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The relationship between burnout and job performance among the vernacular school teachers in Perak

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Abstract

Teaching is a wonderful yet challenging job. Due to lengthy hours of teaching and preparation, teachers are prone to burnout. The goal of this research is to examine whether there is a link between teachers' job burnout, and job performance. For the aim of this study, 105 teachers from the Vernacular national-type Tamil schools in the state of Perak, Malaysia were selected as sample. To achieve this objective, the data was collected by means of a questionnaire that examined the

influence of burnout on the job performances among teachers in Vernacular national-type Tamil schools in Malaysia. The finding of the study indicates that burnout is negatively related with job performance where a high level of burnout may decrease the level of job performance. Finally, the consequences of this research towards the theoretical and practical contributions are discussed and suggestions for future research are brought forward.

Keywords: job performance, burnout, teachers, vernacular schools

1. Introduction

In the current state of the world, individual's performance at work is critical for both employers and employees concerning the quality of education. Nothing is more alarming than the most recent Covid-19 pandemic challenges, which are causing widespread concern and affecting ordinary people's everyday lives, including the school teachers, where teachers' life have been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic (Zadok-Gurman, Jakobovich, Dvash, Zafrani, Rolnik, Ganz, & Lev-Ari, 2021) [28].

In our increasingly interconnected society, teachers play a crucial role as advocators to lead and collaborate well with others especially with students. However, teachers, as well as other public care workers, are vulnerable to burnout (Iancu, Rusu, Ma Țoiu, Pa Țurar, & Maricuțoiu, 2018), which is linked to several other bad experiences and consequences. Increased aggravation and signs of mental illness are examples of changes in mood and wellbeing (Capone, Joshanloo, & Park, 2019; Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006). This indicates job burnout affects the job performance of the teachers in many angles.

Teaching in difficult situations also may lead to depression, an unstable work-life balance, and poor behaviour control. Teachers have to adapt to all the challenges and they must face it in order to provide a good teaching environment for students as well as managing life and family. The excessive workload and some task challenges will all have an impact on a teacher's overall performance. Despite all the stress, teachers still must learn to manage their stress or problems and overcome it.

In the context of Malaysian education system's current success and challenges, the emphasis on enhancing accessibility to education, raising expectations (quality), narrowing achievement disparities (equity), promoting student solidarity, and increasing system effectiveness, are some of the local education objectives, (Ministry Of Education blueprint, 2013-2015). However, the disparity in primary school examination scores between Nation-wide and National-type vernacular schools is thinning. The National schools, also known as Sekolah Kebangsaan (SK), and Vernacular National-type Chinese schools, also known as *Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan Cina* (SJKC), have a slight distinction.

In addition, according to Malaysia Kini (2016) [11], there are around 1,000 Tamils school education. Currently, the number is coarsely half of what it was and vernacular schools in the country are facing many challenges (MalaysiaKini, 2020) [10] the weakening of Tamil school education institutes were caused by a number of factors. To begin with, the commercialization and urbanisation that has resulted in the sale of estate lands that houses these schools for their workers has resulted in the closure of many Tamil schools across the country. Moreover, in the last five years, the distance between Vernacular national-type Tamil schools, or *Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan Tamil* (SJKT), and their peers has more than halved. However, the number of teachers in the Malaysia continues to grow, but on the contrary, educational output has been deteriorating mainly in SJKT schools, shown by table below.

Table 1: Number of Classes

National Type (Tamil) - Vernacular School	Year
4,498	2016
4,455	2017
4,425	2018

Source: Quick fact 2018, Educational Data Sector Educational Planning and Research Division

1.1 Objective of the Study

This study examines the link between the teachers’ burnout and job performance of Vernacular national-type Tamil schools teachers in the state of Perak, Malaysia. The specific objective of the study is to:

1. Determine the relationship between teachers’ job burnout and their job performance.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Job performance

Job performance refers to an employee’s ability to do specific duty (Marcus, 2017). Based on this definition, job performance can exist in a scale. For example, when employee cannot perform a given task, the performance is poor or unacceptable. In contrast, able to complete a task correctly is stated as an excellent performance. In another perspective, job performance is described as activities that employees expected to perform in a certain range (Saxena, 2019). This implies, job performance is the action shown by an employee for a given instruction. This definition connects with the earlier definition in terms of the range. Even though employees can execute the expected activity, the quality of the activity is still looked into before can determine the performance is good or poor. Job performance is also defined as the act of reaching a goal set prior to the task and agreed by the manager and the respective employee (Ones, Anderson, & Viswesvaran, 2015). Therefore the type of the job will determine performance measure in which employee is obliged to show the performance agreed prior to the task.

2.3 Burnout

Burnout is a condition characterised by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a deterioration in personal accomplishment that can affect people who work in any situation (Maslach & Jackson, 1983). Individuals are not the cause of burnout; rather, the social environment in which they work is. People’s interactions with one another and how they perform their professions are shaped by their workplaces. There will be a greater risk of burnout if the workplace does not recognise the human side of work and there are substantial mismatches between the nature of the job and the behavior of people (Maslach, & Leiter, 2016) [7].

Burnout is a syndrome of exhaustion, cynicism and reduced professional efficiency closely linked to the work environment. Once established, the syndrome persists. Burnout occurs as a reaction to stressors in the work environment. It has various negative effects on work performance and personal well-being. Burnout contrasts with positive experiences of engagement at work, and therefore interventions to mitigate or reduce burnout can also be formulated to promote engagement (Michael P. Leiter & Christina Maslach, 2015).

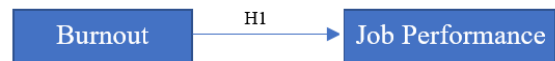
Freudenberg coined the term "burnout" in 1974 after seeing signs of exhaustion in his workers. He found that the cause of this phenomenon is his own physical and emotional fatigue. Exhausted people are those that have been destroyed by

exhaustion and weakness. As a result of low or unnecessary energy intake, burnout induces disability, fatigue, and exhaustion. Maslach (1980) used existing definitions to describe and clarify burnout, as well as to develop the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) scale.

Burnout is the result of long-term occupational discomfort. Stress at work is a term used to describe the internal stress that people in various organisations feel as a result of their work environment. Workplace depression is one of the most pervasive wellness challenges today, placing workers’ lives in jeopardy. This stress at work can lead to physical and mental fatigue, irritability, excitability, anxiety, low self-confidence and increased blood pressure, and it can also endanger health generally (Shirin Yazdanpoor, 2016). Continued strains lead to workplace burnout, which can be fatal. It may even make people feel exhausted and compelled to keep their jobs which could bring negative impact to the employee’s performance (Incirli, 2021) [29].

After reviewing the overall literature, it can be summarized that most scholars agree that burnout employees are characterized by high levels of exhaustion and negative attitude toward their work (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). School teachers spend a lot of time with their work even after the school hours. The plans for preventing the job burnout are either themselves or organisational in nature. This is to ensure that their job performance is at a good level. Therefore, this study aims at presenting a finding for the relationship between burnout and job performance among teachers. For this purpose, the following hypotheses were put forward:

- H1: There is a negative relationship between teachers’ burnout and their job performance.



3. Methodology

This section will discuss the sample of the study, scales of the variables and the process of analysing the obtained data.

3.1 The Sample Population

Due to the limitation during the Covid-19 Lockdown (The Movement Control Order), the data was collected by using Google Form online questionnaire distribution through Whatsapp and email. The teachers of the Vernacular national-type Tamil schools in Malaysia, or *Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan Tamil* (SJKT), from the state of Perak have been chosen as the respondents from the total population. Table 2 below shows the number of 141 teachers from 8 schools that were selected in this study. About 105 respondents were selected using non-probability sampling in this analysis. Aside from that, snowball sampling is used to collect information from hard-to-reach target audiences.

Table 2: Numbers of Sample Selection

School Name	Number of Teachers
SJKT Ladang Sussex	15
SJKT Ladang Chemor	13
SJKT Gunong Rapat	12
SJKT Gandhi Memorial	13
SJKT Menglembu	20
SJKT Tanjong Rambutan	33
SJKT ST Philomena Convent	24
SJKT Ladang Matang	11

Table 3: Source of Research Items

Variable	Number of Item	Source
Job Burnout	5	MBI, Maslach and Jackson 1996 [5]
Job Performance	5	Koopmans 2015

3.2 Measurement of the instruments:

Based on Table 3 below, 5 items from MBI (Maslach Burnout Inventory) developed by Maslach and Jackson (1996) [5] on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 “strongly disagree” to 5 “strongly agree” was used in this research. Meanwhile, 5 items from Koopman (2015) was adopted as the instrument by ranging the scale from 1 “strongly disagree” to 5 “strongly agree”.

While in Table 4 below show the statement for each item for each of the variable in this study.

Table 4: Research Items

Job Burnout
1. I enjoy my work. I have no symptoms of burnout.
2. Occasionally I'm under stress and I don't always have as much energy as I once did, but I don't feel burned out.
3. I am definitely burning out and have one or more symptoms of burnout, such as physical and emotional exhaustion.
4. The symptoms of burnout that I'm experiencing won't go away. I think about frustration at work a lot.
5. I feel completely burned out and often wonder if I can go on. I am at the point where I may need some changes or may need to seek some sort of help.

Job Performance
1. I managed to plan my work so that i finished it on time.
2. I kept in mind the work result i need to achieve.
3. I am able to set priorities.
4. I was able to carry out my work efficiently.
5. I managed my time well.

4. Findings

This section presenting the results based on the data analysis such a correlation (Table 5) and regression analysis (Table 6).

Table 5: Pearson Correlation Analysis

	JB	JP
Job Burnout (JB)	Pearson Correlation	1
Sig. (2-tailed)		

Job Performance (JP) Pearson Correlation -0.708** 1
Sig. (2-tailed) 0.000 0.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The Pearson correlation study between work burnout and job performance is seen in table above. According to correlation study, the maximum reading for job burnout is (r = 0.708, p 0.01), suggesting that there is a negative correlation between job burnout and job performance.

Table 6: Results of Regression Analysis

Variable	Standard Coefficients Beta	P Value (Sig)
Burnout	-0.498	0.000
R ²	0.924	
Adj R ²	0.922	
F	410.629	
Sig.	0.000	

Table 6 above shows that there is a significant negative relationship between job burnout and job performance (b= -0.498, p < 0.001; Sig 0.000 p < 0.05). Therefore, Job Performance will decrease when the level of Burnout is high.

5. Discussion

The outcome of this study shows that burnout was found negatively significant with job performance, this indicates that a high level of burnout could decrease the job performance level among teachers. Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted. In addition, this finding is consistence with the other studies in the literatures (Incirli, 2021; Iancu *et al*, 2018) [29]. As been understood, teachers’ overall performance is crucial for the enhancement of the students, the development of the institution and the advancement of society nation. There is a growing understanding that highly qualified, skilled, and competent teachers are critical in helping the students improve their academic performance (Thakre *et al.*, 2017). According to Morgan and Craith (2015), the vast majority of teachers believe teaching has gotten more stressful. Individual diversity and an overloaded curriculum, as well as the number of students with behavioural issues, are major sources of stress and burnout. When a teacher's workload is increased, they are more likely to experience the burnout. There are times when a teacher's excessive burden confers honour and distinction on him or her. Increased workload, on the other hand, has been linked to burnout which could affect the job performance level. Workload mismatches enhance weariness, according to a study conducted in Poland, and increased workload has a continuous link with burnout. As a result, a heavy workload may be the most sensitive component in distinguishing burnout from inefficacy (Mojsa-Kaja *et al.*, 2015) [8]. Therefore, teachers should require a reasonable degree of workload in the profession. They are more likely to work if their schoolwork is not too demanding. When they ingest too much, it affects their work performance.

6. Limitations and Direction for the Future Research

There are few limitations in this study that should be acknowledged while interpreting the findings of the research. First, the research was carried out during the Covid-19 ockdown (Movement of Control Order) where the interstate travel is prohibited. There were some limitation in terms of the data collection where the researchers cannot meet the respondents face to face to distribute the questionnaire. However, the alternative plan has been carried out by distributing the questionnaire online. Second, is the concern about the research approach where quantitative research is generally has limitation in knowing about “how” and why regarding the antecedents and the consequences of the relationship among the variables Nevertheless, it still may not jeopardizing the whole finding of the study where quantitative could be used in generalizing the large sample size analysis result. It is recommended for the next future research to expand the study on the larger population, particularly in more states of Malaysia. In terms of the research framework, the future researchers can consider to focus on other moderating factors that may weaken or strengthen the relationship between burnout and job performance. Aside from that, the future

researchers may want to look into the demographic variables that affect employee job performance, such as gender and generation differentiation.

7. Conclusion

This study provides an overall indication that the job performance among Vernacular national-type Tamil schools, or Sekolah Jenis *Kebangsaan Tamil* (SJKT) in the selected school in the state of Perak is substantially influenced by job burnout.

In a nutshell, this research provides an overall indication that the job performance among the teachers in the selected schools which substantially influenced by job burnout. The objective and the hypothesis of the study have been achieved. This research could be used as a reference for the employers or the practitioners to be able to recognize the burnout symptoms that affect their employee performance in the workplace. Teachers, on the other hand, should be aware that working in a challenging task and environment should require more patience at all times in order to avoid stress. Finally, based on the findings of the whole report, all local vernacular schools that include the selected school in this study could have a better understanding of job performance in their respective fields.

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