



# Asian Journal of Scientific Research

ISSN 1992-1454

**science**  
alert  
<http://www.scialert.net>

**ANSI***net*  
an open access publisher  
<http://ansinet.com>



## Review Article

# Entrepreneurial Stress, Burnout and Intention to Quit: An Examination on MARA Entrepreneurs

S.M.H.S. Khairuddin, L. Salim, Z. Saidun and M.S. Hashim

Universiti Kuala Lumpur Business School, Universiti Kuala Lumpur, Bangunan Yayasan Selangor, No. 74, Jalan Raja Muda Abdul Aziz, Kg. Baru, 50300 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

## Abstract

The study on stress, burnout and intention to quit among Malaysian entrepreneurs is next-to-nothing. Therefore, there is a need to contribute more in this area of study. The demands of the work of an entrepreneur can lead to burnout. From the literature survey conducted earlier, job burnout led to intention to quit. The objectives of the study are to review the relevant literatures on entrepreneurial source of stress, burnout and intention to quit and to develop hypothesis and a conceptual framework depicting these relationships for the majlis amanah rakyat (MARA) entrepreneurs in Malaysian Small and Medium Enterprises (SME). In this study, stress will be measured through ASSET, a shortened stress screening tool. The source of stress measured are: Work relationships, work-life balance, overload, job security, control, resources and communication, aspects of the job and pay and benefits. Meanwhile, burnout is measured through maslach burnout inventory and lastly intention to quit is measured with intention to quit scale. The sample of the study is the MARA entrepreneurs in Malaysian SMEs. Implication of this study is that by improving on these source of stress, burnout and finally, their intention to quit, entrepreneurial success will be ensured.

**Key words:** Small medium enterprise, MARA, burnout, hypothesis, to quit scale

**Received:** April 10, 2016

**Accepted:** June 20, 2016

**Published:** September 15, 2016

**Citation:** S.M.H.S. Khairuddin, L. Salim, Z. Saidun and M.S. Hashim, 2016. Entrepreneurial stress, burnout and intention to quit: An examination on MARA entrepreneurs. *Asian J. Sci. Res.*, 9: 171-175.

**Corresponding Author:** S.M.H.S. Khairuddin, Universiti Kuala Lumpur Business School, Universiti Kuala Lumpur, Bangunan Yayasan Selangor, No. 74, Jalan Raja Muda Abdul Aziz, Kg. Baru, 50300 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

**Copyright:** © 2016 S.M.H.S. Khairuddin *et al.* This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the creative commons attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

**Competing Interest:** The authors have declared that no competing interest exists.

**Data Availability:** All relevant data are within the paper and its supporting information files.

## INTRODUCTION

Occupational stress are prevalent in many professions. However, occupational stress studies on the entrepreneurs particularly in the Malaysian context are scarce. According to ASSET<sup>1</sup>, there are eight commonly found source of stress at the workplace i.e., work relationships, work-life balance, overload, job security, control, resources and communication, aspects of the job and pay and benefits. Makhbul and Khairuddin<sup>2,3</sup> found these sources of stress to be significant in Malaysian organizations. As the effect of stress, entrepreneurs could suffer from burnout; and this will lead to their intention to quit. Therefore, the objectives of this study are: (1) To review the relevant literatures on entrepreneurial source of stress, job burnout and intention to quit and (2) To derive hypotheses between these variables for the MARA entrepreneurs in SMEs.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

**Entrepreneurial stress study:** In a rare study, Ahmad and Xavier<sup>4</sup> in their observation of 118 entrepreneurs from industries in Malaysia, revealed their source of stress as related to required business skills, pressure of work, other's high expectations and responsibility.

**Majlis amanah rakyat (MARA):** Majlis amanah rakyat (MARA) is a Malaysian government agency under the Ministry of Rural and Regional Development. The mission of MARA is to spearhead the fields of entrepreneurship, education and investment to enhance equity holding of Bumiputera. There are 3 subsectors under the entrepreneurship sector namely, entrepreneur development division, industrial and infrastructure development division and lastly business financing division. The MARA entrepreneurs in this study was defined as entrepreneurs who received loan financing from MARA.

**General stress theory:** From the general theory of stress<sup>5</sup>, there are seven facets prevalent in most stress studies i.e., environment, personal, process, human consequences, organizational consequences, adaptive responses and time facets. The environment facet consists of the source of stress. Meanwhile, the human consequences facet consists of the effects of stress that can such as burnout. Finally, the organizational consequences facet consist elements that is detrimental to the organizations such as withdrawal behavior.

**Source of stress:** Work relationship can be defined as the working relationship between the entrepreneurs and their customers and staff. Therefore, a bad relationship between MARA entrepreneurs and the customers could be a major source of stress. Meanwhile, work-life balance is the balancing between work and life of the entrepreneurs. Work has the potential to spillover to life of the entrepreneurs. This could be a source of stress for the MARA entrepreneurs. Next, overload, it can be defined as the work load of the entrepreneurs in which they are unable to cope with. Since MARA entrepreneurs deal with many type of tasks from dealing with customers to designing the product, overload could be a major source of stress. Job security could mean the stability of the job to entrepreneurs. The risk of closure to their businesses is always there. Therefore, job security could also be a potential source of stress for the MARA entrepreneurs. Control can be defined as the power of entrepreneurs over their environment. If they are not able to control them, such as rules and regulation, etc. their businesses could be in jeopardy. Thus, control could be a main source of stress for MARA entrepreneurs. Resources and communication deal with the entrepreneurial resources and communication with their business partners. Entrepreneurs need resources such as financial capital to operate their business successfully. However, securing a business loan might be a challenge. They also should be communicated well enough by their business partners. Therefore, resources and communication could be a major source of stress for the MARA entrepreneurs. Aspects of the job consist of nature, physical condition and satisfaction of the entrepreneurial job. All of these factors might not be favorable for a small and medium businesses of the MARA entrepreneurs. This could be a major source of stress for them. Finally, pay and benefits, because of the growing stage that the businesses are going through, their pay and benefits might suffer. Therefore, pay and benefits could be a potential source of stress for the MARA entrepreneurs.

**Burnout:** According to Maslach *et al.*<sup>6</sup> burnout is a psychological phenomenon pertaining to the effects of job stress. Meanwhile, Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey (MBI-GS)<sup>7</sup> dimensionalised burnout as emotional exhaustion, cynicism and professional efficacy. Emotional exhaustion is the basic individual stress dimension of burnout referring to feeling of overextended and depleted of one's emotional and physical resources. The MARA entrepreneurs who suffered from stress could face emotional exhaustion. Representing the interpersonal distancing dimension of

burnout, cynicism can be defined as losing involvement with work. Due to stress, MARA entrepreneurs could face cynicism. Finally, professional efficacy, the feelings of incompetence and a lack of achievement and productivity in work is the reference of professional inefficacy. MARA entrepreneurs could face tremendous stress and this will affect their professional efficacy.

**Intention to quit:** Intention to quit can be defined as the process of leaving the organization. Turnover can be voluntarily or non-voluntarily. Voluntarily turnover existed when the employee decided to leave a company for a certain reason, whereas involuntarily turnover refers to the decision of the management to terminate the employment contract. Voluntary turnover is more problematic since it is unexpected and can cause considerable expenses to the company. The MARA entrepreneurs who suffered from stress could feel burnout and in turn quit their job.

## HYPOTHESIS

**Relationship between source of stress and burnout:** Source of stress is positively related to burnout in most studies<sup>8-10</sup>. In the study by Ashill and Rod<sup>8</sup>, in non-health service encounters, significant relationships were discovered between job demand source of stress such as role overload, role conflict, role ambiguity and emotional exhaustion and depersonalization). In other development, call centre stressors and emotional exhaustion were found to be significantly related<sup>9</sup>. Finally, positive and significant relationship were discovered between role conflict and work load and burnout<sup>10</sup>. The MARA entrepreneurs in SMEs who are stressed-out could be suffering from job burnout as well. Therefore, hypothesis one reads as such:

- **H1:** High levels of source of stress will lead to high levels of burnouts among MARA entrepreneurs in Malaysian SMEs

**Burnout and intention to quit:** In the study by Ducharme *et al.*<sup>11</sup> on emotional exhaustion and turnover intention in human service occupations, emotional exhaustion was found to be a significant predictor to intent to quit. The data was provided by 1,800 of counselors. In another development, the effect of burnout on psychological outcomes such as turnover intention, job burnout was found to have a substantial effect on high turnover outcomes. This

study was conducted by Surana and Singh<sup>12</sup> on 303 customer service representatives in India. The researchers developed their own measures of job burnout. Similarly, Knight and Leimer<sup>13</sup> discovered that job burnout affected intention to quit of 1,264 institutional researchers in United States of America. In addition, using Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), Lorenz and Guirardello<sup>14</sup> found out that significant correlations were observed between burnout and intention to quit of 198 nurses in Brazil primary healthcare services. Finally, in the study of the relationship between job satisfaction, burnout and turnover intention among physicians in China, Zhang and Feng<sup>15</sup> discovered that burnout syndromes were positively related to turnover intentions. Using a cross-sectional survey method, the study involved 1451 physicians from urban state-owned medical institutions in Hubei, China. Hence, MARA entrepreneurs in SMEs who suffered from stress, will get job burnout that in turn leads to their intention to quit their job. Hypothesis two will be as such:

- **H2:** High levels of burnout will lead to high levels of intention to quit among the MARA entrepreneurs in Malaysian SMEs

**Source of stress and intention to quit:** Source of stress such as job demands and role clarity were found significant in influencing employee's intention to quit their job<sup>16</sup>. In other instances, role stressors like overload, ambiguity and conflicts impacted positively intention to leave<sup>17</sup>. Source of stress such as unfair treatment were also found to be significant to turnover intention<sup>18</sup>. Overall, organizational source of stress have predicted turnover intention significantly in the past. Therefore, MARA entrepreneurs in SMEs who suffered from stress could lead them to quitting their job. Hypothesis three will follow suit:

- **H3:** High levels of source of stress will lead to high levels of intention to quit among the MARA entrepreneurs in Malaysian SMEs

**Burnout as a mediator:** In the study by Chen *et al.*<sup>19</sup> on Chinese hotel employees, job burnout was found to mediate between emotional labor and performance. The study was conducted 206 front-line hotel employees. Similarly, in the study of 305 flight attendants in Taiwan, job burnout mediates the relationship between job demands and health problems<sup>20</sup>. In study of construction project managers,

Leung *et al.*<sup>21</sup> discovered that stress was an antecedent to burnout and burnout can further predict job performance. 108 construction project managers in Hong Kong was surveyed successfully. In another development, Jung *et al.*<sup>22</sup> in their study reported that role stress was positively related to burnout and participants with high levels of burnout was likely to leave their position. This study was conducted on 316 hotel employees in Korea. Meanwhile, Li<sup>23</sup> reported that emotional exhaustion was an important partial mediator in the relationship between interactional justice and affective commitment. The participants from the study comprised of 435 teachers from five universities in China. Lastly, in the study by Lin *et al.*<sup>24</sup>, high occupational stress was associated with high burnout and high burnout was associated with high intention to quit the job. This study was conducted on 300 managerial staff in Guangzhou, China. The MARA entrepreneurs in SMEs who suffered from stress could also be suffering from job burnout and as a result of that intent to quit their job. Finally, hypothesis four goes as it is:

- **H4:** Burnout will mediate the effects of source of stress on intention to quit among the MARA entrepreneurs in Malaysian SMEs

### CONCLUSION

This study provides the framework for the study of entrepreneurial stress among entrepreneurs in Malaysia, particularly the MARA entrepreneurs. Implications from the findings suggested theoretical as well as practical contributions. Theoretically, this study not only supports the stressor-strain approach to the study of stress at the workplace but also extend it to become the stressor-strain-outcome theory. Practically, this study also implies primary, secondary, and tertiary interventions of stress. The MARA entrepreneurs can be most effective in reducing their stresses at the workplace by eliminating or reducing of the significant stressors. Secondly, if they are not able to do this, the secondary intervention is required. The MARA entrepreneurs must reduce burnout. Finally, through counseling as the tertiary intervention strategy, MARA entrepreneurs who severely suffered from stress are able to reduce their intention to quit from their job. Implication for the future research is to collect data on stress, burnout and intention to quit of MARA entrepreneurs in SMEs.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This study is funded by a Short Term Research Grant (STRG) of Universiti Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

### REFERENCES

1. Cartwright, S. and C.L. Cooper, 2002. ASSET: The Management Guide. Robertson Cooper Ltd., Manchester.
2. Makhbul, Z.M. and S.M.H.H.S. Khairuddin, 2014. Measuring the effect of commitment on occupational stressors and individual productivity ties. *Jurnal Pengurusan*, 40: 103-113.
3. Makhbul, Z.M. and S.M.H.H.S. Khairuddin, 2014. The effect of occupational stressors on health and individual productivity: Assessments via sobel test. *Jurnal Ekonomi Malaysia*, 48: 117-131.
4. Ahmad, S.Z. and S.R. Xavier, 2010. Stress and coping styles of entrepreneurs: A Malaysian survey. *Int. J. Entrepreneurship*, 14: 25-36.
5. Beehr, T.A. and J.E. Newman, 1978. Job stress, employee health and organizational effectiveness: A facet analysis, model and literature review. *Personnel Psychol.*, 31: 665-699.
6. Maslach, C., M.P. Leiter and W.B. Schaufeli, 2009. Measuring Burnout. In: *The Oxford Handbook of Organizational Well-Being*, Cartwright, S. and C.L. Cooper (Eds.). Oxford University Press, Oxford UK., ISBN: 9780199211913, pp: 86-108.
7. Schaufeli, W.B., M.P. Leiter, C. Maslach and S.E. Jackson, 1996. The Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey. In: *Maslach Burnout Inventory Manual*, Maslach, C., S.E. Jackson and M.P. Leiter (Eds.), 3rd Edn., Consulting Psychologists Press, Palo Alto, CA.
8. Ashill, N.J. and M. Rod, 2011. Burnout processes in non-clinical health service encounters. *J. Bus. Res.*, 64: 1116-1127.
9. Rod, M. and N.J. Ashill, 2013. The impact of call centre stressors on inbound and outbound call centre agent burnout. *Manag. Serv. Q.: Int. J.*, 23: 245-264.
10. Surana, S.J. and A.K. Singh, 2013. The impact of role stressors and work overload on job burnout. *Int. J. Intell. Enterp.*, 2: 64-83.
11. Ducharme, L.J., H.K. Knudsen and P.M. Roman, 2007. Emotional exhaustion and turnover intention in human service occupations: The protective role of coworker support. *Sociol. Spectr. Mid South Sociol. Assoc.*, 28: 81-104.
12. Surana, S.J. and A.K. Singh, 2012. The effect of job burnout on job outcomes among call centre customer service representatives in India. *Int. J. Intell. Enterp.*, 1: 270-289.
13. Knight, W.E. and C.L. Leimer, 2010. Will IR staff stick? An exploration of institutional researchers' intention to remain in or leave their job. *Res. Higher Educ.*, 51: 109-131.
14. Lorenz, V.R. and E.D.B. Guirardello, 2014. The environment of professional practice and burnout in nurses in primary healthcare. *Revista Latino-Americana Enfermagem*, 22: 926-933.
15. Zhang, Y. and X. Feng, 2011. The relationship between job satisfaction, burnout and turnover intention among physicians from urban state-owned medical institutions in Hubei, China: A cross-sectional study. *Health Serv. Res.*, Vol. 11. 10.1186/1472-6963-11-235.

16. Allisey, A.F., A.J. Noblet, A.D. Lamontagne and J. Houdmont, 2014. Testing a model of officer intentions to quit: The mediating effects of job stress and job satisfaction. *Criminal Justice Behav.*, 41: 751-771.
17. Cho, J.E., H.S.C. Choi and W.J. Lee, 2014. An empirical investigation of the relationship between role stressors, emotional exhaustion and turnover intention in the airline industry. *Asia Pac. J. Tourism Res.*, 19: 1023-1043.
18. Hwang, J., J.J. Lee, S. Park, H. Chang and S.S. Kim, 2014. The impact of occupational stress on employee's turnover intention in the Luxury hotel segment. *Int. J. Hosp. Tourism Admin.*, 15: 60-77.
19. Chen, Z., H. Sun, W. Lam, Q. Hu, Y. Huo and J.A. Zhong, 2011. Chinese hotel employees in the smiling masks: Roles of job satisfaction, burnout and supervisory support in relationships between emotional labor and performance. *Int. J. Human Resour. Manage.*, 23: 826-845.
20. Chen, C.F. and Y.L. Kao, 2012. Investigating the antecedents and consequences of burnout and isolation among flight attendants. *Tourism Manage.*, 33: 868-874.
21. Leung, M.Y., Y.S.I. Chan and C. Dongyu, 2011. Structural linear relationships between job stress, burnout, physiological stress and performance of construction project managers. *Eng. Constr. Arch. Manage.*, 18: 312-328.
22. Jung, H.S., H.H. Yoon and Y.J. Kim, 2011. Effects of culinary employees' role stress on burnout and turnover intention in hotel industry: Moderating effects on employees' tenure. *Serv. Ind. J.*, 32: 2145-2165.
23. Li, Y., 2014. Building affective commitment to organization among Chinese university teachers: The roles of organizational justice and job burnout. *Educ. Assess. Eval. Accountability*, 26: 135-152.
24. Lin, Q.H., C.Q. Jiang and T.H. Lam, 2013. The relationship between occupational stress, burnout and turnover intention among managerial staff from a Sino-Japanese joint venture in Guangzhou, China. *J. Occup. Health*, 55: 458-467.