

WORK STRESS AMONG EXPATRIATE MANAGERS IN MALAYSIA'S GOVERNMENT-LINKED COMPANIES

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ABSTRACT

Due to the rapid increase in demand for skillful and experienced managers, many multinationals including Malaysian conglomerate companies under the umbrella of Khazanah Nasional Berhad which also known as the government-linked companies (GLCs) had employed expatriates in their workplaces especially in IT, engineering and elite positions such as management directors that really focus on restructuring and developing healthy business growths. In fact, their expertise and experience had improved many GLCs performance. However, many of them are exposed to work stress that could jeopardise the performance of the Malaysian GLCs. Thus, this study aims to explore such phenomenon related to work stress at workplace. Workload, role conflict and interpersonal relationship are among the factors that influence the work stress at workplace. Expatriates who are attached with Malaysia's government-linked companies such as UEM Group, Silterra, Telekom Malaysia, Tenaga Nasional Berhad, ASTRO, CIMB Group and Celcom Axiata were used as the main database in this study. A total of 90 useable questionnaires were received. Result shows that workload and interpersonal relationships were significant but on the other hand role conflict was not a significant factor to influence work stress among the expatriates who are attached with Malaysian GLCs.

Keywords: Work Stress, Expatriates, Malaysia government-linked companies (GLCs)

1.0 Introduction

Workplace environment is one of the important parts in our daily lives which cause a great deal of stress. Due to the competitive nature of working environment, most of the people in the world are spending their time for job related work purposes resulting to ignore the stressor which those that influenced their work and life. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to determine factors that influencing work stress among foreign managers in Malaysia's government-linked companies (GLCs).

In today's era of globalization, companies from different nationalities are trying to capture new markets and proving their presence all over the globe and the value of foreign managers increases significantly. However, the issue of work stress has increased dramatically among foreign managers who have a negative impact on them and their work as well. For instance, people have been suffering from all types of diseases such as heart attack, back pain, neck pain, fatigue, high blood pressure, eye problem and many other diseases caused by work stress.

In global organization there is an increasing needs to get group of managers from different nationalities to work together effectively either as enduring management teams or to resource specific projects addressing key business issues. Many organizations identified mixed of nationalities of managers can be problematic and performance is not always at the level required or expected.

Performance is then related to workplace stress, which is the harmful physical and emotional response that occurs when there is a poor match between job demands and the capabilities, resources, or needs of the employees.

Thus, this study attempts to discuss about foreign managers who have work in Malaysia's GLCs. Most of these managers spend a lot of time at work since they are under pressure to adapt to a new culture and their overall responsibilities are often larger than they have experienced which it might be lead to the work stress.

2.0 Work Stress in the Workplace.

Work stress becomes a common problem faced by employees in many organizations today. In almost all cases, the responsibilities of expatriates in emerging countries will be larger than they are used to overseeing. It will affects employees mental and physical health and which in the long run will affects organization performance. Thus, this study has been focus on the factors contributed to work stress among foreign managers who are working in Malaysia's GLCs, as stated that the foreign managers are stressed because of work overload and some other factors (Division of Human Resource, 2000).

Management role of an organization is one of the aspects that affect work related stress among workers (Alexandros-Stamatios et. Al, 2003). Foreign managers in Malaysia's GLCs can face occupational stress through the role stress that the management gave. Role stress means anything about an organizational role that produces adverse consequences for the individual (Kahn and Quinn, 1970).

With the amount of workloads and other contributing factors, most of the foreign managers admitted in the GLCs are experiencing the work stress. Workload stress can be defined as reluctance to come to work and a feeling of constant pressure accompanied by the general physiological, psychological, and behavioral stress symptoms (Division of Human Resource, 2000). According to Wilkes et al. (1998) work overloads and time constraints were significant contributor to work stress among community nurses.

Besides that, they are tried to adapt to the different working cultures and in different groups and categories of people at the same time. Moreover, culture stress studies underline the influence that a society and its accepted norms can have on the types of stressors individuals may experience as well as the types of resources available to deal with them (Bahrami, 2010). Role related are concerned with how individuals perceive the expectations other have of them and includes role ambiguity and role conflict (Alexandros-Stamatios et. Al., 2003).

In conclusion, the aim of this study is to determine the level of work stress and few other factors that influencing work stress among foreign managers in Malaysia's government-linked companies and shall find ways to help the foreign managers in Malaysia's GLCs to handle and manage stress at the workplace. Not only that it would be beneficial to the knowledge of the researcher, but it would also be beneficial to the employees and organizations as a whole to promote a healthy working environment.

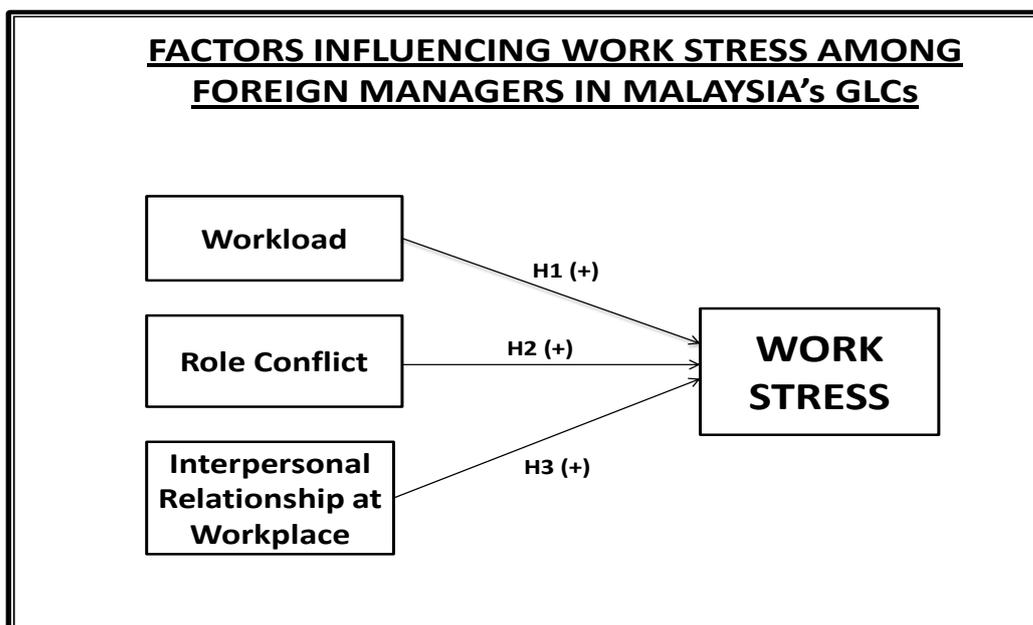
This research is carried out to determine the factors influencing work stress among foreign managers in Malaysia's GLCs. The research questions are:

- What is the significant correlation relationship between workload and work stress among foreign managers in Malaysia’s GLCs?
- What is the significant correlation relationship between role conflict and work stress among foreign managers in Malaysia’s GLCs?
- What is the significant correlation relationship between interpersonal relationship at workplace and work stress among foreign managers in Malaysia’s GLCs?
- Which factors among workload, role conflict and interpersonal relationship at workplace are most significant towards work stress among foreign managers in Malaysia’s GLCs?

3.0 Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis

Based on the literature review and research problem, the following research framework has been developed, this study suggest a primary research model by combining the dependent variable which is work stress and the independent variable will be workload, role conflict and interpersonal relationship at workplace. This framework is adapted from “Work Organization and Stress” by Stavroula Leka, Amanda Griffiths and Tom Cox (2003). The relationship of the mention variables are shown in figure 2.1 below:

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



The figure 1 shows the conceptual framework for this study. This study is to examine the factors that caused the work stress which are workload, role conflict and interpersonal relationships at workplace. According to Leka et al. (2003), workload, role conflict and interpersonal relationships at workplace are the factors that led to the work stress. Therefore, this study would be able to determine the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables. This study is also be able to identified which factors are most significant to the work stress among foreign managers in Malaysia’s GLCs and comes out with the alternative in reducing level of work stress among foreign managers in Malaysia’s GLCs.

3.1 Theoretical Background: The Lazarus Theory: Cognitive Appraisal

According to Richard Lazarus, stress is a two way process which involves the production of stressors by the environment and the response of an individual subjected to these stressors. This theory conception regarding stress led to the theory of cognitive appraisal. Lazarus stated that cognitive appraisal occurs when a person considers two major factors that majorly contribute in his response to stress. These two factors including the threatening tendency of the stress to the individual, and the assessment of resources required to minimize, tolerate or eradicate the stressor and the stress it produces. In general, cognitive appraisal is divided into two types or stages which are primary and secondary appraisal.

Two concepts are central to any psychological stress theory which are appraisal, for instance individuals' evaluation of the significance of what is happening for their well-being, and coping, whereby the individuals' efforts in thought and action to manage specific demands (cf. Lazarus, 1993). According to Lazarus (1991) stress is regarded as a relational concept, for example, stress is not defined as a specific kind of external stimulation nor a specific pattern of physiological, behavioral, or subjective reactions. Instead, stress is viewed as a relationship or transaction between individuals and their environment. Psychological stress refers to a relationship with the environment that the person appraises as significant for his or her well being and in which the demands tax or exceed available coping resources (Lazarus and Folkman, 1986, p. 63). This definition points to two processes as central mediators within the person environment transaction which are cognitive appraisal and coping.

In Lazarus theory on emotion and adaptation, Lazarus (1991) developed a comprehensive emotion theory that also includes a stress theory (cf. Lazarus, 1993). This theory distinguishes two basic forms of appraisal, primary and secondary appraisal (Lazarus, 1966). These forms rely on different sources of information. Primary appraisal concerns whether something of relevance to the individual's well being occurs, whereas secondary appraisal concerns coping options. Within primary appraisal, three components are distinguished which are goal relevance describes the extent to which an encounter refers to issues about which the person cares. Goal congruence defines the extent to which an episode proceeds in accordance with personal goals. Type of ego involvement designates aspects of personal commitment such as self esteem, moral values, ego ideal, or ego identity. Likewise, three secondary appraisal components are distinguished which are blame or credit results from an individual's appraisal of who is responsible for a certain event. By coping potential (Lazarus, 1991) means a person's evaluation of the prospects for generating certain behavioral or cognitive operations that will positively influence a personally relevant encounter. Future expectations refer to the appraisal of the further course of an encounter with respect to goal congruence or incongruence. Specific patterns of primary and secondary appraisal lead to different kinds of stress.

Three types are distinguished which are harm, threat, and challenge (Lazarus and Folkman 1984). Harm refers to the psychological damage or loss that has already happened. Threat is the anticipation of harm that may be imminent. Challenge results from demands that a person feels confident about mastering. These different kinds of psychological stress are embedded in specific types of emotional reactions, thus illustrating the close conjunction of the fields of stress and emotions. Lazarus (1991) distinguishes fifteen basic emotions which nine of these are negative which are anger, fright, anxiety, guilt, shame, sadness, envy, jealousy, and disgust, whereas four are positive such as happiness, pride, relief, and love. Two more emotions, hope and compassion, have a mixed valence. At a molecular level of analysis, the anxiety reaction, for example, is based on the following pattern of primary and secondary appraisals where there must be some goal relevance to the encounter. Furthermore, goal incongruence is high, for instance, personal goals are thwarted. Finally, ego involvement concentrates on the protection of personal meaning or ego identity against

existential threats. At a more molar level, specific appraisal patterns related to stress or distinct emotional reactions are described as core relational themes. The theme of anxiety, for example, is the confrontation with uncertainty and existential threat. The core relational theme of relief, however, is a distressing goal incongruent condition that has changed for the better or gone away (Lazarus, 1991).

3.2 Workload

According to Leka, Griffiths and Cox (2003) show workload is that which values excessive demands and pressure that are not matched to workers' knowledge and abilities, where there is little opportunity to exercise any choice of control, and where there is little support from others. Carr et al. (2011) stated that the terms and conditions of a job can be a major source of stress. Job demands can be thought as consisting of intrinsic task requirements, the levels of uncertainty, time pressure, and the rate, amount and difficulty of work. According to Thomson (2009), most of the American workers compared to United Kingdom, Italy and Belgium having a work stress. The U.S. workers reported an overly heavy workload of 52%; disorganization 43%; bosses who expected them to work when ill consist of 37% and to meet unrealistic expectations 32%; and too little time to complete tasks are having 31%. Work overloads and time constraints were significant contributors to work stress among community nurses (Wilkes et al., 1998).

Furthermore, Al-Aameri (2003) has mentioned in his studies that one of the six factors of occupational stress is pressure originating from workload. Cooper et al., (1988) and Hedge et al., (1992) also claimed that factors intrinsic to the job include working conditions, shift work, risk and danger, and new technology. Physical surroundings such as air quality, lighting, decoration and tidiness, noise, furniture and personal space can affect moods and overall mental state. The more the demands and pressure of work are matched to the knowledge and abilities of workers, the less likely they are to experience work stress. According to Lardner and Manshor (2003) in their study stated that, in many cases, extra effort is required for a short period and then workload becomes manageable. However, if these problems are repeated frequently or experienced constantly over long periods of time, it becomes more and more likely that workload is excessive and may be harming staff in some way. Therefore:

Hypothesis 1 (+): The higher the workload the bigger the work stress.

3.3 Role Conflict

Role conflict emerges when the worker has to choose between competing demands or expectations. Conflict situations can act as stress factors and lead to cardiovascular ill-health risks, such as elevated blood pressure and abnormal blood chemistry (Manshor, 2003). According to role theory, role conflict results from two or more sets of incompatible demands involving work related issues (Kahn et al., 1964; Katz and Kahn, 1978). According to Peterson (1995) in his study stated that role conflict is incompatibility between the expectations of parties or between aspects of single role. In accordance with this study defined role conflict as the dimensions of congruency-incongruency or compatibility-incompatibility in the requirements of the role, where congruency or compatibility is judged relative to a set of standards or conditions which impinge upon role performance (Tang and Chang, 2010).

As stated by Nusair and Deibageh (1999) role ambiguity and role conflict were also correlated with work stress among 50 emergency doctors working in nine hospitals of the northern areas of Jordan. Role conflict occurs when an employee receives two different, conflicting sets of direction from two different authority figures in a work setting (Hamwi et al., 2011). Behrman and Perreault (2006)

found that the stress level of the employee is increased when role conflict occurs because the employee cannot follow one set of directions without ignoring, or directly violating the other set of orders. According to Elloy and Smith (2003) role conflict refers to the existence of conflicting demands within a single role or between multiple roles. Role conflict can exist in the domestic and the work domain. This could help to explain why much of the research on dual career role conflict has focused on work family conflict as the primary source of role conflict. Therefore:

Hypothesis 2 (+): The higher the role conflict the higher the work stress.

3.4 Interpersonal Relationship at Workplace

Interpersonal relationships at work constitute a day to day interaction between colleagues or managers and employees. These relations are a natural part of work environment and are usually pleasant and creative but sometimes the sources of tension and frustration. According to Manshor et al. (2003) dealings with bosses, peers and subordinates can dramatically affect the way one feels at the end of the day. Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (2011) stated that work colleagues can be important sources of support, but they can also be sources of stress. Relationships with bosses, peers and subordinates can positively or negatively affect the way a worker feels. Wherever groups of people work together, it's likely that some conflict will arise from time to time. Poor relationships with others lead to less trust and support between peers, subordinates and superiors (Al-Omar, 2004).

Furthermore, work related stress is a current and future issue for health and safety. Having to live with other people is one of the most stressful aspects of life. This is also true of working relationship, in which workers are required to have significant interaction with other people, whether colleagues, bosses or subordinates. These relationships can be a major source of stress (Makin, Cooper & Cox, 1996). Besides that, Arnold, Cooper and Robertson (1998) found that poor relationship is resulted from lack of trust, little support, and low interest in listening and attempting to tackle workplace problems. Manshor et al. (2003) also suggested that Malaysia is a collective society where harmony is desired and any kind of confrontation is seen as a threat to society. Often, employees are working in different and changing configurations of very diverse people, frequently from different cultures. Different types of organizational culture nurture values, attitudes and styles of work and create psychologically different work environments, and forms of psychological contract between employer and employee (Cartwright and Cooper, 1992).

Hypothesis 3 (+): The more the staffs have relationship the higher the work stress exists.

4.0 Research Design

This study used a survey design. Its focus is to examine the factors that contributed to stress among expatriates in Malaysian GLCs. Selected Malaysia's government-linked companies which are listed in Bursa Malaysia had been chosen as organizations who have operating MNCs based in Malaysia which are UEM Group, Silterra, Telekom Malaysia, Tenaga Nasional Berhad, ASTRO, CIMB Group and Celcom Axiata which are all based in headquarters, Kuala Lumpur. All of these GLCs are under the government substantial ownership which are directly or indirectly through its investment holding companies such as Ministry of Finance Incorporation and Khazanah Nasional Berhad (KNB). GLC is a legal entity created by a government to undertake commercial or business activities on their behalf as the rightful owner. GLC can be fully owned or partially owned by the government. These organizations have been chosen because all of the organizations are MNCs and they are having a

huge numbers of foreign managers who have work with them (Immigration Department of Malaysia, 2011).

Therefore, the target population in this study comprised of all foreign managers in the Malaysia's GLCs as per mentioned above is about 110 respondents. As at 2012, there are more than 100 companies that had been registered as government-linked companies in Malaysia and 54% of it has been listed in Bursa Malaysia (Bursa Malaysia, 2011).

4.1 Measurements and Data Collection

A survey instrument in the form of structured questionnaire was developed for the purpose of collecting the main data for the study. Questionnaires were adapted from Gerard Hargreaves (2007). Out of 120 questionnaires, we managed to collect 90 responses. Multiple follow-up methods were used to obtain the responses such as mail, email and personal visit to the respondents offices. Table 1 demonstrates the profile of the respondents. The respondents were 90 foreign managers, 76 male and 14 female. Their average age was 50 (54%). Majority of them were from Asian countries, while Americans (30%) and European (29%). Most of them are in the level of senior managers (80%) which received more than RM20,000 per month.

Table 1: Respondents Profile

Characteristics of respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	76	25.7
Female	14	46.8
Age		
26 to 35 Years old	11	12.2
36 to 45 Years old	48	53.3
46 years and above	31	34.4
Citizenship		
Asians	36	40.0
Americans	28	31.1
European	26	28.9
Designation		
Top management	17	18.9
Senior Management	73	81.1
Income (RM)		
8,000 - 10,000	2	2.2
10,001 – 20,000	33	36.7
More than 20,001	55	61.1

N = 90 (Number of respondents)

4.2 Reliability Test and Analysis of Data

In this research, Cronbach's alpha tests being applied to test the reliability of the instruments used. Item reliabilities were assessed by examining the outer loadings of each item (Table 2), which were above the recommended threshold of 0.7 (Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics, 2009). However, two of the outer loadings were lower than the threshold: work stress and interpersonal relationship. Although the level is low, both are nearly 0.7 which are accepted for the measures. As such, almost all internal consistency reliability measures are above the recommended level of 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978).

Pearson correlations and Multiple regression were used to analyse the data of three variables in explaining factors that lead to work stress among foreign managers in Malaysia's GLCs.

Table 2: Cronbach's Alpha Values

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Item
Work Stress	0.636	10
Workload	0.908	5
Role Conflict	0.788	5
Interpersonal Relationship	0.679	5

5.0 Results

In this study, the dependent variable (work stress) and independent variables (workload, role conflict, and interpersonal relationship at workplace) are measured by the mean and standard deviation. The respondents have been asked to rate the answer for each variables in the questionnaire by using Likert five point scale range from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

Table 3 shows mean and standard deviation scores of the variables. The table shows that work stress has a score of 3.9433 in mean. Workload has the mean of 3.9689 while role conflict has the mean of 3.7244. Lastly, interpersonal relationship at workplace scores a mean of 3.6178.

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Variables

Factors	No.	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Workstress	90	2.20	5.00	3.9433	0.49448
Workload	90	1.40	4.80	3.9689	0.88884
Role Conflict	90	1.40	5.00	3.7244	0.90917
Interpersonal Relationship at Workplace	90	1.60	5.00	3.6178	0.78104

5.1 Pearson Correlation Coefficient

A correlation test is conducted to determine the relationship between work stress as the dependent variable and independent variables which are workload, role conflict and interpersonal relationship at workplace. Correlation test will measure the degree of “covariation” between two variables. Covariation is when one variable consistently and systematically changes relative to another variable (Hair et al., 2007). Table 4 demonstrates correlation result.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Coefficient

	1	2	3	4
work stress	1.000			
workload	0.569**	1.000		
role conflict	0.522**	0.809**	1.000	
Interpersonal relationship	0.465**	0.552**	0.480**	1.000

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

5.2 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was conducted to study the relationship between independent and dependent variable. According to Cavana et al. (2007), regression analysis is a statistical method that develops an equation (usually a linear model) that relates a dependent variable to one or more independent (predictor or exploratory) variables. Table 5 shows the regression result between work stress and workload, role conflict and interpersonal relationship at workplace. From the table, the adjusted R Square is 0.365, which shows that the model accounts for 36.5% of variance in the work stress.

Table 5: Multiple Regression Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.604	0.365	0.343	0.40078

a. Predictors: (Constant), Workload, Role Conflict, Interpersonal Relationship at Workplace

Table 6 shows the result for ANOVA. The table as below shows that the F value of 16.492 is significant at the 0.000 level. These results bring the meaning that the 36.5% of the variance in work stress has been significantly explained by the independent variables.

Table 6: ANOVA Results

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	7.947	3	2.649	16.492	0.000 ^a
	Residual	13.814	86	0.161		
	Total	21.761	89			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Workload, Role Conflict, Relationship Workplace

b. Dependent Variable: Work Stress

Table 7 below shows the results of the regression coefficient. The regression coefficient will tell us how much of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variables (Hair et al., 2007). The Standardized Beta Coefficient gives measure of the contribution of each variable to the model. A large value indicates that a unit change in this predictor variable has large effect on the criterion variable. Table 5.2 reveals that workload and interpersonal relationship at workplace have a significant relationship with work stress ($p < 0.05$). Role conflict however does not have a significant relationship based on the result of the analysis. The variable is not significant because $p > 0.005$. (Role conflict = 0.157).

Table 7: Regression Coefficient

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Unstandardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 Constant	2.424	0.225		10.765	.000
Work load	0.182	0.086	0.327	2.119	0.037*
Role conflict	0.085	0.080	0.157	1.070	0.288
Relationship	0.133	0.065	0.210	2.031	0.045*

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

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed)

Apart from that, T-statistic helps to determine the relative importance of each variable in the model. Table 7 shows that all variables provide a positive number. Workload scores the highest value which is 2.119, followed by interpersonal relationship at workplace with the score of 2.031. However, role conflict scores the lowest for T-value which is 1.070.

In addition, the table also illustrates the beta for each variable. Workload has a beta of 0.327 as well as interpersonal relationship at workplace which has a beta of 0.210. The role conflict has computed a beta of 0.157. Therefore, the overall multiple regression also can be reported as below:

Adjusted R square = 0.365; F3, 86 = 16.492, $P < 0.005$

Significant variables are:

Table 8: Significant Variable

Predictor variable	Beta	T	p
Workload	0.327	2.119	$p < 0.005$
Interpersonal Relationship at Workplace	0.210	2.031	$p < 0.005$
Role Conflict	0.157	1.070	$P > 0.005$

*Role conflict is not a significant predictor in this model.

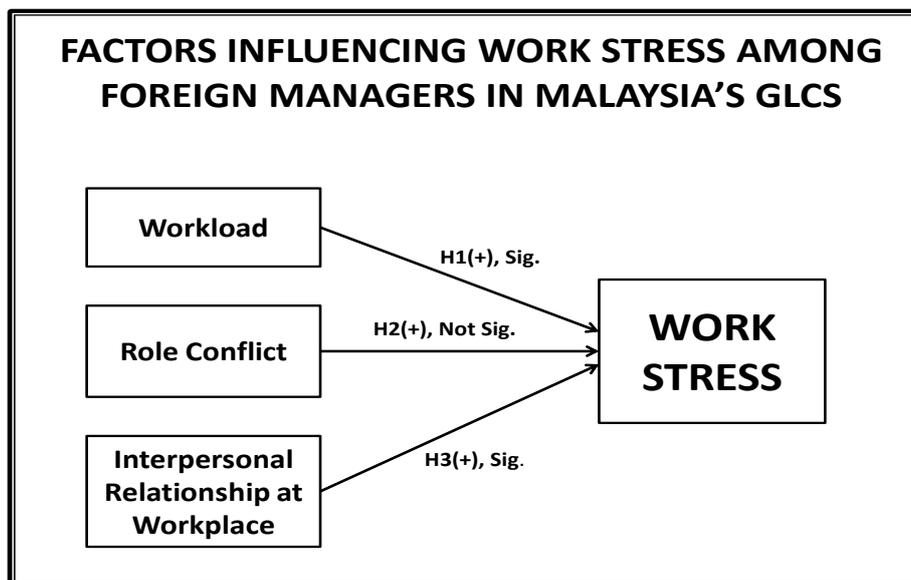
6.0 Discussion and Research Contribution

Table 9: Summary of Findings

Hypothesis		Result
H1	There is a positive relationship between work stress and workload	Significant
H2	There is a positive relationship between work stress and interpersonal relationship at workplace	Significant
H3	There is a positive relationship between work stress and role conflict	Not Significant

The modified model in figure 5.1 below show the new framework that result from the hypothesis testing. One variable in the figures 5.1 below shows that the role conflict is not significant to influence the work stress. The other two variables which are workload and interpersonal relationship at workplace show the significant and positive relationship with the work stress among foreign managers in Malaysia's GLCs.

Figure 2: Modified Model



6.1 Workload and Work Stress

Finding analysis reveals that the p value is significant (beta = 0.327, $p = 2.119$) and therefore the hypothesis (H1) is accepted. The T-statistics reveals that workload is the most important factors that influence work stress among foreign managers in Malaysia's GLCs. Positive T value shows that the more the foreign managers received the workload, it will increase more work stress to the foreign managers. The findings also show that the more workload foreign managers have to deal, the high of work stress the foreign managers will face. Most of the respondents in this study are all in managers level. It might explain the positive relationship between workload and work stress as according to French and Caplan's (1973) differentiation of work overload in terms of quantitative (too much

work) and qualitative (work that is too difficult) overload represents additional categories of potential stressors.

Cunningham (1997) mentioned that workload variance involves dealing with both job overload and job under load. When employees are given more work than they can reasonably handle, they become victims of job overload. Job under load may occur when employees are given menial and boring tasks to perform. A study of work stress among professionals found that teachers were most likely to experience work overload and that is one of the cause of work stress (Chan et al. (2000). The result further indicates that the direction of the associations is positive in which it implies that the more work overload is given to foreign managers, the possibility of them to face of work stress will be higher.

6.2 Role Conflict and Work Stress

The H2 which is role conflict however, is not in-line with a wide range of previous findings by Alexandros-Stamatios et. al., 2003 and Susan C., 2003, Kahn and Quinn, 1970, whereby in this study, role conflict is having positive relationship with workstress, but however, in multiple regression analysis has resulted that role conflict ($\beta = 0.157$, and $p = 1.070$) reveal as not significant predictor towards work stress. Therefore, role conflict is not really giving an effect to the work stress compared to workload and interpersonal relationship at wokplace. This is due to the management role of that Malaysia's GLCs is very much supportive to their employees. This contrasts the findings in Chonko et al (1986) and Fry et al. (1986). They both mentioned that role conflict usually is an unavoidable attribute of a job, and high amounts of role conflict can lead to greater levels of work related stress.

Another possible explanation for the absence of role conflict on work related stress among foreign managers in Malaysia's GLCs may not reveal to others when they are experiencing conflicting role demands. As pointed by Grover (1993) employees are more likely to lie about role conflict to others when the reward or the benefit for hiding the truth is great. Therefore, role conflict was proved to be not significant cause of work related stress among foreign managers in Malaysia's GLCs.

6.3 Interpersonal Relationship at Workplace and Work Stress

Surprisingly, the results of this study shows that the association between interpersonal relationship at workplace and work stress is significant with ($\beta = 0.210$, $p = 2.031$) and therefore, this hypothesis is accepted. The importance of relationship factor may be due to fact that most of the employees in Malaysia's GLCs are uncomfortable to adapt into others working cultures and also not cooperative. Probably because of the different cultures that make them are difficult to adapt each others. The resulted shows that the more foreign managers are having interpersonal relationship at workplace, the more they will face the work stress. However, we can expect to get less association if the both foreign and local employees start to adapt with others cultures in their organizations and specifically to Malaysian cultures.

Mitroff and Alpaslan (2003) constructed a wheel of crisis that human beings should learn and prepare to confront. In this wheel, they listed the following crises that people must prepare to confront and cope with physical crisis, political crisis, criminal crisis, informational crisis, reputation crisis, economic crisis, natural disasters and personal crisis. If managers learn more about the kind of things that can cause stress in their everyday lives, they will be better prepared to deal with all stresses. High level of stress is due to a lack of sensitivity towards colleagues, which may lead to aggression (Spector et al. 2000). Similarly, Galvin and Dileepan (2002) reported that poor relationship with colleagues is among the most stressful factor within the organization. French and

Caplan (1972) noted that the responsibility for people is much more likely to lead to stress. Increased responsibility for people usually means that one has to spend more time interacting with others, and attending meetings.

6.4 Managerial Implication

The findings in this study provide a good guideline for the company to think of and implement the strategies to reduce stress among foreign managers in Malaysia's GLCs. Even though this study is conducted on foreign managers, but they are the expertise and important person to the organization. It is necessary for them to understand the factors that are important to find ways to reduce stress which it will help the organization to design an appropriate strategy in order to reduce stress among their employees.

This study also proof that high workload will cause foreign managers or employees in trouble. It is because work stress may lead to physical symptoms such as headaches, neck pain, backaches, dizziness, chest pain, heart palpitations, and intestinal problems. Also, stress itself alters the heart rhythms and poses a risk for serious arrhythmia with heart rhythm disturbances in people. Stress can attack the hearing, hair, brain, digestive track, muscles, skin, and lungs. Also, in women, chronic stress may reduce estrogen levels, which are important for cardiac health (Hayman, 2003). Besides, workload variance involves dealing with both job overload and job under load. When employees are given more work than they can reasonably handle, they become victims of job overload. Job under load may occur when employees are given menial and boring tasks to perform Cunningham (1997). So, in order to reduce work stress among the foreign managers and also the employees generally is exercise. Applying exercise in everyday life such as playing sports and swimming can reduce stress caused by physical tension and pressure. Exercise can help the body relax and improve good sleep (Smith, 2007). By focusing on the target and goal when playing, the mind will be separated from stress and its causes. Trying to forget the causes of work stress through exercises may lead to relief from stress. The more one tries to remember and think about the causes of work stress, the more stress will follow the person like footmarks left behind after every step.

Even though role conflict is not important in work stress, but still if any of the foreign managers are facing this problem, they need to overcome it. According to both Frank (1958) and Ditz (1959) stated that conflicting directions made it necessary for managers to use multiple criteria in judging personnel performance; however, the necessary criteria could not be specified, even theoretically, and thus posed a dilemma. Besides, Smith (1989) noted that in the workplace, where the CEO's leadership style often sets the tone, the corporate culture has a lot to do with stress. An autocratic CEO who permits little input from subordinates may create a stressful environment or the job itself could produce excessive stress due to factors related to job performance. Role conflicts respectively occur when an employee does not understand the content of the job or when an individual is placed in the position of having to pursue opposing goals. However, this factor of stress can be relief through recognizing and disengaging technique. It means taking time out to temporarily disengage from stressful thoughts. By this method, the connection between stress and its cause will be separated, and eventually it will lead to the end of stress.

For the interpersonal relationship at workplace, findings show that the factors can easily reduce the work stress if the foreign managers cope with the cultural differences in their organizations. The foreign managers have to adapt themselves into Malaysian working culture and always creating positive feeling with the colleagues. Positive or negative feeling is very much dependent on the way people see things and respond to the others. Among many problems and stressful situations, if human beings learn how to think positively, speak politely and reasonably, and act appropriately,

they will not be suffered from any problems confronting them (Yongmanitchai, 2010). The basic way to create a positive feeling is to make the mind free from stress and all bad emotions like worry, anxiety, hatred, and anger, so that, there will be a space in the mind to generate positive and healthy energy. This mental energy can be created only if the mind is at peace, and calm (Channuwong, 2010). By focusing on positive thoughts and invoking the power of positive thinking, the foreign manager can create good relationship with their colleagues or subordinates. Being one's self-starter, doing and completing a task in a positive manner can enhance personal performance. Mitroff and Alpaslan (2003) constructed a wheel of crisis that human beings should learn and prepare to confront. In this wheel, they listed the following crises that people must prepare to confront and cope with such as physical crisis, political crisis, criminal crisis, informational crisis, reputation crisis, economic crisis, natural disasters and personal crisis. If foreign managers learn more about the kind of things that can cause stress in their everyday lives, they will be better prepared to deal with all stresses.

This study also shows that the Malaysia's GLCs and other organizations should always alert on this work stress matters because work stress can cause the low job performance and job satisfaction; and also the emergence of negative attitudes and anger and create feelings of hopelessness. Cryer, McCrathy and Childre (1995) added that stress can manifest in mood swings, sleep disturbance, and aggressive behavior. Things surrounding workers can create stress to them anytime if they do not have enough immunity for feeling. People who never purify their mind and never realize the role of their thinking cannot identify and stop the causes of stress; they know at the last moment when they are stressful, and suffer by it (Raitano and Kleiner, 2004). As human beings, we need to understand the nature of stress as it is an impermanent one; it occurs, exists for a moment, and then reaches an end. It cannot last forever. If we can calm the mind, stress will be disappeared.

So that, the best strategies for organization to overcome the work stress issue among their employees is through work redesign whereby the organization should change the demands of work or workload, ensure that employees have develop appropriate knowledge and abilities to perform their job effectively, improve employees' control over the way they do their work and increase the amount of quality of support that they will received. Other than that, the organization also should provide the conducive working environment, stress management training programme, ergonomic and environmental design, management development, organizational development and lastly, encourage employees to engage in extra activities conducted by the organization such as social works, and etc.

7.0 Limitation of study

There are some limitations in this study. First, this study focused only on foreign managers in selected Malaysia's GLCs which are Petronas, Telekom Malaysia, MISC, Sime Darby, Tenaga Nasional Berhad, Maybank and Celcom Axiata which based in headquarters and also are listed in Bursa Malaysia. The use of respondents from other government or private firm is not possible due to time and cost constraint. Second, the target respondents are foreign managers and most of them are working in different companies and therefore, it reflects the difficulty of collecting data once the survey had been distributed. Even though there is a due date to the respondents to complete the survey, yet multiple follow up need to be done in order to obtained the survey. Furthermore, since the respondents is difficult to meet and often not available in the office, so that it is difficult for researcher to get a prompt feedback from them.

It is crucial thing to get cooperation from the respondents in order to get the correct data. If they refuse to give correct information, then the data gathered will not be precise. In addition, the

respondents are busy with their daily works and tasks, hence, they are not able to entertain the researcher all the time. Besides, some of the data would not be gathered due to confidentiality and it is for the view of authority. Besides that, it is difficult to raise the participation from respondents. Some respondents are unwilling or reluctant to answer the questionnaire and some respondents answered the questionnaire poorly. In order to obtain more robust result, this study should be carried out across all the Malaysia's GLCs. Also felt that more independent variables should have included in this study instead of limiting it to three.

8.0 Direction for Future Research

Although this study provides the significant insights towards work stress among foreign managers in selected Malaysia's GLCs that listed in Bursa Malaysia such as Petronas, Telekom Malaysia, MISC, Sime Darby, Tenaga Nasional Berhad, Maybank and Celcom Axiata which based in headquarters, thus, further study should cover a larger group and wide areas of the survey. This may include local managers from the same selected Malaysia's GLCs for this study or from all the Malaysia's GLCs in Malaysia. This is because we might see the different factors influencing work stress between local and foreign managers who are working in Malaysia's GLCs. Thus, it would strengthen the validity of the future study.

Even, if the future researchers want to use foreign manager as the respondents, it should be include from various industry; such as the government and private firm all across Malaysia. The research should be focus on the foreign managers from Malaysia's GLCs in Malaysia overall rather than only focus on selected Malaysia's GLCs as per mentioned above. So that, it will help the organization to identify more factors that influenced work stress and it might be able to help the management to improve the work stress issues as a whole.

Furthermore, this study has used the quantitative methods using questionnaire, it would be suggest for future research to be focus on qualitative methods such as using an interview or case study because the researcher could have deeper explanation from the respondents regarding factors that influencing work stress issues towards foreign managers. Finally, future research may be conducting multiple statistical analyses for each variable is a challenging and stressful, therefore it would be necessary to conduct only one or two analysis which will fit or achieve the objective of the research.

9.0 Conclusion

The study has identified two most important factors that influence work stress among foreign managers in Malaysia's GLCs which are workload and interpersonal relationship at workplace. Also the foreign managers, the workers and organizations must note the insignificant relationship between role conflict factors and work stress. This valuable information is useful for the foreign managers, local workers and the organization itself in order for them to improve to the better performance in work as well as life. Therefore, all of them especially foreign managers must be very concern on these factors and try to develop the best strategy in order to reduce the work stress and experience the healthy life. Besides, the study also recommends the strategies to the companies in order to overcome the work issues in their organizations.

In the nutshell, this study provides us a better understanding on the factors that affect the work stress among foreign managers in Malaysia's GLCs. Furthermore, this study is done on foreign manager who are actually experiencing themselves the work stress problems in their working life. Understanding the factors that influence the work stress now will eventually help the companies for their future management plan in overcoming the work stress issues. However, firm should realise

that factors influencing work stress might be change in the future due to environments' changing, peoples' changing, and etc.

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