

The Effect of Various Modes of Occupational Stress, Job Satisfaction, Intention to Leave and Absentism Companies Commission of Malaysia

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Abstract: This article highlights some of the major research findings regarding the causes of occupational stress within the organization and the implication on job satisfaction and intention to leave and absenteeism. The researcher chooses 100 employees in Companies Commission of Malaysia, a statutory body which regulated company and businesses. Pearson Product Moment Correlation to find out correlations and Multiple Linear Regression Technique were used to find out effect between variables. The finding indicates that factor such as external environment contribute to the occupational stress. This external factor is beyond the control of the organization. The occupational stress do not have direct effect on intention to leave and absenteeism but have direct negative effect on job satisfaction. Job satisfaction have negative effect on intention to leave and absenteeism.

Key words: occupational stress, job satisfaction, intention to leave and absentism

INTRODUCTION

Occupational stress was there when our predecessors were required to fight their survival. In modern times, stress plays an important role in how successful or unsuccessful we are in our productive work activity, and in general in enjoying our lives. It also is the one of the most critical problem that commonly occurring in the organizational behavior, in part due to the increase in the pressures that take on workers and managers alike. When the occupational stress occurs, it will directly affect the performance of worker and managers to the organization. Mostly, the occupational stress comes from the job that they are doing.

Many people not aware of occupational stress that occur in the organization and they did not care about the occupational stress. They assume that the occupational stress will only affect their performance of work but also affect their health like heart attack, migraine that can lead to death. If people not were aware about job stress, it will become worst such as suicide.

Hans Selye (1936), stated that the term "stress", defined it as "the non-specific response of the body to any demand for change". He later demonstrated that persistent stress could cause these animals to develop various diseases similar to those seen in humans, such as heart attacks, stroke, kidney disease and rheumatoid arthritis.

Problem Statement:

An occupational stress is a condition where the employees especially will feel undesirable and being threat in the organization. According to E. B. Marisa (2008), some people use the term stress to refer to a bad boss or unpleasant situation that they were exposed to. Sometimes, they will become unsafe in their work in the organization because of the condition.

The occupational stress that occur among employees as stated in newspaper which employees do strike in order to get what they want and to get back their privileges. Therefore, there are many effects on human, social and country and most important things is its affect economy of country.

Other than that, the occupational stress can lead to the health problem like heart attack, migraine, blood pressure, headache, and etc. These will affect many financial problems among employees.

According to American Institute Stress, the term stress as it used today was coined by Hans Selye in 1936, who defined it as the non-specific response of the body to any demand for change. His theories garnered considerable attention and stress became a buzzword that evolved to ignore his original definition.

This construction firm has long recognized human capital as a competitive advantage. Thus, the vision to become a reality, its leadership relies on employees to execute strategic objectives. The employees' knowledge, experience, skills, expertise, the ability to collectively innovate and their decision-making processes are key to the survival of this company.

The major problem that arises is supervisor not giving motivation also support for their employees for doing job. From this research, we will investigate the antecedents of occupational stress among employees. Thus, will increase trustworthy of employees towards their leader or supervisor and indirectly will give positive impact. Also, this study is to determine the outcomes of occupational stress that occur among employees which can give effect to the organization.

Antecedent of Occupational Stress:

Role Ambiguity:

Role ambiguity/conflict is undesirable aspects of a work environment. "Perceived role ambiguity occurs when a salesman believes that the expectations and demands of two or more of his role partners are incompatible and that he can not simultaneously satisfy all the demands being made of him" (Churchill et al. 1976, p.326). "Perceived role ambiguity occurs when the salesman feels he does not have the information necessary to perform his job adequately. He may be uncertain about what some or all of his role partners expect of him in certain situations, how he should go about satisfying those expectations, or how his performance will be evaluated and rewarded" (Walker et al. 1977, p.1 59). According to Rhoads et al. (1994), role ambiguity occurs "when a local person feels he/she is uncertain about the salient information necessary to enact his or her role" (p.2). Misinformation and/or lack of information lead to role ambiguity. Other than that by Fisher and Gitelson, 1983; Jackson and Schuler, 1985., role conflict and role ambiguity have been shown to have significant effects on personal and organizational outcomes.

Time Pressure:

According to Perlow, 1999, time pressure is becoming an increasingly prominent feature of work in America. Both the business press and the organizational literature have identified a "time famine," in which people feel that there are never enough hours in the work day. Indeed, it is likely that anyone reading this paper has a daunting "To Do" list on the current mental agenda. Prior research on performance effects has demonstrated clearly that time pressure is defined as either subjectively perceived time pressure or the imposition of a deadline - increases the rate of individual and group performance (Kelly & Karau, 1993, 1999). Time pressure has always been a fact of life in product management, and it is becoming increasingly intense as middle management cutbacks continue. In fact, a new term has been coined - "corporate anorexia" - to describe a situation in which the "fat" has been cut from a firm beyond a level that is healthy for existence (Wysocki, 1995). According to Isenberg(1981) and Kelly and McGrath (1985) examined communication patterns among group members under varying conditions of time pressure and stress. Kruglanski and Freund (1983) suggested that time pressure induces closing of the mind. In fact, under this condition people seek cognitive closure, they stop considering multiple alternatives, they use poor processing of information, and they refrain from critical probing of a given seemingly adequate solution (De Dreu, 2003).

4. Job Security:

Herzberg (1968) defines job security as the extent to which an organization provides stable employment for employees. The importance of job security stems from the fact that it is critical for influencing work-related outcomes. For instance, job security is an important determinant of employee health (Kuhnert *et al.*, 1989); for the physical and psychological wellbeing of employees (Burke, 1991; Jacobson, 1987, 1991; Kuhnert and Palmer, 1991) for employee turnover (Arnold and Feldman, 1982); for employee retention (Ashford *et al.*, 1989; Bhuian and Islam, 1996; Iverson and Roy, 1994); for job satisfaction (Ashford *et al.*, 1989; Burke, 1991; Davy *et al.*, 1991; Gavin and Axelrod, 1977; Lim, 1996; and Vinokur-Kaplan *et al.*, 1994); and for organizational commitment (Abegglen, 1958; Ashford *et al.*, 1989; Bhuian and Islam, 1996; Iverson, 1996; Morris *et al.*, 1993). Because of its significance, job security has attracted a great deal of research interest in

recent years. Massive layoffs now place job security at the center stage of an increasing number of labor negotiations, and make the traditional ignoring of the compensation monetary value of job security inadequate. The cost of job security agreements to the employer is that of reduced flexibility in future resource allocation decisions, while the uncertain benefits can include a more motivated workforce.

By contrast, workers usually bear no measurable costs of job security – paradoxically, total compensation for secured jobs tends to be higher than that for comparable unsecured jobs (Drago, 1986) – while secure workers enjoy an multitude of well-documented benefits, ranging from higher job satisfaction to financial, psychological, and physical well-being. Job security viewed as a compensation component is linked with contemporary research in intellectual capital. For example, from an intellectual capital, psychology, and knowledge management perspective, Edvinsson and Camp (2005, p. 112) find that “enterprises need to offer their people a more sustainable remuneration on their invested personal human capital, consisting of both tangible and intangible remunerations.”

2. Outcomes of Occupational Stress:

Job Satisfaction:

In the case of job satisfaction, although there is no universal definition of the concept of job satisfaction (Mumford, 1991), it can be conceived of as a multi-dimensional concept that includes a set of favorable or unfavorable feelings by which employees perceive their job (Davis and Newstrom, 1999). Specifically, Churchill et al. (1974) define job satisfaction according to all the characteristics of the job itself and of the work environment in which employees may find rewards, fulfillment and satisfaction, or conversely, sentiments of frustration and/or dissatisfaction. In contrast, Locke (1976) conceptualises job satisfaction as the emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job. Subsequently, Price and Muller (1986) identify job satisfaction by the degree to which individuals like their job. Expressed more simply, Spector (1997), Judge and Hulin (1993) and Judge and Watanabe (1993) present job satisfaction as the degree to which a person feels satisfied by their job, which has an impact on personal wellbeing and even on the life satisfaction of the employee. It is therefore necessary to determine the factors that define this satisfaction, thereby allowing suitable updates to be made in order to prevent the deterioration of job conditions in an organization. It is obvious that employees who are satisfied with their job are more prone to perform better. Job satisfaction is explained by “one’s affective attachment to the job viewed either in its entirety (global satisfaction) or with regard to particular aspect (facet satisfaction; e.g., supervision)” (Tett and Meyer 1993, p.261). More specifically, according to Locke 1969, p.3 16, job satisfaction is formally defined as “the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job as achieving or facilitating the achievement of one’s job values”. Employees who are dissatisfied with their job are more inclined to quit and change workplaces (Churchill et al. 1976). Employees who are satisfied with their jobs are expected to be more willing to adopt more customer– oriented behaviors and put extra effort to satisfy his/her customers.

Intent to Leave:

Empirical evidence strongly supports the position that intent to stay or leave is strongly and consistently related to intention to leave (Dalessio et al., 1986; Griffeth and Hom, 1988; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990). Other author, Hendrix et al., 1999; Mowday et al., 1982), researchers have found intention to leave or stay as the strongest predictor of actual intention to leave. Intention to leave among domestic operations typically refers to the separation of the individual employee from the firm. This definition is too narrow for the international environment and must be broadened to include several other dimensions of intention to leave since expatriate turnover often involves internal transfers to the organization (Naumann, 1992). This situation is more common in international operations than in domestic situations (Tung, 1984). Retention is the organizational outcome and refers to the worker’s intention to leave. Retention to turnover are affected by the same factors, with positive factors contributing to retention and negative factors contributing to intention to leave decisions (Zeytinoglu & Denton, 2005).

3 Absenteeism:

Absenteeism has been defined as “non-attendance when an employee is scheduled to work” (Price and Mueller, 1986, p. 17). Therefore, nonattendances due to annual and other approved leave are not generally viewed as absenteeism (Mueller et al., 1987). Voluntary and involuntary absences are usually differentiated, so that when employees do not intentionally create the conditions which produce the absence (e.g. illness) then these are typically considered as involuntary absenteeism (Mueller et al., 1987). Wooden (1995) listed

organizational commitment as one of the most important factors that impact on absence. He commented that higher levels of organizational commitment positively related to attendance, which suggested that increased organizational commitment could lead to substantially reduced levels of absenteeism and possibly reduced labor turnover. Significant negative relationships have previously been found to exist between organizational commitment and absenteeism in some studies (Blau, 1986; Farrell and Petersen, 1984; Hammer et al., 1981; Mayer and Schoorman, 1992; Pierce and Dunham, 1987; Steers, 1977; Terborg et al., 1982) but not in others (Angle and Perry, 1981; Ivancevich, 1985; Jamal, 1984). In fact, Ivancevich (1985) found that an individual's past absenteeism was a better predictor of subsequent absenteeism than the individual's level of organizational commitment. Blau (1986) carried out a study which examined organizational commitment and job involvement as predictors of absenteeism and tardiness behavior. Individuals with higher levels of organizational commitment and job involvement exhibited less absenteeism and unexcused tardiness than those with lower levels of commitment and job involvement.

3 Occupational Stress:

Occupational stress is defined as “a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the individual as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being” (Holt, 1983 13, p. 19). In other words, not only the characteristics of the environmental factors, but also the perception of the person about the demands of the environment (9), his/her coping resources (4,14), his/her sources, and type of social support (4) are important in defining occupational stress. Although Holt (1983) discusses some objectively defined stressors experienced in the workplace (e.g., noise, time variables, pollution levels) and there are legitimate arguments for focusing research solely on objective stressors (Fresse & Zapf, 1999), the perceived stressfulness of those factors still seems to be based upon personal appraisal. In support of examining the subjective nature of appraised/perceived work occupational stress, Cox (1993) found that a worker's perception of the demands presented in an occupational setting is generally more predictive of work-related distress than more objective features of the work situation. In addition, the identification of work stressors based on an individual's grasp of the meaning of the situation and their perception of the challenge, threat or harm sets the stage for psychological interventions that target primary and secondary appraisals (Benner & Wrubel, 1989).

MATERIAL AND METHOD

In this study, descriptive method is being used rather than exploratory research design or conclusive research design. This is because descriptive method describes phenomena as they exist and it also describes market characteristics or functions. Descriptive studies generally take raw data and summarize it in a useable form. An effective research design possess two common characteristics; (1) Provides answer to questions as objectively, accurately and economically as possible and (2) Control possible sources of errors such as collecting data from respondents who are not representative of the population's interest.

Descriptive research design is very important to find out leadership antecedents and outcomes that influence employee commitment. The research methodology must be pre-planned and structured. The main objective of descriptive research is to describe attitudes, perceptions, characteristics, activities and solutions.

Population:

Population refers to the entire group of people, events, or things of interest that the researcher wishes to investigate (Sekaran, 2003). Population is any complete group of people, companies, hospital, store, college students, or the like that share some set of characteristic. (William G. Zikmund, 2003). The population for the study is all employees who work in construction firm and target population is employees who are manager, executive and non executive.

The population of worker in these companies was a group of respondent who are employed in this company. At this section, employees from headquarters are chosen to be a sample of population in this study. The sample frame and the sample utilized were (N=100) in this company. These entire employees are choosing from headquarters only.

Sampling Technique:

The sampling techniques can be divided into two types that is probability or representative sampling and the other one is non-probability or judgmental sampling. In this study, the sampling technique used is non-

probability sampling. In non-probability sampling, elements in the population do not have any probabilities attached to their being chosen as sample subjects. Population not well identifies and not well defined. In this study, convenience sampling technique was applied. Convenience sampling attempts to obtain a sample of convenient elements. Often, respondents are selected because they happen to be in the right place at the right time. Besides, this sampling is the least expensive and least time consuming of all sampling techniques. The sampling units are accessible, easy to measure, and cooperative.

Data Collection Method:

Descriptive Statistic Of Antecedents For The Most Influence Occupational Stress

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation for Occupational Stress

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Role Ambiguity Mean	100	1.25	4.25	3.4950	.62981
Time Pressure Mean	100	1.83	5.00	4.2333	.60422
Job Security Mean	100	1.50	4.25	2.8450	.44289

Based on the table , there are three items in the antecedent of occupational stress among employees. The result shows that all the antecedents were influence employees occupational stress in the organization. However, the most influence based on this finding is time pressure with mean of 4.233.

Descriptive Statistic Of Outcomes For The Most Influence Occupational Stress

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation for Occupational Stress

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Job Satisfaction Mean	100	1.75	4.50	3.6500	.67951
Absent Mean	100	1.33	4.33	3.6000	.70630
Intent To Leave Mean	100	2.50	4.75	3.8750	.47178

Based on the table 3 there are three items in the outcomes of occupational stress among employees. The result shows that all the outcomes were influence employees occupational stress in the organization. However, the most influence based on this finding is intent to leave with mean of 3.875.

Correlation:

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Matrix between Antecedents of Occupational Stress

		ROLE	TIME	JOB	STRESS
ROLE	Pearson Correlation	1	.624(**)	.326(*)	.738(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.021	.000
	N	100	100	100	100
TIME	Pearson Correlation	.624(**)	1	-.177	.515(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.220	.000
	N	100	100	100	100
JOB	Pearson Correlation	.326(*)	-.177	1	.361(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.021	.220	.	.010
	N	100	100	100	100
STRESS	Pearson Correlation	.738(**)	.515(**)	.361(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.010	.
	N	100	100	100	100

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

H0: There is no significant relationship between role ambiguity and occupational stress among employees. As refer to table 4, we can see that role ambiguity (p=0.000) significantly associated with occupational stress. That means there is a statistical significant relationship between role ambiguity and occupational stress to the organization. Thus, there must accept hypothesis one. In addition, according to Alvin C. Burns and Ronald F. Bush 2005 there is a moderate relationships between the two variables with (r=0.738) and second test will be conducted.

Refer to table, we can see that time pressure (p=0.000) significantly associated with occupational stress. That means there is a statistical significant relationship between time pressure and occupational stress to the organization. Thus, there must accept hypothesis two. Even though it is a significant, according to Alvin C. Burns and Ronald F. Bush 2005 there is a weak relationships between the two variables with (r=0.5 15) and second test will be conducted.

Refer to table, we can see that job security (p=0.000) significantly associated with occupational stress. That means there is a statistical significant relationship between job security and occupational stress to the organization. Thus, there must accept hypothesis three. Even though it is a significant, according to Alvin C. Burns and Ronald F. Bush 2005 there is a very weak relationships between the two variables with (r=0.361) and second test will be conducted.

Table 5: Pearson Correlation Matrix between Outcomes of Occupational Stress

		Job Satisfaction	Absenteeism	Intent Leave	To Stress
Job Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.500(**)	.720(**)	.674(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
	N	100	100	100	100
Absenteeism	Pearson Correlation	.500(**)	1	.434(**)	.624(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.002	.000
	N	100	100	100	100
Intent To Leave	Pearson Correlation	.720(**)	.434(**)	1	.719(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.002	.	.000
	N	100	100	100	100
Stress	Pearson Correlation	.674(**)	.624(**)	.719(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
	N	100	100	100	100

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

Refer to table 5, we can see that job satisfaction (p=0.000) significantly associated with occupational stress. That means there is a statistical significant relationship between job satisfaction and occupational stress to the organization. Thus, there must accept hypothesis forth. Even though it is a significant, according to Alvin C. Burns and Ronald F. Bush 2005 there is a moderate relationships between the two variables with (r=0.674) and second test will be conducted.

Refer to table, we can see that absenteeism (p=0.000) significantly associated with occupational stress. That means there is a statistical significant relationship between absenteeism and occupational stress to the organization. Thus, there must accept hypothesis five. Even though it is a significant, according to Alvin C. Burns and Ronald F. Bush 2005 there is a very weak relationships between the two variables with (r=0.624) and second test will be conducted.

Refer to table, we can see that job security (p=0.000) significantly associated with occupational stress. That means there is a statistical significant relationship between intent to leave and occupational stress to the organization. Thus, there must accept hypothesis six. Even though it is a significant, according to Alvin C. Burns and Ronald F. Bush 2005 there is a moderate relationships between the two variables with (r=0.719)

Multiple Linear Regression (Second Test):

Table 6: Relationship between Occupational Stress and Role Ambiguity Coefficients(a)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	1.364	.299		4.568	.000
	ROLE	.638	.084	.738	7.584	.000

a Dependent Variable: STRESS

Occupational Stress : 1.364 + (+0.73 8) Role Ambiguity

The table 6 shows the hypotheses 1, role ambiguity does not contribute to the occupational stress even there is a relationship between them.

Table 7: Relationship between Occupational Stress and Time Pressure Coefficients(a)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	1.629	.476		3.420	.001
	TIME	.464	.111	.515	4.165	.000

a Dependent Variable: STRESS

Occupational Stress: 1.629 + (+5.15) Time Pressure

The table 7 shows the hypotheses 2, time pressure do significant not contribute to the occupational stress since there is a relationship between them.

Table 8: Relationship between Occupational Stress and Job Security Coefficients(a)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.33	.476		4.896	.000
	JOB	.444	.165	.361	2.683	.010

a Dependent Variable: STRESS

Occupational Stress : $2.33 + (+0.361) \text{ Job Security}$

The table 8 shows the hypotheses 3, job security do not contribute to the occupational stress since there is a relationship between them.

Table 9: Relationship between Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction Coefficients(a)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.624	.484		1.291	.203
	STRESS	.842	.133	.674	6.326	.000

a Dependent Variable: JOB_SATI

Occupational Stress : $0.624 + (+0.674) \text{ Job Satisfaction}$

The table 9 shows the hypotheses 4, job satisfaction do not contribute to the occupational stress even there is a relationship between them.

Table 10: Relationship between Occupational Stress and Absenteeism Coefficients(a)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.689	.532		1.295	.202
	STRESS	.810	.146	.624	5.536	.000

a Dependent Variable: ABSENT

Occupational Stress : $0.689 + (+0.624) \text{ Absenteeism}$

The table 10 shows the hypotheses 5, absenteeism do not contribute to the occupational stress even there is a relationship between them.

Table 11: Relationship between Occupational Stress and Intent to Leave Coefficients(a)

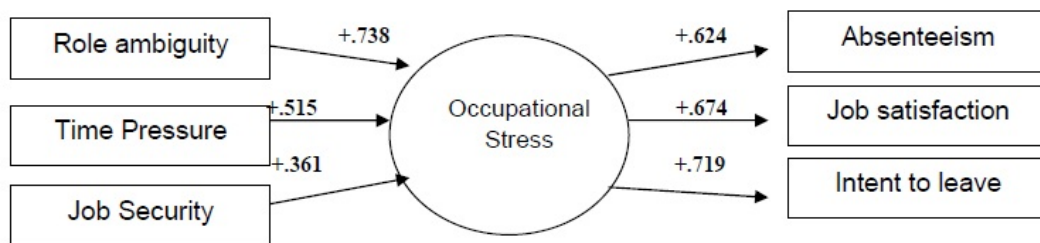
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.636	.316		5.174	.000
	STRESS	.623	.087	.719	7.163	.000

a Dependent Variable: INTENT

Occupational Stress : $1.636 + (+0.719) \text{ Intent to Leave}$

The table 11 shows the hypotheses 6, intent to leave do not contribute to the occupational stress even there is a relationship between them.

Final Model



Overall Findings:

First relationship is between role ambiguity and occupational stress. It shows the value of Beta is +.738 which means that there is a positively significant between role ambiguity and occupational stress.

Second relationship is between time pressure and occupational stress. It shows the value of Beta is +.515 which means that there is a positively significant between time pressure and occupational stress.

Third relationship is between job security and occupational stress. It shows the value of Beta is +.361 which means that there is a positively significant between job security and occupational stress.

Fourth relationship is between job absenteeism and occupational stress. It shows the value of Beta is +.624 which means that there is a positively significant between absenteeism and occupational stress.

Fifth relationship is between job satisfaction and occupational stress. It shows the value of Beta is +.674 which means that there is a positively significant between job satisfaction and occupational stress. Lastly is sixth relationship is between intent to leave and occupational stress. It shows the value of Beta is +.719 which means that there is a positively significant between intent to leave occupational stress.

Recommendations:

Based on the literature review and findings of this study, the researcher has made several recommendations that proposed to the selected construction firms.

According to Steven B. Donovan and Brian H. Kleiner, an important criterion related to occupational stress is role ambiguity and time pressure. When an employees become curiosity with their responsible for their work, it will create stress among them. Time pressure also have positive relationship to occupational stress which is most employees being procrastinate with their work. Thus, when an occupational stress occurs, intent to leave and absence will also exist because the employees feel demoralized with their work. employee absence and intention to leave is employee satisfaction that is employee with high level of job satisfaction is less likely to be absent and intent to leave the organization. In order to reduce the number of absenteeism and intention to leave the organization, organization must increase the level of job satisfaction so that employee will feel satisfy when working in the organization. Job satisfaction can be increase by give reward, recognition, give better salary and benefit, and provide good facilities and so on.

Besides that, even occupational stress is not effect intention to leave and absenteeism, it may effect through job satisfaction because occupational stress effect job satisfaction. Organization must reduce the stress level so that job satisfaction will be high. Occupational stress can be reduced by give support to employee, give training, good communication in workplace, give extra leave, better salary and benefit and so on.

In addition, only one factor is recognizing in this research which is external environment. Organization must find as much as possible factor to reduce the level of occupational stress in the company so that future way can be predicted.

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