



Social support as predictors of reducing work stress on early childhood education teacher

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ABSTRACT

A profession as a teacher and teaching activity are activities that often make people stressed. People who deal with stress effectively can reduce work stress if they get resources from the surrounding environment through social support. This study aims to test social support as a predictor to reduce work stress for Early Childhood Education (abbreviated ECE) teachers. This study uses a quantitative approach with a correlational causality design. The survey method used to collect data is by distributing instruments that had gone through the adaptation process. Convenience sampling was used to get 58 respondents. The research hypothesis is tested using simple linear regression analysis with SPSS Program for Windows Version 20. The result of statistical analyses presents that social support has a significant negative effect on stress at work. This research contributes to ECE teachers' social support and stress, where this topic is still limited to research.

Keywords: early childhood education, job stress, social support, teachers

INTRODUCTION

In Law no. 20 of 2003, the Indonesian government stated concerning the National Education System chapter I, article 1, paragraph 14. It says that "Early childhood education is a coaching effort aimed at children from birth to the age of six years which is carried out through the provision of educational stimuli to assist physical and spiritual growth and development so that children have the readiness to enter further education."

According to Ariyanti (2016), in order to create a situation and environment where children will be able to explore experiences that provide opportunities for them to know and understand the learning experiences they get from the environment, educators and parents must try and act in the process of caring for, nurturing and educating children. This is also in line with the statement of the Indonesian government in Law no. 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection chapter III, article 9, paragraph 1. It says that "Every child has the right to receive education and teaching in the context of his personal development and level of intelligence according to his interests and talents".

Educators have a role in forming potential human resources in the field of education; for this reason, educators are one of the crucial elements in the learning process. Educators

are experts who must play an active role and direct and foster students to become superior individuals according to the criteria of a growing society (Sardiman in Hasanah & Laily, 2020). The characteristics that make ECE teachers effective based on a survey conducted by Colker (2008) are as follows: (a) enthusiasm, (b) persistence, (c) willingness to take risks, (d) pragmatism, (e) patience, (f) flexibility, (g) respect, (h) creativity, (i) originality, (j) love of learning, (k) high energy, (l) sense of humour.

Teaching is among the most stressful works (Johnson et al. 2005 in Klassen et al., 2012). Work stress is not only experienced by workers in the industrial sector. Teachers and lecturers who are in the field of educational services also experience this (Yogisutanti, 2018). In fact, Yogisutanti (2019) also found that ECE teachers were included in the category of a moderate degree of stress. Wong, Cheuk and Rosen (2000) researched 108 kindergarten principals in Hong Kong shows that principals find their work quite stressful.

According to Hakanen et al., 2006 (Klassen et al., 2012), work stress is defined as a person's physiological and emotional response to a perceived imbalance between job demands and abilities, resources, or needs. A person experiences stress if he is in a state of tension that directly influences his emotions, thought processes, and physical condition (Manduku et al., 2016).

Klassen et al. (2012) explained that the stress experienced by teachers could come from student behaviour, workload, or other sources. Based on a survey conducted by Suparman (2018) on 36 teachers in elementary schools, in general, it can be concluded that teachers experience stress which is manifested in psychological, physical, and behavioural symptoms that appear. The sources of stress are related to worries about the future, welfare problems, and the curriculum demands in certain schools. This is certainly unavoidable in his work as a teacher. Therefore, it is necessary to think of a solution to help teachers cope with stress in the workplace.

Teachers' work stress may be regenerated by school policies, support from colleagues, and school leaders (Klassen, 2010). Lack of social support can make employees feel isolated and alone at work, worsening the effects of stress at work (Illeffe & Steed, 2000 in Lambert et al., 2015). In addition, stressed people will be able to deal with stress effectively and reduce work stress if they get resources in the form of social support (Neveu, 2007 in Lambert et al., 2015). Teachers need support from all parties to carry out their duties and responsibilities in the stages of implementation and achievement of educational goals because this is very important (Hasanah & Laily, 2020).

Social support refers to a network of connections with other human beings who are able to pass on help, contribution, and assistance to someone (Lambert et al., 2015). The primary forms of social support are administrative support, supervisor support, co-worker support, and family and friend support. Support from co-workers, supervisors, and management represents an intra-organizational social support system, while support from family and friends represents an extra organizational support system (Lambert et al., 2015).

Based on the above background, it can be concluded that teachers have an essential role in optimizing the growth and development of early childhood (Ariyanti, 2016). But unfortunately, the teaching profession is the most stressful job (Johnson et al. 2005 in Klassen et al., 2012), and one alternative solution to reduce stress is to provide social support for teachers (Klassen, 2010). Several studies related to social support and work stress were conducted by Setyaningrum and Dwityanto (2014) on health workers who showed a negative correlation between social support and work-related stress. Supervisory support felt by employees of multinational companies also significantly reduces work stress (Kang and Kang, 2016). Research conducted by Lambert et al. (2015) also proves that administrative support, supervisor support, and co-worker support statistically have a significant relationship with job stress.

This research aims to test the social support variable as a predictor of reducing work-related stress in early childhood education teachers. This topic is rarely studied using ECE teachers as research respondents. So the results of this study are expected to add references to social support and work stress for ECE teachers. This study hypothesizes a negative effect of social support on work stress on ECE teachers.

METHOD

A quantitative approach is used in this research with a correlational causality design. The attitude opinion-taking method is used to collect data by distributing instruments (questionnaires) to participants in order to calculate the frequency with which opinions, perspectives, experiences, stages, actions, or assumptions appear (Rowley, 2014). This research took two months, including preparation, data collection, analysis, and discussion.

Participants

The subjects of this research are teachers who foster early childhood education institutions (playgroups and kindergartens) in the Lamongan Regency area. This study uses non-probability-based sampling with convenience sampling technique (Coolican, 2014) obtained as many as 58 teachers as research samples.

Instruments

Work Stress. The instrument used to measure the level of work stress on teachers is the Teacher Stress Inventory (Boyle et al., 1995), developed by Klassen et al (2012). It consists of 3 aspects: workload stress, student behaviour stress, and other stress. This instrument consists of 13 items with a very high level of reliability ($\alpha = .932$). Examples of instrument statements on the workload stress aspect include the following: "I feel it is too difficult to carry out additional tasks (extracurricular)" ($r = .833$). Examples of instrument statements on the aspect of student behaviour stress include the following: "I am often confused with students who are noisy or noisy in class" ($r = .684$). Examples of instrument statements on other stress aspects include: "I often complain because of lack of support" ($r = .809$).

Social Support. The researcher uses the Social Support scale instrument to assess the social support construct (Lambert et al., 2015), which consists of 4 aspects: administration support, co-worker support, family support, and supervisor support. This instrument consists of 11 items with a high level of reliability ($\alpha = .832$). Examples of instrument statements in the administration support aspect include the following: "I feel that the management of the institution supports teacher activities" ($r = .607$). Examples of instrument statements on the co-worker support aspect include: "I feel that my fellow teachers are good friends with me" ($r = .702$). Examples of instrument statements on aspects of family support include the following: "I have a family who really supports my profession as a teacher" ($r = .631$). Examples of instrument statements in the supervisor support aspect include the following: "Heads of educational institutions are very supportive of teacher activities" ($r = .649$).

Researchers adapted all instruments in this study through the stages of the adaptation process (Beaton et al., 2000) as follows: (1) translating into Indonesian; (2) synthesis; (3) translated back into the original language; (4) the item draft was tested by expert judgment consisting of psychometricians and linguists, the results of the Aiken's V coefficient score showed a range of scores for the Teacher Stress Inventory ($V = .48 - .72$), and *Social Support Scale* ($V = .41 - .65$); (5) the instrument was tested on 58 teachers and item analysis through validity and reliability tests, the results showed a range of validity for the Teacher Stress Inventory ($r = .536 - .833$); and *Social Support Scale* ($r = .336 - .702$).

Data analysis

Researchers use simple linear regression analysis to test the hypothesis in this research. In addition, a stepwise technique is used to analyze the effect of each sub predictor

variable on the work stress variable for teachers. All data analysis was used with the help of the SPSS Program for Windows Version 20.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The statistical study in Table 1 explains the existence of a significant negative effect on the predictor variable, namely social support on work-related stress experienced by teachers. ($F=4.641$; $P=.036 < .05$). This study states that social support is a significant predictor of work stress on teachers. This shows that the hypothesis of this study that there is a negative effect of social support on work stress on teachers is accepted. The impact of predictor variables is 7.7% on work stress on teachers, and other variables influence 92.3%.

Table 1. Simple Regression Analysis of Predictors of Work Stress on Teachers

Statistic	Value
<i>F</i>	4.641
<i>P</i>	.036
<i>R</i>	-.277
<i>R Square</i>	.077

Table 2 shows the partial test results of each aspect of the social support variable on teacher stress. There is a significant negative effect between aspects of administration support on job stress for teachers. ($\beta = -.700$; $t = -.245$; $p = .007$). The interpretation is that the higher the administration support, the lower the work-related stress on the teacher; on the other hand, when the administration support decreases, the work-related stress experienced by the teacher increases. While the coworker support aspect has a significant negative effect on work-related stress experienced by teachers ($\beta = -.854$; $t = -.611$; $p = .041$). It means that the more co-worker support, the less stress related to the work experienced by teachers; on the contrary, the less co-worker support, the more stress related to the work experienced by teachers. The aspect of family support has a significant negative effect on work-related stress experienced by teachers ($\beta = -4.106$; $t = -1.769$; $p = .008$). This means that the higher the family support, the lower the stress related to the work experienced by the teacher; on the contrary, the lower the family support, the greater the stress related to the work experienced by the teacher. Similarly, the aspect of supervisor support has a significant negative influence on work-related stress experienced by teachers ($\beta = -2.305$; $t = -1.118$; $p = .026$). It can be interpreted that the higher the supervisor support, the lower the work-related stress on the teacher; on the contrary, the lower the supervisor support, the higher the work-related stress felt by the teacher. Thus, all aspects of the social support variable can be used as predictors of teacher work stress.

Table 2. The Effect of Predictor Variables on Work Stress on Teachers

Predictors Variables	B	T	R	P
Administration Support Co-	-.700	-.245	-.233	.007
worker Support	-.854	-.611	-.168	.041
Family Support	-4.106	-1.769	-.313	.008
Supervisor Support	-2.305	-1.118	-.208	.028

Based on table 2, the linear regression equation in this research can be arranged as described below:

$$Y' = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + b_4X_4$$

$$Y' = 2.310 + (-.700)X_1 + (-.854)X_2 + (-4.106)X_3 + (-2.305)X_4$$

$$Y' = 2.310 - .700 - .854 - 4.106 - 2.305$$

Explanation:

Y' = work stress scores on teachers

a = constant

b_1, b_2, b_3, b_4 = regression coefficient

X_1 = *Administration Support*

X_2 = *Coworker Support*

X_3 = *Family Support*

X_4 = *Supervisor Support*

Based on the regression equation above, it can be described as follows: (1) a constant of 2.310, meaning that if the score of administration support (X_1), co-worker support (X_2), family support (X_3), and supervisor support (X_4) is 0, then the work stress score on the teacher (Y') is 2.310. (2) A regression coefficient of -.700 on the administration support indicates that every 1 point increase in administration support may lower teachers job stress by .700, *ceteris paribus*. In other words, higher administration support is likely to lower teachers' work-related stress, vice versa. (3) sub variable regression coefficient of *co-worker support* (X_2) is -.854; it can be interpreted that if the score of the other predictor variables does not change and the value of co-worker support increases 1, the score for work-related stress on teachers has decreased by .854. The interpretation is that the higher the co-worker support, the lower the work-related stress on the teacher, and vice versa. (4) sub variable regression coefficient of Family support (X_3) is -4.106; if the other predictor variables have a fixed value and the value of family support has increased by 1, then the work stress score for teachers has decreased by 4.106. It can be interpreted that the increased family support, the less work-related stress on the teacher, and vice versa. (5) sub variable regression coefficient of supervisor support (X_4) is -2.305; if the other predictor variables do not change the score and the supervisor support score increases by 1, then the teacher's work-related stress score decreases by 2,305.

This means that the higher the supervisor support, the lower the work-related stress on the teacher, and vice versa.

The result of this study supports Setyaningrum and Dwityanto's (2014) report on the negative relationship between social support and work-related stress among health workers. When social support increases, work-related stress decreases and vice versa; when social support decreases, work-related stress increases felt by non-nursing health workers. Supervisory support felt by employees of multinational companies also significantly reduces work stress (Kang & Kang, 2016).

Research conducted by Lambert et al. (2015) proved that administrative support, supervisor support, and co-worker support statistically had a significant relationship with job stress. Increased administrative support, supervisors, and co-workers are associated with lower work stress. In contrast, the support of family and friends did not have a significant correlation with job stress.

In this study, the effect of the predictor variable of social support was 7.7% on work stress on teachers, while other variables influenced 92.3%. Other variables affecting work stress include self-efficacy (Erozkan et al., 2016; Klassen et al., 2012), physical environment, and workload (Angwen, 2017).

The study conducted by Klassen et al. (2012) on teachers showed that self-efficacy was able to reduce the adverse impact of stress on work commitment. Bandura (1997) explains that self-efficacy differentiates depending on how individuals think, feel, and act. It depends on optimistic belief in being able to cope with many stress factors. While individuals with high self-efficacy prefer to do more challenging tasks, low levels of self-efficacy are associated with depression, anxiety, and helplessness (Erozkan et al., 2016). The physical environment and workload also have a positive relationship with stress, as the research results conducted by Angwen (2017) on 120 employees in the company.

CONCLUSION

The hypothesis of this study that there is a negative effect of social support on work stress in ECE teachers is accepted. It shows that social support is a significant predictor of work stress for ECE teachers. All dimensions of social support, namely administration support, co-worker support, family support, and supervisor support, can also be used to predict work stress for ECE teachers. The limitations of this study are the relatively small number of respondents. Future researchers interested in researching the same topic should increase the number of respondents and expand the research population. Another limitation of this study

is the sampling technique used, namely convenience sampling, so it cannot be generalized to the study population. For this reason, the next researcher is advised to use probability-based sampling. Other variables that influence work stress on ECE teachers, such as self-efficacy, work environment, and workload, also need to be investigated further.

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