

# EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND JOB STRESS AMONG ACADEMICIANS IN HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTIONS

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**Abstract:** Working as academicians is uncertain. Higher learning Institutions has become a challenging place since it's a platform to help and prepare the students to acquire and absorb multiples knowledge, skills, and attitude for the preparation of future work. Thus, the emotional stability of the academicians is vital to concern with to make sure they are stress free to distribute knowledge and educate all the learners to become a productive graduate. Not just talking about the KPI and achievements as academicians, students is also parts of big responsibilities that should take into academicians' account. However, because of the new era that is endemic today, where all working and timing patterns of academicians have been changed after two years working from home to return to old office hours routine are quite worrisome. Students that have been experiences learning through online distance learning for a few semesters or zero experience with campus life required heavy guidance from academicians in terms of academic education and emotional education, while in some aspect their work is beyond their working time and days. Thus, job stress among academicians is very familiar to all academicians either in universities or colleges that should be investigate further by researchers. This conceptual paper is attempts to determine the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Job Stress Among Academician in Higher Learning Institutions.

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence, Job Stress, Academician

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## Introduction

University staff, especially academic staff, have specific roles and responsibilities. These responsibilities are grouped into the following areas: teaching, examinations, management and administration, self-development, student guidance and special practice outside of school, etc.; providing support and management of family affairs (Chong et al., 2020). Academic individuals experience few problems in the teaching and learning process that affect their ability to survive. These issues include poor management, inappropriate working hours, inflexible institutional arrangements, overwhelming workload, poor student behaviour, poor dealings with partners, poor working conditions including depleted assets and poor physical components of the school structure, lack of rewards and partial ambiguity (Faiza, 2022). Academic staff, on the other hand, have more concerns than the all-inclusive community. Academic salaries have not kept up with other professions; an increasing number of posts are untenured or on a contract basis; workloads have increased as the number of academic roles has decreased or remained the same; weight has increased to get outside funding; and even primarily undergraduate institutions have placed a more notable emphasis on output (Garcia-Martinez, et al. 2021)

In this new globalization era, being an academician is among challenging jobs that require persistent effort. Coping with multiple requirements and responsibilities may lead the academicians to job stress that might impact their performance in multiple aspects. At the same time, academic staff have recently experienced increased job stress because of passing through an age of transition characterised by ongoing global changes, particularly significant shifts in the curriculum design and dynamic multitasking responsibilities, which has led to the development of high-performance expectations that must be met in educational institutions (Kaur et al., 2018). It is important for academicians to manage their emotions effectively. So, they can prepare for any differences or unexpected duties and tasks any time soon. According to Mohammadi et al. (2020), workplace stress is a major contributor to lost productivity and a leading source of medical and emotional problems for many employees today. Educators are the most essential element in the education industry, ensuring that students receive the greatest education possible for the development of their potential. However, if educators are stressed, this will certainly result in discordant conditions such as melancholy, frustration, and high anxiety. Indeed, stress can have an impact on the quality of teaching and learning (Jafar et al., 2022).

According to the study conducted by Mukosolu, Ibrahim, Rampal, and Ibrahim (2015) regarding the prevalence of Job Stress and factors associated has proof that educators in Universiti Putra Malaysia experienced stress at a rate of 23.1%, which is greater than the rate for non-educators (19.8%). Through Utusan Malaysia, Prof. Madya Dr. Khairunesa Isa has shown his concern about the situation that need to be faced by the young and juniors' lecturers this day who just started to get involved with academic world. He emphasizes that despite they need to face the harsh realities of life, they also stressed out that ended up being sick with everything. Thus, this is the challenge that need to be faced as an academician which made this career are having several values that are not existence somewhere else (Mior, 2021). Isa et al., (2021) stated that individual who are not able to cope with the stress may lead to disease like heart attack and musculoskeletal disturbance which is disorders of the nervous system, joints, ligaments, muscles, and tendons in the long term. However, does EI of one academician impacted their job stress? This has been getting curiosity by multiple researchers since the result of these two variables in higher educational institutions are still lacking. Burnout at work is a syndrome brought on by a protracted sensitivity to stress at work (Lubadeh,2020). Hussin et al., (2022) concluded that academicians in higher education reported 48% occupational

fatigue or burnout, beside academics in public higher education institutions experienced moderate burnout at a rate of 44%, compared to 5% for private academics.

Increasing workload and job complexity typically have an impact on academic staff. This workload and job complexity would inevitably lead to the formation of stressful working circumstances. Emotions play a significant part in the creation of academicians. In a profession that involves not only technical skill but also psychologically oriented care, knowledge about the self and emotions in nursing would be critical to the profession's ongoing development and progress. Emotional intelligence affects many elements of academicians' everyday lives, including their behaviour and interactions with others. Faculty members are responsible for providing students with education and advice, as well as doing research in their particular disciplines to improve the quality of teaching and research. They must have a clear mind as well as expertise in order to focus on the teacher-learner process. With this in mind, an academicians' behaviour with EI in an organisation is critical for professional and personal success. As a result, this talent is necessary for academicians to work well. This ability may help instructors cope not just with their pupils, but also with their colleagues. As a result, the purpose of this study is to look at the link between job stress and emotional intelligence among academicians in higher learning institutions in East Coast Malaysia only.

## Literature Review

There are three areas will be discussed in LR such as Emotional Intelligence, Job Stress and the relationship between these two variables.

### Emotional Intelligence

According to Kanesan & Fauzan (2019), Bar-On, Goleman and Petrides, Salovey, and Mayer characterised emotional intelligence differently in their study, resulting in three models which are ability, mixed, and trait. This research examines the strengths and weaknesses of EI models. EI is usually divided into personal and social intelligence. However, the review concludes that ability model is the best model to explain emotional intelligence phenomena because (1) it can be defined as intelligence, (2) the founder of emotional intelligence suggested this framework, (3) it fits well with the common definition, handling emotion in oneself and in others and (4) it highlights pure EI without personality trait.

Emotional intelligence is vital in inspiring people to commit to a work. The attitude of a person while performing job directs emotional intelligence towards good productivity in the organisation (Ahad, Mustafa, Mohamad, Abdullah, & Nordin (2021). Ali (2020) believed individuals, groups, and organisations can develop trust, loyalty, dedication, productivity, and innovation if they can manage their emotions appropriately. Since EI has been found to positively effect a wide range of working characteristics, it should be incorporated into the education and training of both leaders and employees (Papoutsis, Drigas & Skianis, 2019). Due to the fact that it is associated with burnout and psychological distress, there is a huge body of research that has demonstrated that EI is a significant resource for teaching professionals (Lopez & Extremera, 2017). Many experts are interested in the idea of emotional intelligence at the moment, so it turned out that having a high IQ does not make a person successful or happy in life. Emotions are important when making decisions and getting along with other people, so it seems likely that there is something else that is important besides good cognitive abilities (Norboevich, 2020).

Based on Rathore et al., (2017), EI is thought to contribute to higher job performance, and it is essential for success in almost all positions. The world's largest organisations are headed by emotionally intelligent people, which has been critical to their success (Pittenger, 2015). As time goes by, there are multiples research has been conducted which introduce various models and theories of EI which involve additional of new contribution. However, this study will focus on Daniel Goleman (1997) concept that has introduced the mix model of EI that involved five components which are self-awareness, self-regulation, social-ability, empathy, and motivation.

**Self-awareness:** EI is founded on self-awareness. Knowing one's emotions (being able to monitor feelings on a continuous basis) is essential for psychological insight and self-understanding. Evaluating how emotions influence performance, using beliefs to guide decision-making, self-assessment which looking at your strengths and flaws and gaining through previous lessons and being self-confident and definite about your capabilities, values, and objectives.

**Self-regulation:** Maintaining composure and the capacity to think rationally under pressure; resisting impulses; and cultivating dependability and self-control. Self-regulation involves managing one's internal states, impulses, and resources. This element of EI includes self-control, trustworthiness, conscientiousness, adaptability, and innovation.

**Social-ability:** The capability to control relationships, engage, and engage with others. In the other words, the ability to manage interpersonal connections effectively is referred to as social ability. Influence techniques, effective communication with others, conflict management skills, leadership abilities, change management skills, instrumental relationship management, collaboration and cooperation abilities, and successful team membership capabilities are all part of this EI component.

**Motivation:** Enthusiasm for difficulty and stimulation, pursuit of success, dedication, initiative, optimism, and being influenced by one's individual preferences while selecting objectives. Self-motivation involves the control of emotional tendencies that guide or facilitate reaching goals. Achievement drive, commitment, and initiative are key elements in one's self-regulation.

**Empathy:** The ability to see things from other people's perspectives; acting openly and honestly; avoiding the inclination to stereotype others; as well as cultural awareness. Empathy, or understanding of other people's feelings, wants, and worries, is a critical social ability that various writers have stated is a necessary component of EI. Understanding others, developing others, being service-oriented, exploiting diversity, and having a strong political awareness are all aspects of empathy.

### **Job Stress**

The term "stress" refers to an uncomfortable state that may take place in an individual as a result of an imbalance in the individual's cognitive, emotional, and environmental systems that is triggered by external stimuli (Bliese, Edwards & Sonnentag, 2017). Asha et al. (2022) proofed that employees experience job stress when their needs are not satisfied. If the requirements do not match the worker's competencies and skill sets, if there are insufficient resources allocated, and if the worker's needs are not addressed, job stress may ensue. Stress at work is a negative indicator that can result in a variety of physical and emotional emotions and responses, as well as affect the employee's health. Various study regarding job stress has been found.

Based on study conducted by Ogunola (2020), job stress is differed from one type of work to another. It clarified that job stress has a big effect on how well a family works together and that different families have different expectations about what stress at work means. It showed that male and female employees have very different ideas about how stressful their jobs are. The study suggested that employees get training on how to deal with stress on a regular basis so that they know what they need to do to stay healthy and keep working. Mensah (2021) stated that there are four very important theories about job stress have been found in a lot of research which related job stress with job control and job demand by Karasek (1979), job stress with rewards which highly related with Effort Reward Imbalance (ERI) by Siegrist (1996), job stress with job burnout by Demerouti et al. (2001) and last one is job stress with person and environment by Lazarus and Folkman (1984). According to Singh, Amiri & Sabbarwal (2019), job stress come from job discontent which leads to abandoning the office, absenteeism underemployment, and lack of time in the workplace. These issues lead to low employee productivity, and the organizations will underperform. The better an organization can clear stress from the workplace, generate a positive attitude toward its work, and create the ideal conditions for job satisfaction, the better it can achieve its goal of high production and efficiency.

On the other hand, according to the study conducted by Tentama et al. (2019), has identified has confirmed that job stress is a major driver of job happiness university leaders must pay attention to their employees' psychological state and avoid placing unreasonable demands and duties on them to avoid stressing them out. Stress may be a universal aspect, and people from all walks of life must deal with it. Employees in various organisations should be sensitive to stress. These pressures lead to lower organisational performance, lower employee overall performance, lower labour quality, increased staff turnover, and absenteeism. It additionally leads to health issues such as anxiety, sadness, migraines, and backaches (Pandey, 2022).

### **The Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Job Stress**

A study found by Navas and Vijayakumar (2018) the EI had a significant positive effect on organisational commitment, workplace stress, and work satisfaction. Employees who are emotionally intelligence will have great job happiness, which will lead to the highest workplace performance. Job stress is wholly reliant on a person's level of EI, and an employee's positive characteristics will help his stress management. As a result of their ability to read and manage their own and others' emotions, employees with high EI contribute significantly to workplace productivity. They also exhibit less stress and greater organisational dedication. This has been supported by Naseem (2018) that individuals with greater EI perceive less stress and a higher degree of happiness.

According to Moahamed & Neggy (2017), staff in academic area consistently being involved with high job complexity and burden of workloads. Those issues are directly influence the chances of creating the stressful working situations towards the academicians. Yamani et al., (2014) has concluded that there is important inverse relationship between EI and job stress. In fact, by increasing the EI among employees, stress can be reduced and vice versa. Thus, personnel that contents high EI can combat with stressful environment or situations. This result also been supported by other study which also resulted in the same findings such as from Birks et al., (2009) and Deshiri (2004).

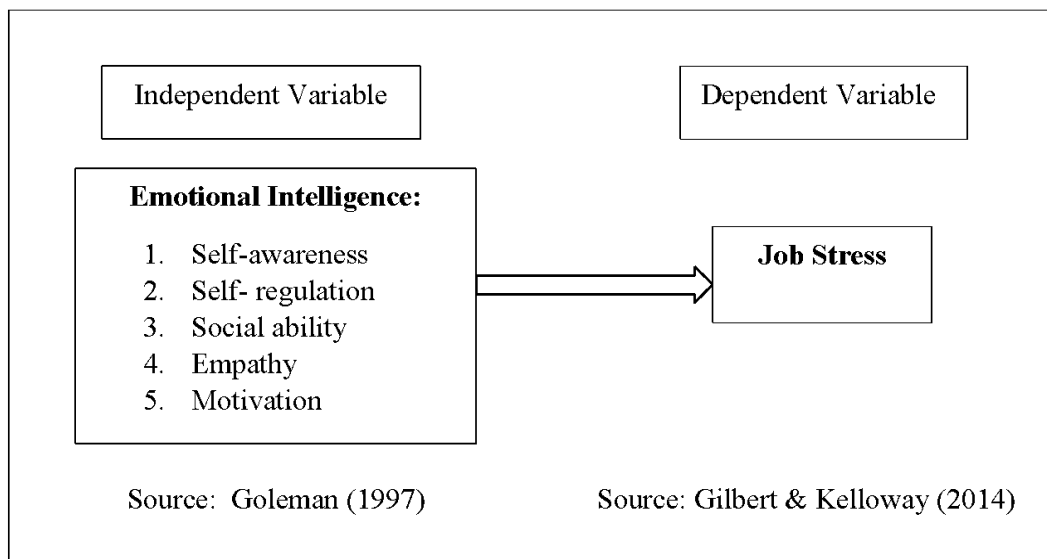
On the other hand, these two important variables not only significant among academics' sector but also impactful in healthcare area. Even though the components of EI might be differences;



however, results of EI do have effects on job stress among employees. According by the study conducted by Rakhshani et al., (2018), EI also found that EI among nurses give moderate and positive relationship between their job stress. Besides, the EI components (self-awareness, self-motivation, self-control, social consciousness, and social skills) are very useful in helping the staff especially nurses to reduce their stress. This study is consistent with this finding and been supported by study conducted by Tourani & Ahmadi (2014).

Finally, Putro & Wening (2022) concluded that both work stress and EI have a positive and significant effect on employee performance, with EI strengthening the effect of work stress on employee performance. Work stress is a big issue for both employees and corporations. Thus, it is important for all the upper management to give a big concern about the academicians's emotional state to reduce their stress towards the jobs which in return increase their job performance.

### Conceptual Framework



This conceptual framework has been developed by referring on the sources initiated by Goleman (1997) which covered five EI components that includes social awareness, social regulation, social ability, motivation, and empathy, and single items job stress proposed by Gillber & Kelloway (2014).

### Methodology

This chapter discusses about how this research was designed and the measurement of variables. The following sections concentrate on determining the research design, population, sampling technique, and sample size of the research, and plan for data analysis. This research is non-experimental research in which researcher will be conducted to investigate the relationship emotional intelligence and job stress among academicians in higher learning institutions in East Coast Malaysia only. The researcher wants to know the relationship between emotional intelligence and job stress among academicians in higher learning institutions. The study is causal research. It indicates the main goal is to identify the effect relationship between variables. According to (Sundram, et al., 2016) causal relationship indicates that one concept or variable causes a movement in another concept and variable. For this reason, the questionnaire will be

used to collect the data for this study. For population and sampling, based on statistics from Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia (MOHE) (2022), there are total 20 public universities. For this study, we are focus public universities in East Coast Malaysia only. Academicians from all selected public universities in East Coast Malaysia will be respondents for this study; therefore, no specific population number is provided. The sampling technique used in this study is convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is a type of non-probability sampling that involves the subjects being drawn from the part of the population which is close to hand. The subjects were selected as such because they were readily available and convenient (Sundram, et al., 2016). For the unit of analysis for this study, the subject involved is an individual academician at selected public universities in East Coast Malaysia. The instruments that will be used for this research is questionnaire and IBM SPSS Statistics, which will be used to analyse the data.

### Research Instruments

The research instruments used in the study were adopted from various sources based on the suitability.

- 1) The researchers created a socio-demographic data questionnaire to gather information such as age, marital status, academic position, and monthly income.
- 2) The researchers will design a job stress questionnaire after evaluating relevant literature. It is made up of 49 elements that evaluate the academic members' sources of job stressors. It will be divided into three subscales; the first pertains to the sources of job stress in the academic setting as work tasks that require time and effort, such as "I feel pressure on me to work up compared to my colleagues in other colleges," the second pertains to the levels of job stress and describes repeated complaints of symptoms such as headache; back pain for no apparent reason, the third subscale is connected to the neglect of home chores, and organisational loyalty which involves "I feel pride while talking about the faculty in front of others, faculty has a high place on myself". Using a five-point likert scale, respondents will be asked to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with the statements in the job stress questionnaire ranging from (5= strongly agree) to (1= strongly disagree)
- 3) Emotional intelligence scale: It is a 28-item questionnaire designed by Petrides and Furnham (2003) that will be used to test emotional intelligence among academicians. It is linked to a variety of EI elements such as self-awareness, self-regulation, social ability, empathy, and motivation. The respondents' replies were graded using a five-point Likert scale, in which (1) indicates strongly disagree, (2) indicates disagree, (3) indicates somewhat, (4) indicates Agree, (5) indicates strongly agree.

### Conclusions

This study is going to be conducted which will provide insightful implication towards high education institutions regarding the concerns towards the job stress of their academicians. Thus, multiple aspect of emotion which to be highlighted emotional intelligence components is significant to be tested to determine the impact towards job stress among academicians. The results will be giving a lots of importance recommendation that might be used to improve the performances of academicians these days in coping with a lot of challenges while educating new advanced generations. Last but not least, this research is a conceptual paper in which is further study will be conducted in this selected area soon.

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