

Systematic Literature Review: Stress among School Counsellors

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Abstract

School counselor (GBK) is a career that carries out its duties as a teacher in providing guidance and counseling services in schools. This career is one of the important areas of work in the process of educating and providing auxiliary services in schools, but it is also not spared from many challenges and stresses. It is important that we examine the stress among GBK as it can affect their personal well-being, productivity and quality of service. Therefore, this systematic literature review (SLR) was conducted with the aim of identifying stress factors among GBK. The study was conducted by obtaining data and findings from reading materials through search engines such as Scopus, Sage and Eric. The results of the analysis found that there are several factors that trigger stress among GBK and they have been grouped into two main factors, namely personal and professional factors. Although there are studies done on the stress factor of GBK, it is still not conducted in depth, especially in the country. Therefore, it is hoped that the relevant studies in this field can be further enhanced in the future.

Key factors: *stress factors; school counselor; stress*

1. Introduction

Stress is one of the global issues that are often discussed in various stages and the current environment. This stress-related issue is quite worrying by looking at current statistics either internationally or locally. Stress is often known as stress or exertion caused by certain events (Selye, 1976). Stress also occurs in the workplace and it is expected that this issue will be one of the causes of global health problems (WHO, 2021).

School counselor or Guidance and Counseling teacher (GBK) also do not shy away from dealing with issues related to stress and extreme fatigue (Roxas et.al. 2019). The school environment as well as the norms of their service as teachers as well as professional counselors are quite different from counselors serving in other fields. In general, their services include diverse task spaces such as guidance and counseling services in developing personality and improving pupil discipline, providing pupil career education, developing psychosocial aspects and mental well-being of pupils, carrying out management work, consulting services with teachers and parents, meeting alternate class schedules, conducting co-curricular management, out-of-school assignments, as well as other assignments directed from time to time (Surat Siaran Bil. 12, KPM 2012). The diversity of the branches of duty also changes in various aspects of the current can contribute to stress. Undeniably, GBK is also prone to stress especially when they are conducting the best counseling sessions taking into account all aspects comprehensively (Friedman, 2017).

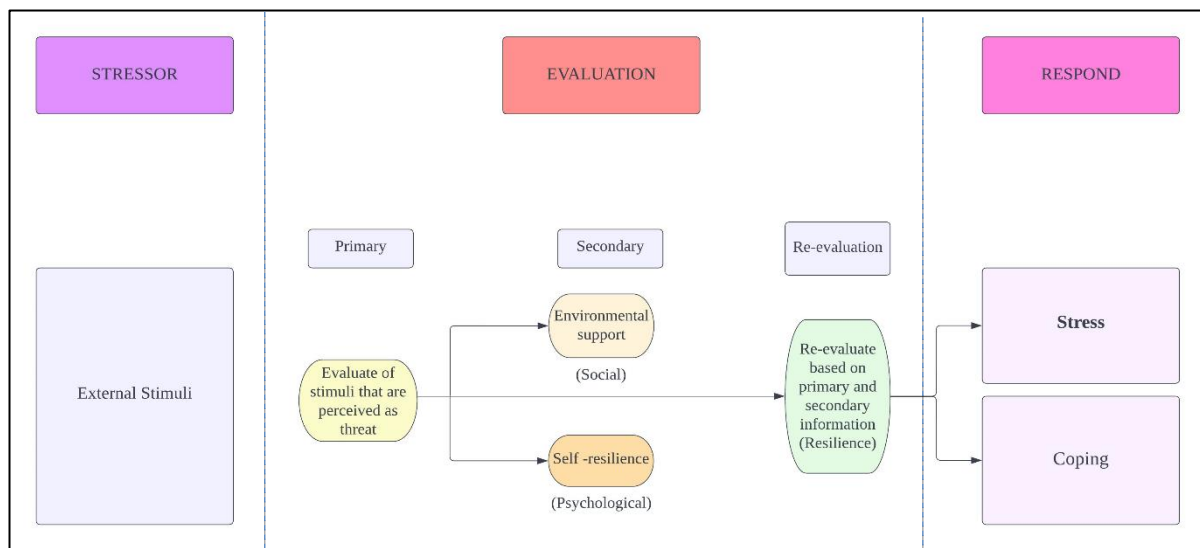
Prolonged stress can affect their personal well-being, productivity and quality in their service delivery especially in the handling of counseling services for clients (Arnout & Almoied, 2021; Mullen & Gutierrez, 2016). Studies also show that GBK is reported to be dealing with higher levels of stress and emotional fatigue compared to other professional counselors (Bardhoshi et. al. 2022). This shows the need for GBK to emphasise their well-being especially with regard to stress that can disrupt and affect the effectiveness of service delivery. In order to help GBK in the face of stress issues, stress factors need to be identified in order for this problem to be

overcome more effectively. Therefore, this study aims to identify factors that can trigger stress among GBK based on previous relevant studies. Through this study, it is also hoped that it will contribute to future studies focusing on stress-related solutions among GBK.

2. Literature Review

Stress is a pressure or urge that occurs on a person as a result of a certain event (Selye, 1974). Stress response situations are also often associated with how a person interprets, feels and labels his experiences as well as how he expects of the future (Davis et. al., 2008). There are several theoretical views on the basic concepts of stress among them which were first introduced in 1930 by Dr Hans Selye. In addition, the concept of stress brought by McGraths (1970) defines it as a disproportionate condition between self-desire and the abilities they are capable of and the level of stress that will be high if what is desired exceeds its abilities. This concept means that stress can also stem from the psychological aspect of a human being by involving the reaction process in themselves. Among the models that explain the basic concepts of stress involving cognitive processes as well as the environment is the Theory of Stress and Transactional Adaptation that Lazarus & Folkman (1984) introduced. This introduced model looks at the stress that goes through a broader perspective. Among them is looking at the stress dimension not only triggered by external situational events, but also looking at the cognitively involved process of evaluating the stimulus. The level of stress a person feels also depends on how the stimulus is interpreted and translated through an evaluation process that takes into account social information such as his environment as well as psychological such as endurance. The evaluation process involves three stages, namely the primary, secondary and cognitive reassessment stages which take into account information from the previous stage. Then, a person's reaction to the stimulus is either stressful or able to respond to the stimulus. Figure 1 below briefly describes this model.

Figure 1: Model Framework for Stress Theory and Transactional Coping



Source: Lazarus & Folkman (1984)

Stress is a dynamic and complex phenomenon. Stress-related issues are still being discussed and their knowledge is evolving according to current changes. The study of stress is among the growing studies globally. There are various studies that looked at stress from different points of view, among them by examining factors that can trigger stress especially stress at work. The effects of prolonged stress in the workplace appear to have affected various things such as deterioration in health, accidents at work, decreased work performance, as well as on a person's social life (Liley et. al., 2016).

American Counseling Association (ACA, 2018) found that 75.5% of counseling practitioners agree that stress is one of the threats to their profession. This shows that the issue of stress among GBK is one of the issues that needs to be discussed in more detail. Studies on stress among GBK are still poorly conducted especially locally.

Therefore, based on the stress-related literature and its importance for study, the authors see the need to examine stress factors among GBK more thoroughly.

3. Study Methodology

The study carried out was using the SLR (Systematic Literature Review) approach. This approach is one method that follows several systematic stages such as processing, preparation as well as making a reassessment of all empirical evidence. This detailed process also needs to meet the needs in ensuring that study questions are answered (Brown, 2020). The review protocol of this study follows the concept of ROSES (Reporting standards for Systematic Evidence Syntheses) so that the information obtained is coincided with the requirements required by the authors. Appropriate study questions should be raised in the process of making this study. Next, the author explains about the systematic search strategy which includes three main processes, namely the identification process, the screening process and the qualification process.

3.1. Review protocol – ROSES

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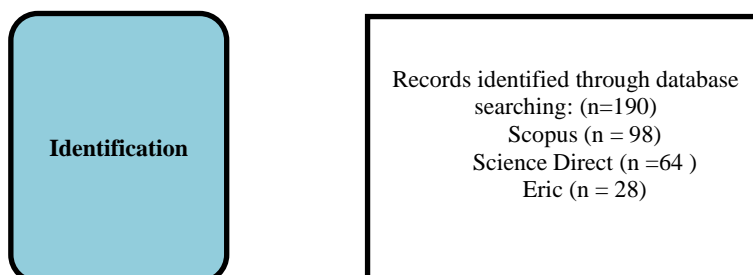
3.2. Formulation of study problems

The study questions for this study are focused on PICO which is a concept that helps the author in building questions that are in accordance with the needs of the study. The PICO concept is based on three main elements, namely P – Population or Problem, I – Interest, Co – Context and these elements will encourage the author to build this SLR study question. The SLR study question for this study is: What are the factors that cause stress among School Counselors?

3.3. Systematic search strategy

The data and findings used are obtained through reading materials such as books, journal articles, as well as other relevant reading sources. This reading material is available through the several search engine databases such as Scopus, Sage and Eric. The approach used throughout the study process follows several stages such as identifying the necessary information, filtering information, compiling information and subsequently processing and analyzing the information obtained. In order to identify the necessary information, the authors directed the search to answer the question of the constructed study which is 'What are the factors that cause stress among GBK?'. The search was then continued using the keyword 'stress+school counselors+causing factor' and the screening process was carried out to select the material that was suitable for the study needs. This filtered material is compiled, processed and analyzed before these findings are translated in this concept paper. The materials obtained are local and foreign to ensure more comprehensive research results and meet the required requirements.

3.4. Article selection criteria



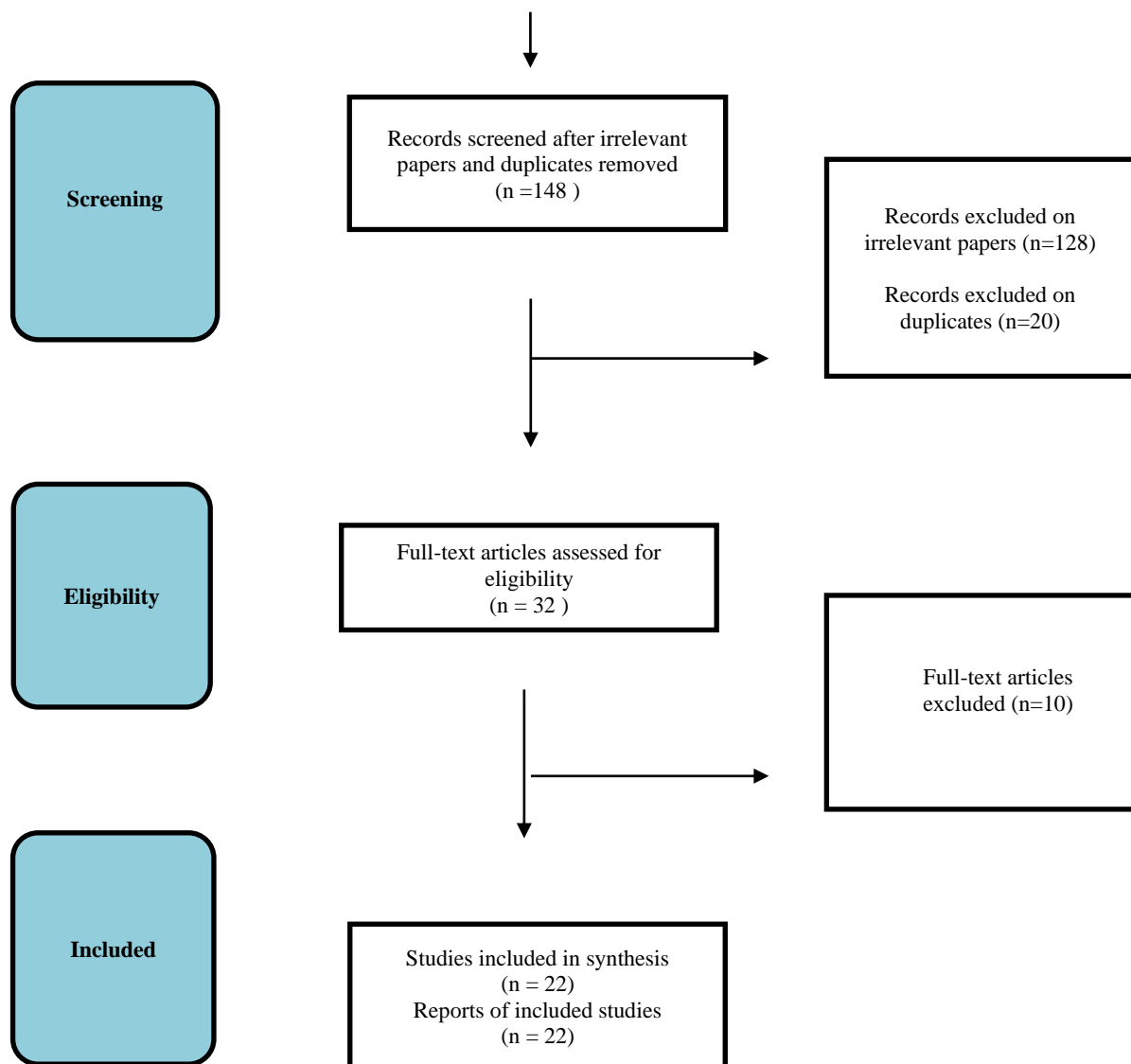


Figure 2. Flow diagram of the search strategy.

Source: Zakaria et al. (2020), Moher et al. (2009)

4. Study results

Table 1. Summary of previous studies

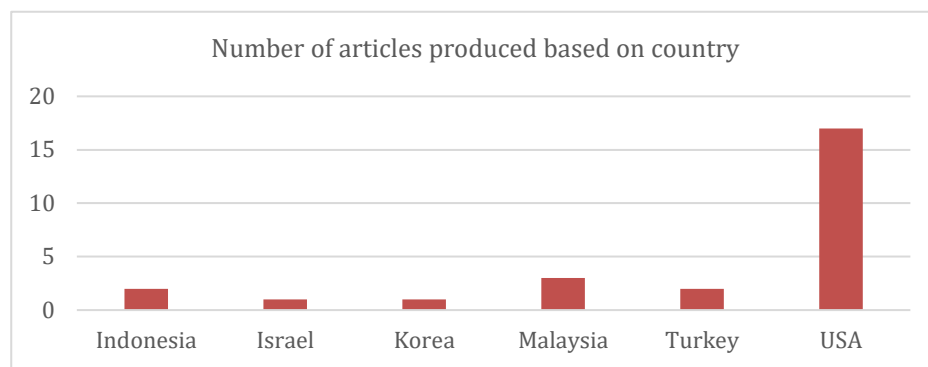
Author	Countries	Research	Year
Anjanette T. & Hiba C.	USA	Exploring How School Counselors Practice Self-Compassion	2019
Ertuğrul, Nursel T., & Cem G.	Turkey	Severity and Correlates of the Symptoms of Depression, Anxiety, and Stress in a Nationally Representative Sample of Turkish Secondary Boarding School Counselors	2022
Fitri W., Bambang B. W., & Adi A.H.	Indonesia	Assessing Relationships between Emotional Intelligence, School Climate and School Counselors Burnout: A Structural Equation Model	2019

Author	Countries	Research	Year
Bardhoshi G., Byeolbee U., Jennifer N., Huijuan L., Eunae H., & Margaux B.	USA	Novice School Counselors' Burnout Profiles and Professional Experiences: A Mixed-Methods Study	2022
Heather J. F., Ryan M.C., & Andrea B.	USA	Exploring Individual and Organizational Predictors of School Counselor Wellness	2022
Jordon J. B., & Elizabeth K. N.	USA	An Investigation of Factors Contributing to Secondary Traumatic Stress in School Counselors: A Pilot Study	2020
Kelsie B.	USA	School Counselor Self-Care Practices as Mitigating Factors Regarding Professional Burnout	2019
Leigh F. H., Judith N., & Richard W.	USA	Organizational Variables Contributing to School Counselor Burnout: An Opportunity for Leadership, Advocacy, Collaboration, and Systemic Change	2019
Leigh F. H., Richard W., Rebecca R.P., & Lisa G.	USA	Exploration of Potential Predictor Variables Leading to School Counselor Burnout	2019
Mastura M., Sidek M. N., & Aslan A. S.	Malaysia	Development of Rational Emotive Education Module for Stress Intervention of Malaysian Boarding School	2019
Nayoung K., & Glenn W. L.	USA	Burnout and Implications for Professional School Counselors	2018
Nur J. B.M., Ku S.K.J., Mohd I.M., Salleh A., & Syazwani S.	Malaysia	Psychological Well-Being of School Counselors Model	2021
Patrick R. M., & Allison C.	USA	A Psychometric Investigation of the Short Grit Scale With a Sample of School Counselors	2023
Patrick R. M., & Daniel G.	USA	Burnout, Stress and Direct Student Services Among School Counselors	2018
Patrick R. M., Nancy C., Adrienne B., & Jennifer N.	USA	School Counselor Burnout, Job Stress, and Job Satisfaction by Student Caseload	2021
Qi S., & Margaux H. B.	USA	School Counselors' Impact on School-Level Academic Outcomes: Caseload and Use of Time	2020
Rachel E., & Mirit S.	Israel	Subjective Wellbeing of Israeli School Counselors: Personal and Environmental Explaining Variables	2023
Rebekah L., & Steve Z.	USA	Residential Counselors and Self Care: A Retrospective Qualitative Study of Archival Interview Data	2019
Suci H., Alfiah, Herman N., Afdal, Raja R., & Hasgimianti.	Indonesia	The Contribution of Co-Worker Social Support on Burnout of School Counselor	2022
Tommy W.	USA	School Counselor Perceptions and Knowledge of	2022

Author	Countries	Research	Year
		Trauma-Informed Practices	
Victoria M.	USA	School Counselors: Risk of Accumulated Stress	2020
Yu R. L., Ju Y. L., JaeM. K., IIS. S., Jin S. Y., & Sung W. K.	Korea	A Comparative Study of Burnout, Stress, and Resilience among Emotional Workers	2019

TDE=Total documents examined (n=22)

Figure 3: Analysis of articles from the aspect of the country



Based on figure 3, United States is one of the countries that conducts many studies related to stress among GBK. It shows a significant difference in terms of the number of articles compared to other countries. And followed by other countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Turkey, Korea and Israel.

Figure 4: Analysis of articles from the aspect of the research methodology

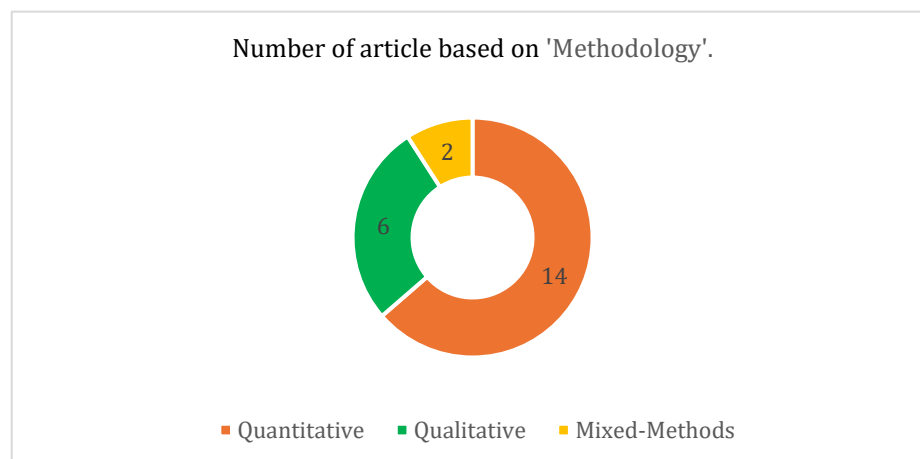


Figure 4 shows that most of the studies carried out related to GBK stress are done quantitatively, which is as many as 14 out of 22 articles in total. For quantitative studies, there are several questionnaires used by researchers who conduct quantitative studies, including the Perceive Stress Scale (PSS-10) questionnaire to measure the perception of stress, the Depression Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS-21) which measures the level of stress as well as several questionnaire used to see other variables.

GBK Stress Factors

There are several factors identified to contribute to the cause of GBK stress. The authors grouped the factors identified into two main parts, namely personal and profesional factors. Under these two main fractions, the authors examined several stress factors that affect GBK among them are psychological factors, efficacy trust,

supervision factors, task load factors, role conflict factors, as well as pupil ratio factors.

4.1 Personal Factors

This personal factor explains the stress factors that stem from within GBK itself such as in terms of psychology that looks at how the cognitive evaluation process is against stress and the process of adaptation in oneself. Also discussed in the personal factor is the efficacy and beliefs factor.

- **Psychology**

Psychological factors are among the factors that are often discussed as one of the causes of stress. Stress theory and transactional adjustment also look at the psychological dimension that looks at how external situation stimulation is through the process of cognitive assessment and also adjustment of a person in responding to these stimuli (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The psychological factors discussed are related to the assessment of stress (Perceived Stress) and also the adjustment process (Coping Process).

Past studies have shown how the stress assessment process as well as this adaptation process has a direct impact on stress levels as well as extreme fatigue (Mullen et. al., 2018). High levels of stress assessment were also seen to have an impact on job satisfaction as well as their service delivery to students (Victoria, 2020).

In terms of adaptive process factors, in one of the studies related to perfection, extreme fatigue, stress and even adaptation have shown that those who avoid adapting to emotions (avoidant-emotional coping) are easily faced with high levels of stress and extreme fatigue (Fye et. al., 2018). The process of adapting to emotions is one of the factors that GBK needs to emphasize as it can affect their stress levels.

- **Efficacy Trust**

The belief of school counselors is a belief in their ability to carry out assignments as school counselors according to specific assignments and situations (Boderhorn et. al., 2010). While Butts et al., (2018) see the self-efficacy of counselors as their attitude towards the ability to competently use all techniques and counseling responsibilities while conducting joint sessions with clients. Bandura (1997) emphasizes the association between efficacy beliefs and feelings of stress and anxiety. These studies show that low efficacy beliefs have an effect on stress. There are several studies that have been conducted related to the efficacy beliefs of school counselors and have shown an association with their emotional including stress and mental health, but they are still less observed when compared to the testing of efficacy trust on counselor training, experience level and aptitude (Suci et al., 2022; Yu et al., 2019).

4.2 Professional Factors

This professional factor looks at the stress-triggering factors stemming from the GBK work environment such as supervision, taskload for counseling and non-counseling, relationship with role conflict as well as pupil ratio.

- **Supervision**

Supervision is one of the most important points discussed in the counseling profession. Good supervision will help to improve the profession of GBK (Henderson, 1994). The quality and also quantity of supervision can also contribute to the level of well-being of GBK. Supervision has been identified as one of the mediators against stress among GBK (Holman & Grubbs, 2018; Leigh et al., 2019). The findings have also shown that GBK which receives supervision with the proposed supervisory model of ASCA has reduced stress levels and improved personal well-being (Bardhoshi et al., 2022; Nayoung & Glenn, 2018).

- **Task load**

The main task of GBK is to provide guidance and counseling services to students including personality development and improvement of pupil discipline, career education of pupils, psychosocial and mental well-being of pupils, carrying out management work, consultation with teachers and parents, following alternate class schedules, (Surat Siaran Bil. 12, MOE 2012). However, GBK also needs to carry out external tasks as well as other tasks that are directed over time. The increased burden of duty and ambiguity towards GBK's main responsibilities and tasks can have effects such as increasing stress levels as well as extreme fatigue (Bardhoshi et. al. 2022; Leigh et al., 2019; Patrick & Allison 2018).

Among the taskloads seen to be the cause of the increase in GBK stress is in terms of increased non-counseling duties that are at odds with ASCA's National Model). (Bardhoshi et al., 2022; Holman et al., 2019). In fact, a number of studies have suggested that GBKs' stress may be influenced by the assignment of inappropriate non-counseling tasks, such as master scheduling, substitute teaching, administering state-mandated tests, lunch duty, and administrative tasks (Bardhoshi et al., 2022; Holman & Grubbs, 2018; Mullen, 2016; Tommy, 2022; Qi & Margaux, 2020).

- **Role conflict**

Role conflict results when GBK place a multiple demands from outside resources among the stakeholders like administrators, parents, teachers, and students. They claim that trying to live up to all of these externally imposed standards overwhelms them to the point where they find it difficult to truly implement the ASCA model (Bardhoshi et al., 2022; Holman & Grubbs, 2018; Leigh et al., 2019). Due to competing demands from outside sources that put pressure on their limited time and resources, school counselors feel job stress as a result.

- **Pupil ratio**

The GBK to pupil ratio proposed by ASCA is 1:250. However, this ratio has not yet been achieved either locally or abroad. In Malaysia, the GBK to pupil ratio is 1:500, while overseas the average GBK to pupil ratio is 1:482, which is twice as high as the recommended recommendation (ASCA, 2017). In addition to the increase in taskload, too high pupil ratios have also increased stress among GBK (Patrick & Daniel, 2021; Qi & Margaux, 2020). Too large a ratio also means that GBK's responsibility for increased caseload, academic management, emotional, social and even pupil careers becomes large and can cause GBK to feel burdened and increase stress (Qi & Margaux, 2020; Victoria, 2020).

Limitations, Implications and Reserves

Overall, through the findings of this study, we have collected factors that contribute to stress among GBK. Although there are limitations in terms of lack of information related to GBK stress in the country, it is hoped that the findings will contribute accordingly. It is hoped that this study will help readers to get a broader picture as well as raise awareness of stress issues among GBK. With the current changes in the development of the field of education as well as the rapid changes in various fields have impacted the well-being of an individual including GBK. This GBK stress issue is one of the issues that need to be examined more deeply to ensure that the well-being of GBK is maintained and in turn they can deliver services to pupils and schools more productively and effectively. It is hoped that this study will provide benefits and information to relevant bodies such as the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE) especially related to stress among GBK. This can also assist MOE in ensuring that GBK's mental health is maintained with the proactive actions of the MOE by making assessments and screenings at an early stage and thus providing awareness and appropriate interventions.

5. Conclusion

The findings of this study show that there are various factors that contribute to stress among GBK. Among them are the factors that come from the GBK itself such as psychological and self-efficacy. There are also factors derived from professional factors such as counseling supervision factors, duty load, relationship with administrator, and pupil ratio. With these findings, it is hoped that it will help studies in related fields in particular to identify GBK stress factors and in particular to identify more accurate solutions and intervention measures. However, in addition to these factors that can be collected, other factors also need to be given attention and identified in more depth so that these GBK stress-related issues can be managed better and more effectively.

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