

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the three parts of the statistical analysis from the results in the previous chapter. The first part discusses and highlights the results that support the main objective of the study. The second part includes recommendations to MAF Management, especially to the HRD of the respective services and the last portion concludes the research.

#### **5.1 Conclusion: The Results and Objectives**

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the main objective of the study is to identify factors that lead to job stress among military officers. From the results of the inferential analysis (see chapter 4, 4.2) it shows that three out of the four Independent Variables lead military officers to suffer from job stress. The related Independent Variables are organization environment reflected by H2, characteristic of work (H3), role conflict (H4).

The second objective of the study aimed to evaluate the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction of officers from all services in the MAF. From the results shown in Chapter 4, paragraph 4.3.5, it is clear that H5 job stress and job satisfaction have a significant relationship. In conclusion both objectives of the study have been achieved.

In the organization environment, six instruments were used in the questionnaires – situation at workplace whether it is conducive or not, whether success of personal achievement has been recognized, perception towards personal satisfaction, whether there is room to enhance career progression, and whether expertise and knowledge are utilized at the optimum level. Most of the respondents agree that a better working environment will positively reduce their level of stress. Those suggestions are related to objective no. 3 of this study. Hence, in order for officers of the MAF to have high morale, enhancing the working environment should be considered. In the army for instance, there are a few units that have been classified as '*kem daif*' (poor condition camp). For the RMN, their operational duties are mostly onboard ship, so it is very important to have activities that enable their officers to forget being absent from their families. But in the RMAF this variable is not so critical because the working environment is very flexible and most of the RMAF bases are situated near to town with proper facilities and infrastructure.

For characteristics of work, the results of the research found that as mentioned in chapter 1, for objective no. 3 of the study, there is a significant positive relationship between Characteristics of Work and Job Stress. There were nine instruments used in the questionnaire with most of the questionnaire measuring the level of satisfaction in terms of working attributes i.e. amount of work and time allocated, inconsistent priority of work by superior and the effectiveness of the decision making process. The majority of

the respondents agreed that characteristics of work should be positively encouraged in the MAF.

The last Independent Variable for job stress having a positive relationship is role conflict. In other words, the relationship between the duties and responsibilities and the subordinate and the superior is very important. When discussing role conflict, we cannot overlook the various types of role conflict. Whether it is for the benefit of the organization or for personal interest for a certain job position is not going to be discussed here. MAF should take this variable seriously, otherwise it will lead to ineffective communication, which results in loss to the organization and the officers himself/herself. In the long run the element may lead to the collapse of the organization. In this research, the majority of respondents agreed that transparency and trustworthiness are important ingredients for the success of the organization,

For H5, concerning the relationship of job stress and job satisfaction, there is no significant relationship. In other words, although the military officers experience high job stress, they are still satisfied with their job. This result contradicts much of the literature review explained earlier. This is due to the nature of the military setting where obedience and discipline are the core values making the military different from other work settings.

It is surprising, from the demographic variable analysis, that only family size is significant to job stress and job satisfaction. A family size of between 5 and 6 persons has the highest correlation with job stress and job satisfaction.

This suggests that officers, especially those with 5 to 6 members, are sensitive to job stress and job satisfaction. Any corrective measure should be emphasized to this group of officers.

## **5.2 Implications and Recommendations**

The results of the analyses in this study are concluded, and the discussion on the results of work stress has been presented. In addition, the explanation will be on the implications of the study conducted on all parties involved. With this explanation, the involved parties can take action and make an effort to **control the level of work stress** in their respective unit in order to maintain it at the optimal level. The legislators of the respective units should also evaluate the recommendations made. Lastly, it is proposed that further study should be conducted to fully understand the forms of job stress and job satisfaction.

As mentioned in paragraph 5.1, role conflict is a dominant factor in the relationship between the superior and the subordinate, so it is very important that this Independent Variable is handled professionally and maturely. **Relations between peers and superiors** need to be enhanced, especially improvements to communication. The aspects to be improved include – **sharing information** with employees to reduce uncertainty about their jobs and future, clearly defining the employees' roles and responsibilities, and making communication friendly and efficient, not mean-spirited or petty.

Factors to improve the **relationship of superior to subordinate** may include the superior consulting with their employees, this can be done through

giving workers the opportunity to participate in decisions that affect their jobs, consulting employees about scheduling and work rules, being sure the workload is suitable for employees' abilities and resources, avoid unrealistic deadlines and showing that individual workers are valued.

**Offering rewards and incentives** is believed to be one of the factors to improve the relationship between the superior and their subordinates. Superiors should praise good work performance of subordinates verbally and institutionally, provide opportunities for career development and last but not list promote an "entrepreneurial" work climate that gives employees more control over their work.

**Cultivate a friendly social climate**, this can be achieved through providing opportunities for social interaction among employees, establish a zero-tolerance policy for harassment and make management actions consistent with organizational values.

### **5.2.1 Recommendations to MAF Management, especially to HRD**

As mentioned earlier the researcher will suggest to the management how to handle job stress. The interim measures that can be taken are shown in the table below:

Table 5.1 Interim measures to reduce job stress

	<b>Time management tips</b>	<b>Task management tips</b>	<b>Target Group</b>
1.	Create a balanced schedule.	Prioritize tasks.	Officers dealing with staff job
2.	Don't over-commit yourself.	Break projects into small steps.	All types of duty
3.	Try to leave earlier in the morning.	Delegate responsibility.	All types of duty
4.	Plan regular breaks.		All types of duty

Source: [http://www.helpguide.org/mental/work\\_stress\\_management.htm](http://www.helpguide.org/mental/work_stress_management.htm)

For the continuous improvement and good state of morale among military officers it is recommended that all military courses conducted in the country include stress management as a compulsory module. For the content of the module it is suggested that the follow areas should be emphasized – learn and utilize relaxation breathing; meditation; water, inside and out; learn to relax at ion programmes; change diet, less fat, more fresh fruits, vegetables and fibre; give themself permission to experience their emotions, cry if they want; begin an exercise programme; build healthy personal relationships, have someone to talk to; learn to control displaced aggression such as the desire to yell at the kids and kick the dog at home because of stress at work; reappraise life and priorities; realize that most stress is caused from within, not without; take time to smell the flowers and taste the strawberries.

### **5.2.2 Suggestions for Future Research**

The following are a few thoughts to be shared and considered for the future study of job stress and job satisfaction among military officers. The recommended ideas are categorized into two aspects – application and

methodological. First, the application of the research findings is important for the military authority in making decisions. Thus, the study needs to be extended to other ranks in future research.

1) Future study may have to evaluate and focus on several demographic factors such as educational qualification, gender, race, rank, corps and periodical factors, particularly as the indicators could identify individuals who are facing stress. It may provide different findings from various perspectives.

2) It will be interesting for future research to look into the subject from different services such as Malaysian Air Force, Malaysian Navy Force and Malaysian Army Force to represent the whole of the Malaysian Armed Forces with appropriate results and findings. This is important for policy makers and leaders in the military to have an understanding of the effects of the decisions concerning the Malaysian Armed Forces.

3) Future research also needs to incorporate stress factors associated with deployment, types of training and the job nature of military personnel, specifically those that may mitigate work stress as well as other factors that take into account raising the job satisfaction of personnel.

Second, the aspect of research methodology is also a vital aspect to researchers or military officers from the military organization in conducting a more reasonable study. Thus, the following should also be considered in future research. It is necessary in future studies to explore certain aspects in their own right to help discover the technical and methodology in detail to provide reliable and valid information and knowledge.

In response to obtaining more accurate results of data analysis, sampling techniques are vital to give validity and reliability to the research findings for the purpose of generalization to the whole population of military personnel. The sampling technique is the key to ensure the generalisation of ideas to the population tested.

It is also recommended that future study may consider using current questionnaires modified to suit general usage in any military setting. Alternatively, a variety of data collection techniques could be used other than the questionnaire.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

In summary, the precautionary steps or proper action have been written down for the consideration of management parties in order to reduce the level of job stress among military officers to improve job satisfaction and the ability to cope with day to day stressors in the military. It is particularly important in the current military work environment when the size of the military



force is smaller due to the draw down over the past decade, while the job demands and stresses have remained the same or perhaps have even increased. As mentioned by General Masood (Deputy Malaysian Army Commander) "Military is the war organization which is adapting in the peace environment".