rise in suicide cases of people under 65 of age for every 1% increase in unemployment and about 4.45% in deaths due to alcohol abuse (ILO, 2016). Sadly, those that effected are mainly the vulnerable groups, that include under/or low qualified workers, ageing, disabled, migrant and contractual are being hit the hardest (Monica et al. 2013).

Over the past years, close to 3 billion employees' are undergoing massive job stress at their workplace and it is effecting their overall job performances on daily basis (Melanie, 2005). Stress if it has a good amount that can be handled by the employees' it does help denote positive influences as well as (Mai and Vu, 2016) via alleviating the negative side of either arising or even stopping it. It is therefore, pivotal that they need to play a huge role in ensuring that they create a healthy working environment, practicing a constructive preventive culture in the organization, increasing productivity that would eventually responses to greater economy growth and impacts excellence 'employee performance' on a whole (ILO, 2016).

**Table 1: Most stressful jobs in 2017**

Rank	Top Ten Stressful Jobs	Stress Score	Median Salary (US\$)	Growth Outlook
1	Enlisted Military Personnel	72.74	27,936	NA
2	Fire Fighters	72.68	45,870	5%
3	Airline Pilot	60.54	102,520	5%
4	Police Officers	51.68	60,270	4%
5	Event Coordinator	51.15	46,840	10%
6	News Paper Reporter	49.9	36,360	-8%
7	Corporate Senior Executives	48.56	102,690	6%
8	Public Relation Executive	48.50	104,140	7%
9	Taxi Driver	48.18	23,510	13%
10	Broadcaster	47.93	37,720	-9%

Sources: Careers Casts 2017's Job Streets Report

## Contextual Gap

Many researches on job stress in association with job satisfaction were carried out in the past. For example Iqbal and Waseem (2012) conducted a study on job stress and employee satisfaction among air traffic controllers in Pakistan, while Alipour and Monfared (2015) conducted a research on job stress and its impact on job commitment among hospital nurses in Iran. Also in Iran a research was conducted in 2015 by Darvishpour and Hamidi (2015) by examining the impact of metal stress on employee job performance. Also Similar studies were done in Ghana by Sampson and Akyeampon, (2014) om work-related stress among frontline hotel employees. In Nigeria also a study was done on job stress by Ekienabor (2016) in relations with employee productivity and commitment. Also in India, Rani, (2014), explored the effects of job stress on employee retention in India. In the same year Ratnawat and Jha (2014) performed a research on job stress and its effects on employee performance in India. More recently Lopes and Kachalia (2016) conducted a study on banking sector of India by examining the impact of job stress on employee performance. .

Many studies were done on Malaysian context as well. Ling and Bhatti(2014) conducted a study on work Stress and job Performance in Malaysian education sector. Yahaya et al. in (2009) did a research on occupational stress and its effects towards the organisation management. Razak et al(2014) examine the impact of work stress towards work life balance in Malaysia. Ibrahim (2013) did a study on the effects of worker stress on the job performance in electronic manufacturing”. Long et al. (2014) conducted a study on the impact of job stressors on Nurses in Malaysia. Finally, Jamadin et al (2015)., did a study on work - family conflict and stress.

Therefore it seems that there is no study done on commercial sectors of Malaysia by examining job related stress and its impact on employee performance.

## **Research Rational**

Generally, many empirical studies have indicated mix results regarding how job stress affects employee performance. Some of the recent findings unveiled that workload, time pressure, role conflict, lack of motivation, role ambiguity, reduction of resources, harassment, and many other factors impact employee performance (Health Security Executive (HSE), 2014). Highest prevalence of work related health issues on an average has accounted about 23 days of lost per person. Productivity declined due to the level of stress and it was mostly impacted on industries like the defense, public administration, teaching and even social care accounting for 9.9 million days of medical or sick leaves from 2014-2015, (HSE, 2015). Job stress and employee performance should be recognized, as a collective issue with massive implications of the overall wellbeing of an employee, the organization, society and the economy of the country as whole (ILO, 2016).

Time pressure, has become a prominent issue in most organisations (Parlow, 1999). Recently, only a minority number of papers have dedicated their focus on the impact of time pressure (Kocher and Sutter, 2006) and clearly showed that the effects of time pressure on employee performance, resulted in leading to high efficiency costs due to being led significantly on high rejection rates of offers (Sutter et al. 2003). Bollard et al. (2007) and Kocher at al. (2013), discovered that with time pressure it certainly changes the attitude of an employee towards risk. In addition, it also increases physiological stress of an employee that eventually would increase in risk taking (Starcke et al., 2008; Putman et al., 2010; Buckert et al., 2014) and prevent from thinking strategically (Leder et al., 2013).The ability of an employee to be able to cope depends on their personality and their lifestyle externally (Stichting van de arbeidn.d).

Role ambiguity (Katz and Kahn, 1978) associates it with anxiety. Ambiguity devised from beyond complexity of an individual’s understanding and from the increasing demands. Cohen (1959) feels that abstrusely tasks with no proper guidance causes less productivity and stress. Those facing role ambiguity, undergo challenges in meeting their performance targets. Previous works done by (Fried, Ben-David, Tiegs, Avital, & Yeverechyahu, 1998) discovered that those employees’ with high level of role ambiguity were linked with poor performance effectiveness. Role ambiguity is damaging to employee performance and has been strongly indicated by (Bauer and Green, 1994; Szilagyi, 1977 Williams, Podsakoff & Huber, 1992; Sluss, van Dick, and Thompson, 2011).

The aim of this research is to examine the impact of job stress on employee performance. therefore the following objectives were set:

- ✓ To study and examine the effect of time pressure towards employee performance;

- ✓ To study and examine the effect of workload towards employee performance;
- ✓ To study and examine the effect of lack of motivation towards employee performance; and
- ✓ To study and examine the effect of role ambiguity towards employee performance.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Job Stress

The word or term stress was taken from one of the renowned stress researcher, Hans Selye, (Institut universitaire en santé mentale de Montréal 2012). Emotional disruption, physically injurious that happens when the job does not require or connect with the worker's skills, resources and needs, is defined as 'work stress' (Park, 2017), hence it is identified as a challenge mentally and physically of a person, and even organisation (ILO 1986).

Despite, the extensiveness of work and studies conducted by Selye, many scientist opposed and criticised his ideas and even one concluded in a (1951) British Medical Journal that 'stress' besides being itself, it is also the cause of itself and eventually the result of itself, (The American Institute of Stress n.d). In the 1960s, the work of Holmes and Rahe (1967) demonstrated that some major stressful experiences or events that transpires in a person's life could seriously jeopardise ones health condition, (ILO 2011). As for in the 1970s, Cassel (1976) had introduced a concept, and he theorised that host resistance was a severe outcome of stress on a person's health. Two factors were identified to determine the level of a person's host resistance, one the person's ability to cope and secondly receiving support socially, (ILO 2011).

Stress as defined by Arnold and Feldman (1986), is a response of a person via to a new or hostile situation in a working environment, (Walonick 1993). As for William and Huber (1986) stress is a reaction from both psychologically and physically and to internal and external factors of a situation in which the adaptiveness of an individual could be overextended (Walonick 1993). Occupational stress is defined by Colligan and Higgins (2005) as a complex psychological state of mystery, (Akanji, 2015). When the job does not 'marry' with your capabilities or with the right resources, both physical and emotion will react and respond dangerously and that is a symptom of a job stress, (Sauter and Murphy, 2013).

Job stress comes in different form of sources and it plants an affection on people in various ways. No doubt, the relationship between the welfare and health of an employee and the physio social part of the job are well-documented (Dollar and Metzer, 1999), unfortunately only limited work has been conducted on the effects of distinctive stressors on an employee performance. Based on the demand-control model (Karasek, 1979) job pressure is one of the important source of job stress (Jungwee, 2007). What creates the difference between demands and the capability to provide mental security in the family is non-other than job stress (McCubbin and Figley 1983). Even though there is a substantial research body that deals with family and work, there hasn't been much attention (e.g., Jacobson, 1987) provided that actually deals with job insecurity on both marital and family lives (e.g., Buss and Redburn, 1983., Ahmed & Ramzan, 2013). Job stress can be distinguished either a positive or a negative stress and it depends on the perception of a person between these two forces. It is not common now that work at stress especially is a new phenomenon to the way of our modern living.

## 2.2. Related theories

Both Cox and Griffiths (1995), created a framework that helps in evaluating the procedures of dealing with stressful situations. It is depended on the impact of an external stressor (Lazarus and Cohen, 1977; Antonovsky & Kats, 1967; Cohen 1984). This model focuses on the structural characteristics of the stress process, i.e. which stressors are likely to lead to which outcomes in which populations, however transactional views are cognitive, and focus on the dynamic relationship that occurs between individuals and their environment in terms of mental and emotional processes (Cox et al., 2000). This model studies more on cognitive approaches as opposed to G.A.S.-Seyles, it is also considered as one of the most dynamic model that is able to cater on individual differences and detects other alternative methods when dealing with stress (Mark & Smith, 2008). This model emphasis on enhancing the importance of stress-management, it also proposes various methods in managing psychological responses to stress (Sabrina, 2017). However the main limitation of this model lies on its simplicity that does not consider environmental, biology and social factors. Another challenge is to conduct any experimental research where it covers on subjective aspects. Some psychologists even have their own doubts that it still needs to appraise and improves (Sabrina, 2017).

Many other theories were discussed in relation with stress and job performance. Vitamin Model (Warr, 1987) apparently was explored and researched on couple of Dutch health care nurses and their aides (Jonge and Schaufeli, 1998). This said model was assumed that job autonomy, job demands and social support in workplace does relate to main three key pointers and they are satisfaction in job, anxiety related jobs and experiencing emotional exhaustion (Jonge & Schaufeli, 1998). In a nutshell, some job characters do possesses continuous effect where health conditions does increases 'additional decrement' with the increase of dosages up to where it shows no effects both positively and negatively hence these traits can be related to safety, wages and even certain significant jobs (Buunk et al., 1998). The strength of this model is that it challenges this belief of linear relationships, and a thorough literature evaluation done by Warr (1987) he featured 9 job characters that displayed potential causes of job stress /or mental health. These nine characters were included, amongst others and featured in the 'Job Characteristic Model' of (Hackman & Oldham, 1980) and the Demand, Control, Support (DCS) model of (Johnson & Hall 1988., Kerasek & Theorell, 1990), (Jonge & Schaufeli, 1998). Despite the popular premised of Vitamin model, until to date, little can be testified about the validity of the model. Both Sonnentag and Frese (2003) and Buunk et.al (1998) declared that Vitamin model is unsatisfying and mixed, whilst van Veldhoven, Taris, de Jonge and Broersen (2005) testified that the model has yet to be empirically examined and the effect of support at workplace does not follow this model. Another disadvantage is that all studies have indicated unsuccessful to take in consideration of the multi-dimensional methods in which certain characteristic practiced in job may affect the job security (cf. Fletcher 1991, Warr 1987 and 1994., Dewe et al. 2012).

The work stress model of, Cox's Transactional Model (Cox 1978, Cox & Mackay 1981, Cox et.al 2000) is almost related to the work of Lazarus and apparently many of the procedures in the two (2) models seemed similar, but there are some variances in the Cox model in particular a more elucidated structure and more emphasis on personal differences and on work-related health (Cox & Ferguson, 1991; Mark & Smith, 2008). What stresses in this model is the importance of the differences of an individual (Cox & Ferguson 1991). On the other side, Cox model is quite similar to the Folkman and Lazarus model especially on the coping and appraisal. The issue with Cox model is it foresees nothing (Mark & Smith, 2008) the baseline of the hazard function is never actually assessed (Stack Exchange, 2017).

Just like cognitive relational method, the complexity of the Cox's model figures, that it is challenging to capture empirically unlike models like Karasek (1979) and Siegrist (1996).

The Demands-Control model (Karasek, 1979) is currently perhaps the most influential model of stress in the workplace (Kompier, 2003) and the original model focuses on the two (2) psychosocial job characteristics of job demands and job control. As per (Karasek, 1979; Karasek and Theorell, 1990), many other studies demonstrated an employee welfare through massive job demands via Demand-Control model. The Demands-Control model (Karasek, 1979) is currently perhaps the most influential model of stress in the workplace (Kompier, 2003) and the original model focuses on the two (2) psychosocial job characteristics of job demands and job control. As per (Karasek, 1979; Karasek & Theorell, 1990), many other studies demonstrated an employee welfare through massive job demands via Demand-Control model. One of the strength of this model is that if an employee is equipped with sufficient liberty in deciding the use of skills that are available to them, even though the jobs are highly stressful, it enables to adapt 'active-learning jobs' that is an effective manner in problem solving (Mark and Smith, 2008). Others have also criticise that the Demand-Control model only defines the basis of work load and not any other demand (Cox et al., 2000) and it assumes that the high control is always a desired state that can be argued. Some may not see that control in job is not always desired and some may even find low sense of self-effectiveness by seeing control of the stressor is just within (Mark and Smith, 2008).

### 2.3. Review Current Research

Time is valuable, hence with the commitments people uphold from being a professional to domestic accountabilities, time pushes everyone to squeeze every second they could have (Hochschild, 1997; Perlow, 1998, 1999). Time pressure seemed to become increasingly a main issue of work in most developing countries (Moore et. al 2012). In one unique experiment that was conducted, of how time pressure and completion of work impacts the existence of 'cognitive lockup', it was discovered that if most people would have completed their task the likelihood for cognitive lockup is to rise (Schreuder & Mioch, 2011). On the contrary if people execute their task for the second time the probability somehow decreases (Schreuder & Mioch, 2011). However, no effect were seen between time pressure and employees' performance (Schreuder & Mioch, 2011). Few researches e.g. (van d.k 2009, De D. 2003, Durham et al. 2000, Karau & Kelly 1992, Kelly and Loving, 2004), shared the following concerns that lead time pressure at individual level:

- ✓ Performance becomes faster due to the inconsideration of several options;
- ✓ Poor quality of work due to inability of executing task in a systematic or effective manner; and
- ✓ More empirical processing of information and those results from refraining of providing adequate resolution or decision.

In team level, when time pressure increases it helps members to focus on the main tasks and emphasises in completing the task as fast as possible, even though it impacts both their interaction and job performance but the same time quality of work is being sacrificed (Kelly & Loving, 2004). It is obviously not ideal to take more time on all tasks because employees' concern is not only on one task but also about their output – getting the most executed within the limited time given (Kelly & Loving, 2004). Time pressure need not perceived or imply as negative. But in most cases, when employees' performance is impacted by time pressure they are prone in making more mistakes (Johnson et al., 1993 cited in Moore et al, 2012).

H1: *Time pressure has a negative and significant influence on employee performance.*

It is a known fact that the issues of heavy workload and stress at job seemed to be rising day-by-day and literally, every employee seemed to be exposed to this workload issue regardless of their background or industries they belong (Shah et al. n.d). In today's market, organisations do not have much of a choice but to chase on complex aims or objectives that are often challenging to reconcile, either to succeed in becoming more productive, profitable or more competitive. What seemed to 'push to shaft' towards these directions; are globalisation, economy liberalisation and ICT advancement (Vinet, Bourbonnais, & Brisson, 2003). For one to operate systematically and efficiently, workload needs to be define properly and when a workload is either too low or too high it could back fire either ways on the overall employees' performance (Dasgupta, 2013). Employees' are demanded to possess versatility, being flexible and required to be available when duty calls. Due to these factors, employees' seemed to be overwhelmed and seemed to find it straining in carrying out their tasks within the limited timeline given (De Coninck & Gollac, 2006). Workload connects to the force of a task or job, it produces mental stress and when in stress employee loses interest to complete their task or they try to avoid the consequences of not accomplishing them (Fournier et al. 2011). What is ironic is that the work distribution in a public sector is different compared to the private sector. Employees' in the public sector usually do little but seek extra benefits, they are usually not overloaded, but they literally exposed themselves under the pretext of workload stress (Fournier et al. 2011). In a positive end, workload is not always negative, but it also provides opportunities for employees' to gain experience faster and increase their productivity, but at the same time, massive work overload could also result in less productivity and incompetence (Shah et al. n.d).

H2: *Workload has a negative and significant influence on employee performance.*

Motivation is a process that allows someone to strive towards achieving their goals, it is also an intelligence that cannot be observed directly (Seth, 2003), cited (Ibrahim and Brobbey, 2015). Motivation is one of the most vital concepts of psychological process where managers could encourage growth to their fellow peers in achieving specific goals (Adnan, 2005). According to Bartol and Martin (1998), they considered motivation as a powerful instrument that strengthen actions and activates the inclination to continue. Motivation also play as a driver to fulfill and unfulfilled needs that inspires a performance that are objectively set. Due to the current volatile and competitive market, most of the organisation are striving to compete for survival, as such, motivating their employees' is vital for any organisation to succeed through the measurement of employees' performance (Dobre, 2013). Based from an international study conducted by Mullins of Proudfoot Consulting (2005), he discovered that the main factor for less productivity is due to low working morale, relates to low motivation, feeling unappreciative and being rewarded poorly. Kalimullah (2010), also suggested that if organisation practice motivating their employees', their employees' will eventually aligned their goals with the organisation and perform better, they will continuously look forward to improve in their work even though if working under any stressful or challenging conditions (Dobre, 2013). Employees' are considered as the main source of an organisation's advantage towards business competition. Therefore, one could determine if the organisation will grow or live on depends on how they motivate their employees' (Lawler, 2003). Not all employees' are the same, they all have different visions, different abilities, physiological needs that motivates them, so it is important that the organisation take time and seriousness evaluating what's important to motivate their employee in order to see better performance, productivity and loyalty (Dobre, 2013).

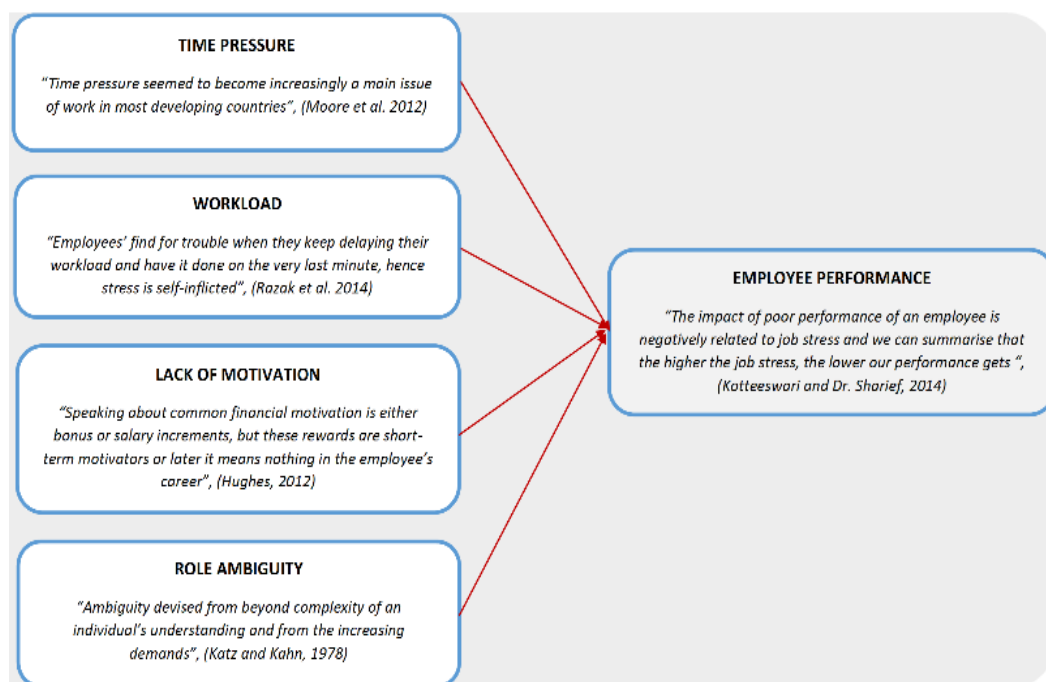
H3: *Lack of Motivation has a negative and significant effect on employee performance.*

Rizzo et al(1970) well-defined ‘role ambiguity’ as a mirror of certainty on relationships, time allocation, power, tasks, clear guidance, policies and the aptitude to envisage authorisations as a result of attitude or performance (Tang & Chang, 2010). It is also associated with anxiety (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Role ambiguity ascends when certain parts becomes unclear, ambiguous and defined poorly and if these are not mentioned or discussed correctly, ‘role ambiguity’ certainly will arise (Srikanth & Jomon, 2013). American Institute of Stress (2004) projected that the overall organisational cost for American businesses, due to ‘job stress would costs more than US\$300 billion annually (Tang & Chang, 2010). Role ambiguity or role conflict occur when some of the processes conflicts or contradicts from the norm and value of the processes applied in the organisation (Coverman, 1989, Ruyter et al., 2001).

According to Luthan (1997), anyone would experience conflicts within their role should they go through more than two pressures at one-go and end-up obeying to one of the pressures. Role ambiguity also happens when an employee goes through hard time trying to adjust two or more roles at the same time (Harijanto et al. 2013). When someone deals with role ambiguity or role conflict they experience emotional challenge, being pathologically loss with reality and a massive slump in success (Karatepe and Uludag, 2008 cited in Harijanto et al. 2013). To Fisher (2001) role ambiguity causes loss of productivity. Burney and Widener (2007) equally argued that role ambiguity was undesirably related to areas like decision-making and strategic planning. Concisely, whenever an employee’s job is being linked closely to other subordinates, the effect of role ambiguity is greater compared to those employees’ whose work is rather independent (Tang & Chang, 2010).

H4: *Role ambiguity has a negative and significant influence on employee performance.*

Therefore the conceptual framework is illustrated below



**Figure 1: Research Theoretical Framework**

Source: Developed for this research



### **3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

The chosen research design to examine the causal impact of stress on employee performance is explanatory or causal research design. This research design is chosen for many reasons. First explanatory research focus on causal impact of stress (independent variable) on employee performance (dependent variable) . Second explanatory research emphasis on empirical study as this study is about empirical evidence of connecting two variable using statistical analyses. Also this study used more than 100 respondents using Likert scale questionnaire.

#### **3.1. The sample and sampling procedure**

We have targeted working professionals mostly office based from various industries and business sectors. Total of 310 questionnaires were distributed among the local and expatriates employees' who are currently engage in full time and contractual basis. Respondents were aged between 20 to 60 ( with 30 years of experience in the field) were included in this survey. Total of 136 respondents responded were mainly Malaysians currently working in Malaysia. These respondents are ranked from junior to C-level professionals who actively responded to all 26 questionnaires.

These respondents were recruited using convenience sampling as this sampling method is useful to recruit participants anywhere and whenever possible, and any subject matter can be invited to partake. This sampling method is simple to accomplish and easy to explain to others, most cost effective and non-time consuming.

#### **3.2. Subjects:**

This research was conducted on working adults from cross industries mainly from Malaysia. As per the findings, 136 responded and a majority of the respondents derived from 82 males (60.3%) and 54 females (39.7%). There are four age groups and about 64 were belonged to the 20-35 of age group (47.1%) followed by the respective age groups of 36-45 (39.0%), 46-55 (18%) and 56 and more than 56 years represented (1%). The targeted respondents were mainly working professionals who belonged from other sectors (47.8%) besides from the oil and gas, marine or subsea (27.2%), followed by Government Link Companies (GLCs) and other government sectors (8.1%), banking, investment or insurance (11.8%) and aviation (5.1%). Majority of those that have respondent to this survey, held either a senior managerial or managerial positions in their organisation, and in total there were about 64 of them (47.1%), 54 (39.7%) were from the executive or junior level and C-levels, directors and vice presidents were about 18 (13.2%).

#### **3.3. Research Instrument**

For this research, a questionnaire with Likert Scale of 1-5 was developed using past literature. The construct has twenty six (26) items measuring the following questions to collect views of respondents on;

- Employee performance (dependent variable)
- Workload (independent variable)
- Time Pressure (independent variable)
- Lack of Motivation (independent variable)
- Role ambiguity (independent variable)

The reliability of the research instrument was tested using Cronbach Alpha. The normality of the scale was tested using Kurtosis and Skewness. The Cronbach Alpha value should be more than 0.7 and where skewness and kurtosis values should range from -1 to 1.

### 3.3.1. Normality Test

Normality is commonly used to compare shape of the data collected and to the shape of a normal curve (UNT Geog 3190, Wolvertonn.d). The normality needs is essential to be tested in statistical analysis using SPSS as it needs to show the validity, and depends highly on it (Ghasemi, 2012). The two main indicators to measure data normality are skewness and kurtosis (Khine, 2013). Skewness is described as either degree of irregularity of a distribution around its mean, whilst kurtosis is characterised the relation of the peak or flat of a distribution, in comparison to normal distribution (James, 1997). Collectively both skewness and kurtosis are known as the parameter shapers for probability model (Donald, 2011).

Based on normality test, the skewness of data falls under the range of (1.0 to -1.0) which means the skewness of this data for questions TP1 (-1.11), TP3 (-1.02), WL3 (-1.06), WL5 (-1.26) and LM5 (-1.34) are higher than 1.0, and not within the acceptable range. As for the kurtosis, TP1 (1.66), TP4 (-1.12), WL2 (1.08), WL3 (1.46), WL5 (3.51), LM5 (2.51), RA2 (-1.10), RA3 (-1.08) and RA4 (-1.11) also fell under the unacceptable level of distribution. However the two items that really needs adjustment are WL5: *'When overloaded with work, an employee is prone to be effected with either mental or physical issues or even both'* and LM5: *'Would financial rewards motivate you the most?'* Scored way beyond the range in the kurtosis level. Those data that are within acceptable range, considered normal are:

**Table 2: Items that are at acceptable range**

❖ Time Pressure	○ TP2 and TP5
❖ Workload	○ WL1 and WL4
❖ Lack of Motivation	○ LM1, LM2, LM3, LM4 and LM6
❖ Role Ambiguity	○ RA1 and RA5
❖ Employee Performance	○ EP1, EP2, EP3, EP4 and EP5

### 3.3.2. Reliability Test

The reliability test is done using Cronbach Alpha values where 0.7 was mostly considered as suggested by Hair et al (2009) while 0.6 is also accepted at certain case suggested by Bakon and Hassan (2013). The overall reliability of the scale for 26 items were 0.758 suggesting there is a high internal consistency among the items measured.

**Table 3: Reliability Test**

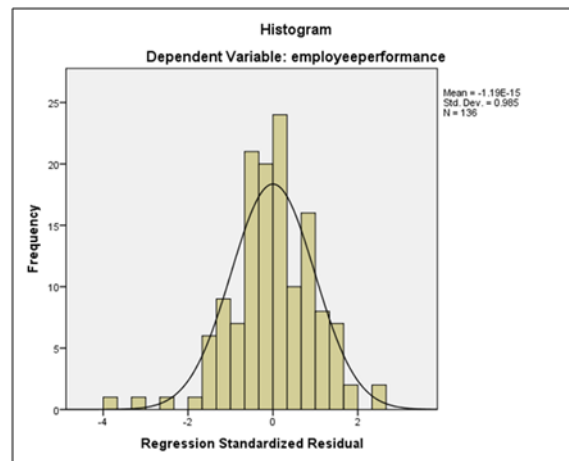
Variable	No of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Time Pressure	5	0.620
Workload	5	0.732
Lack of Motivation	6	0.734
Role Ambiguity	5	0.874
Employee Performance	5	0.802

Since the items included in the construct is qualified in the reliability test for regression analysis, the four assumption of the multiple regression was tested before proceeds to main regression analysis.

## 4. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

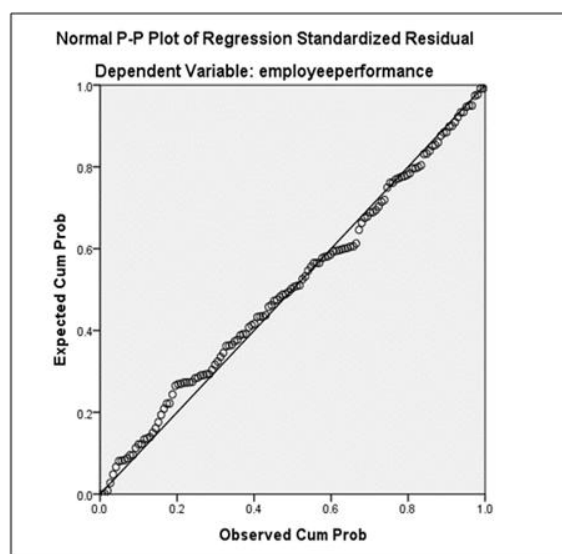
### 4.1. Testing four assumption of Regression

**Assumption 1:** Normality of standardized residuals: it has demonstrated that the residual of employee performance (dependent variable) projects that the frequency of the normality assumption is satisfactory as shown in the figure below



**Figure 2: Normality of standardized residuals**  
Source: SPSS output

**Assumption 2:** Linear relationship between independent and dependent variable: P-Plot for employee performance and independent variables of Time Pressure, Workload, Lack of Motivation and Role Ambiguity are shown to have a linear relationship with each other as shows' in the graph below. It can be observe from the graph, it has indicated that there is a liner relationship between the dependent variable (employee performance) and independent variables



**Figure 3: linear relationships**  
Source: SPSS output



As per Table, among the independent variables, the mean statistics of workload topped the chart with (M=3.93, Std=0.595), where the respondents clearly perceived that workload effects employee performance the most. Clearly this indicates that the experiencing massive workload, having potential misunderstandings with superiors coupled with overloaded work results mental and physical stress influencing employee performance. Second highest mean is time pressure with a mean value of (M=3.51) and its (Std=0.685), working more than the standard eight (8) hours' and weekend and public holidays, denied quality time with family and friends and no flexi hours granted by management seemed to be perceived as the second most concerned area of respondent after workload. Similarly Follow lack of motivation with (M=3.415, Std=0.679) and role ambiguity (M=2.83, Std=0.95) scored the lowest mean, simply indicates that isn't much issues of respondents feeling uncertain of their job roles and description or even their level of authority compared to time pressure and workload.

Correlation analysis is another way of measuring the association between the variables, more so a statistical tool that analyse the degree of association between two random variables. The correlation coefficient should be range from -1 to +1. It is pivotal that the two variables should have the cause and effect connection, if such connection do not exist then the two variables cannot be correlated (SRM University, n.d).Table below would certainly indicate negative on almost all variables for that matter. The basic rule on the value is that it should not exceed 0.75 and the similar correlation of 0.8 or higher would suggest an issue, (Ringim, et al., 2012).

**Table 5: Correlation analysis**

	<b>EP</b>	<b>TP</b>	<b>WL</b>	<b>LM</b>	<b>RA</b>
Employee Performance(EP)	1				
Time Pressure (TP)	-0.483**	1			
Workload(WL)	-0.333**	0.562**	1		
Lack of Motivation(LM)	-0.402**	0.611**	0.341**	1	
Role Ambiguity(RA)	-0.496**	0.466**	0.195*	0.625**	1
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)					
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)					

According to Table 5 above , time pressure is negatively correlated and the relationship between the variable is rather weak with a value of -0.483. Time pressure is significant with a value of 0.000 which is lower than 0.01. Hence, time pressure is found to have a negative significant relationship with employee performance. Workload is negatively correlated and the association between the variable is weak with a value of -0.333. Workload is significant with a value of 0.000 which is lower than 0.01.Lack of Motivation, another variable showed negative correlation with the value of -0.402. Lack of motivation is significant with a value of 0.000 which is lower than 0.01. Hence, it has a negative significant with employee performance. Role Ambiguity scored the highest with a negative value of -0.496. Role Ambiguity is significant with a value of 0.000 which is lower than 0.01. This certainly indicates that role ambiguity has a significant strong negative correlation towards employee performance. Since all the correlation values of the items associated with each other are lower than 0.85 , the items in the construct are divergently valid (Hair et al, 2009). This suggested to progress towards the regression analysis.

### 4.3. Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is primarily used for causal inference and prediction. In regression, it demonstrates how in one variable correlates with the other (Campbell, 2008).

**Table 6: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	Durbin Watson
1	0.581	0.336	0.318	-0.6523	16.703	4	131	0.000	2.035
a. Predictors: (constant), role ambiguity, workload, lack of motivation, time pressure									
b. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance									

According to Table above, R square is 0.338, which shows that 33.8 percent of the dependent variable is being explained by independent variables. Adjusted r square is 0.318 which shows that a model is not a good fit model as the value is lower than 0.60. According to Imna and Hassan (2014), a good fit model would be expected to envisage a minimum of 60 percent of the variation from employee performance (dependent variable). The Durbin Watson value is 2.035, which shows that there is no auto correlation among the selected respondents for this study as the value falls in a range of 1.5-2.5 (Folarin & Hassan, 2015). Similarly, the F test that has been done for this study, shows the value of 16.703, which means the regression model is significant.

**Table 7 : Beta Coefficient -Stress and Employee Performance**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	5.5649	0.410		13.779	0.000
Time Pressure	-0.296	0.119	-0.257	-2.484	0.014
Workload	-0.167	0.115	-0.126	-1.459	0.147
Lack of Motivation	0.034	0.119	0.029	0.284	0.777
Role Ambiguity	-0.307	0.077	-0.370	-4.002	0.000

According to Table 7 above, time pressure beta coefficient value is -0.257 with a significant value of 0.014 which is lesser than 0.05. In this case, time pressure has a negative significant influence on employee performance. In a similar case, a study was done in Eastern South Africa on a medical institution and it was perceived that the longer employees' work the greater the stress (Khosa et al., 2014). Workload's beta coefficient value stands at -0.126 with a negative insignificant value 0.147 which is higher than 0.05. In this case, workload is a contributor factor to stress but it is not significant. This means that workload does not have a significant influence on employee performance (Ademola et al., 2015). Lack of motivation's beta coefficient value from the table indicated 0.029 with a positive insignificant of 0.777, that is higher than 0.05. This means poor motivation do not have a significant influence on level of stress and employee performance (Rana & Munir, 2011). Role ambiguity's beta coefficient value is -0.307 with a significant value of 0.000 which is lower than 0.05. Hence, role ambiguity has a negative and significant influence on employee performance. When employees' are not sure of their role and job description in the organisation it does impact their level of productivity and contribution as they are not sure where they stand.

Overall, time pressure and role ambiguity have a negative and significant influence on employee performance and workload and lack of motivation do not have any significant influence on employee performance.

**Table 8 : Hypotheses Acceptance and Rejection**

Hypotheses	Beta Coefficient	Significant (P<0.05)	Result
H <sup>1</sup> : Influence of Time Pressure towards Employee Performance	-0.257	0.014	Accepted
H <sup>2</sup> : Influence of Workload towards Employee Performance	-0.126	0.147	Rejected
H <sup>3</sup> : Influence of Lack of Motivation towards Employee Performance	0.029	0.777	Rejected
H <sup>4</sup> : Influence of Role Ambiguity towards Employee Performance	-0.370	0.000	Accepted

## 5.0. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The main objective of conducting this study is to examine the influence of job stress on employee performance. Hence, it has certainly exposed every working individual from lower to higher income gainers to undergo job stress that has great impact not only on the quality of job performances but the quality of life we led as well. It is a known fact that, job role and working condition change at such rapid pace, hence comes along the contemporary challenges faced by most of us.

The study have derived the following conclusions from the findings. That time pressure and role ambiguity has a significant adverse influence on employee performance. It is therefore, seemed that employees' undergo job stress when they are pushed-right-to the wall and pressured to complete their task within an unreasonable time provided by their employers' or superiors. Yahaya et.al, (2009), described that when the employees' receive too many tasks or job assignments and is expected to have it completed within the limited given timeline, the rate of turnover seemed to end-up quite high. Adding on, less support from managers in completing the assignment has led to high level of job stress and dissatisfaction in job performance. One of the case studies in Malaysia, revealed that employees' get extremely stressed-out when they are forced to submit their work on time to their employer without accepting any given reason (Razak et al., 2014). On the contrary, employees' find for trouble when they keep delaying their workload and have it done on the very last minute, hence the stress is self-inflicted (Razak et al., 2014).

From the survey conducted by researcher, to summarise the various factors of time pressure influencing job stress and employee performance are; it is proved that due to time pressure it does effect employees' productivity negatively, and about (46.3%) agreed. Majority of the respondents seconded that working more than eight (8) hours' daily, and at times on weekends and public holidays, working long hours and have denied time with their family and friends, and current organisation do not provide flexi working hours to complete their tasks are main contributing factors of time pressure resulting to work stress and poor employee performance.

The second most influenced factor or variable is role ambiguity. The unclear of their roles and position in their organisation does impact their job performance. Role ambiguity is experienced when superiors do not convey the right and accurate information to employees', hence this has become of the factors of occupational stress. From the survey, it clearly

indicated that most of the employees' are going through predicament on where they actually stand in the organisation, where are they heading in terms of their career plans etc. Based on the survey results, about (45%) of the respondents are still unclear of their job description or role in their current organisation, follow on to the survey result many still unclear about the limits of researcher's authority at present job, uncertain on how would they be evaluated for promotion or a raise in their organisation. About (12.1%) strongly agreed that they feel a lack of policies and guideline to help them in their work. Interestingly, (39.6%) of the respondents disagreed that still do not have clear objective and goal in their job, but the rest still do not have a clue where they are heading in the organisation and to the researcher this is a serious issue. Why 2.5 million Americans would quit their jobs on a monthly basis and close to 30 million in a year, this is because they were not given a sense of where they can go in their career (Jackson, Forbes 2014).

As for workload and lack of motivation might not adversely impact employee performance. Many may have the sense that there is nothing much they can do to avoid workload, especially in this current situation. In this research, we could conclude that whether employees like it or otherwise, they have to take-on the workload regardless. Pressure may come in, if they start being choosy hence chances of being laid-off is higher. Lack of motivation also proved that there is no significant influence in employee performance. Perhaps, it is essential to note that these days, motivational talks or pep-talks do not work much on employees and it has become quite evident to many organisations include researcher's as well. What would probably work in motivating employees' are rewards or monetary compensations paid, would allow employees' to stay in the organisation longer and management would be able to retain their employees'. In this survey, many are gained for financial rewards, as it would motivate them highly, especially in this current situation. One case study, an oil and gas engineering firm have structured a plan to their employees' that anyone serving more than three (3) years' will be rewarded of some shares with the assurance that everyone will be eligible for a profit sharing based on the organisations performance. That is one of a strategy to retain staff and get them to work harder, since monetary benefits is now the motivation key.

## **Recommendation**

It is recommended that, in future other researchers should identify and explore other variables that were not utilised to be considered for this research. The sample size could have increased to more rather than 136. Researcher used the current economic crisis and other social factors that influences working professionals' and feels that it was a timely to conduct this study. On the contrary, researcher did not come across any similar studies that had any indication on the impact of economic crisis. Hence, the manner the survey was formed based on the responses clearly indicated that employees' had positive significant influence on time pressure and role ambiguity. Despite employees' work for long hours and with absence of motivational factors didn't seemed to influence employees' much the way it has been for the other two variable. It is also recommended that future researchers could further explore this research on a wider data and discover other variables that effects employee performance that would enable to provide a better analytical results.

## **Limitations**

The limitation experienced through this research is that the sample size of the survey was rather medium compared to other past studies conducted. Moreover, the questionnaire created could be more profound. The time to receive some of the feedbacks of the survey were long and that did disrupt the motivation of wanting to achieve a better sample size.



## Future Work

Since the research was done within working professionals in Malaysia emphasising few industries, perhaps in future the research could be well structured, researching on one particular key industries (e.g oil and gas or banking) that has massive expectations on employee performance, would be recommended. Future studies could explore other independent variables that affect employee performance.

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