

## **Temperament and Job Stress Among Malaysian Telecommunication Employees in Petaling Jaya: The Moderating Role of Personality Traits**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study examines the relationship between temperament and job stress among employees in the Malaysian telecommunications sector, with a focus on the moderating role of personality traits. It aims to assess the level of job stress and address a gap in understanding the specific psychological factors influencing stress within this industry. Adopting a quantitative research design, data were collected from 101 employees of a leading telecommunications company based in Petaling Jaya, Malaysia. An online survey platform was used to ensure participant anonymity and data reliability. The results shows that temperament significantly affects the level of job stress experienced by employees and personality traits moderate the relationship between temperament and job stress. These findings highlight the critical role of both temperament and personality traits in understanding workplace stress, offering valuable implications for organizational psychology, stress management strategies, and human resource practices. The study contributes to the development of more personalized stress management interventions tailored to employees' psychological profiles, providing a foundation for future research within the telecommunications industry.

**Keywords:** Temperament, Job Stress, Personality Traits

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The telecommunications industry in Malaysia is undergoing rapid transformation, driven by continuous technological advancements and an increasingly dynamic operational environment. Employees in this sector are consistently required to adapt to new systems, implement organizational changes swiftly, and meet demanding performance targets often under tight deadlines. While these demands contribute to growth and innovation within the industry, they also serve as significant sources of job stress.

Globally, technology has reshaped workplace dynamics, and Malaysia is no exception. The rollout of 5G networks has revolutionized connectivity, enabling enhanced productivity and operational efficiency. However, this rapid technological progression has also introduced new workplace stressors, including information overload, increased workloads, and intensified performance expectations (Nisafani, 2020). Collectively, these challenges have given rise to a phenomenon known as technostress, which can negatively affect both employee well-being and overall organizational performance (Dragano, 2020).

Understanding the psychological impact of these evolving work conditions particularly how individual personality differences influence the experience of stress is crucial. This study explores the role of temperament and the moderating effect of personality traits in shaping how telecommunications employees perceive and respond to job stress within this fast-paced and high-demand environment.

## **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Job stress is a complex and pervasive issue that negatively impacts both individual well-being and organizational performance. It has been linked to a range of adverse outcomes, including psychological distress, burnout, reduced job satisfaction, increased turnover intention, and deteriorating physical health. For instance, conducted a meta-analysis of longitudinal studies and found that stressors such as excessive job demands, high workloads, and interpersonal conflicts significantly contribute to long-term employee strain (Kubicek, 2022). The study also identified coping strategies and organizational support as critical moderating factors in mitigating these effects.

This issue is particularly pronounced in high-pressure industries like telecommunications, where organizational cultures are often shaped by performance metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs) (Smollan, 2024). The constant need to meet evolving technological demands and customer expectations places telecommunications employees under considerable stress.

A key factor influencing how individuals perceive and respond to stress is temperament a foundational component of personality rooted in both genetic and environmental influences. Temperament shapes behavioral tendencies and coping mechanisms, making it highly relevant to stress research. Studies have shown that certain temperamental traits, such as neuroticism, are associated with higher stress sensitivity, while others, like conscientiousness, are linked to greater resilience (Heszen, 2012). Despite growing interest in this area, there remains a significant gap in understanding how these traits operate within different occupational contexts, particularly in Malaysia's fast-evolving telecommunications industry.

To address this gap, the current study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the level of job stress among telecommunications employees?
2. Is there a significant effect of temperament on job stress among telecommunications employees?
3. Do personality traits moderate the relationship between temperament and job stress among telecommunications employees?

Understanding the interaction between temperament and personality traits is essential for developing targeted strategies to manage job stress effectively. Recognizing that stress responses are not uniform, organizations must consider individual psychological differences when designing interventions aimed at reducing stress and promoting employee well-being.

This study aims to explore the relationship between temperament and job stress, with personality traits acting as a moderating variable, among telecommunications employees in Malaysia. By examining these dynamics through a structured conceptual framework, the research seeks to generate actionable insights into the mechanisms behind workplace stress and inform the development of evidence-based interventions. These findings will be valuable not only for improving employee productivity and job satisfaction, but also for guiding organizational practices and policies that foster a more supportive and resilient workforce.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Stress is the unintentional reaction people have to high demands or other forms of pressure. Numerous important factors, including workload, management support, and the work environment, contribute to the stressfulness of a job and its impact on employees' physical and mental health. Additionally, research has examined the antecedents of family conflicts that lead to stress among employees (Edward, 2019). Both employees and organizations often view job stress as dysfunctional. Stress has been defined as an individual's response to environmental forces that affect performance (Colligan, 2006). Work-related stress can be debilitating, potentially compromising an individual's ability to support their family and maintain material security (Colligan, 2006).

### **Job Stress**

Job stress is defined as a negative emotional condition resulting from the assessment of work experiences, arising from a combination of low pleasure and excessive mental stimulation. Tension arises when an individual fails to adapt to both them and their environment (Colligan, 2006). In other words, employees are likely to experience stress when job demands exceed their resources. While this definition may be seen as restrictive, as it overlooks the adaptive role of stress (Urbanaviciute, 2020), it remains relevant due to its emphasis on the interaction between personal traits and environmental stressors in explaining health and well-being outcomes. According to this framework, individuals' reactions to work-related pressures may vary significantly (Igboanugo, 2023). Job stress has been linked to various health issues, including mental disorders and cardiovascular disease, as well as lower levels of subjective well-being (Gerhardt, 2021).

### **Temperament**

Temperament, a concept deeply rooted in psychology, refers to the inborn and enduring personality traits that influence an individual's emotional, cognitive, and behavioral tendencies. Often likened to the "building blocks" of personality, temperament lays the foundation upon which an individual's reactions, preferences, and adaptability are constructed (Nigg, 2006). Unlike character or personality traits that experience, and external influences might shape, temperament is believed to emerge early in life and maintain remarkable stability throughout adulthood. Temperament can be grouped into four types based on the original concept of temperament (Flaskerud, 2012). The Sanguine temperament is more friendly, understanding, nonaggressive, and well-liked by others. Choleric temperament is about ardent and enthusiastic people. Melancholic temperament is characterizing reserved, impulsive, task- and goal-oriented people who exhibit features like digesting information before acting, delaying gratification, following a set of rules, and being extremely orderly and careful. Phlegmatic temperament is serene and unattached, living a life of minimum activity. This temperament is the most tenacious of all since they only accept a minimal amount of control over their actions

(Capelli, 2018). They also think they know what everyone else is doing, right or wrong (Thukral, 2018). Temperament and work-related stress have a complicated and multifaceted interaction. Existing theories of personality and temperament can be used to understand how an individual's intrinsic qualities interact with their work environment to influence their experience of job stress, even though there isn't a single theory that focuses only on this interaction.

### **Personality Traits**

The personality traits model aims to understand and categorize the various patterns of behavior, thoughts, and emotions that individuals consistently exhibit across different situations. This model helps to understand the uniqueness of each person's personality while also providing a framework for understanding commonalities across individuals. Openness to experience demonstrates a person's inventiveness, curiosity, and openness to trying out new things. Conscientiousness reflects qualities of responsibility, organization, discipline, and goal setting. Extraversion reflects a person's propensity for social contacts, assertiveness, and sociability. Agreeableness reflects the degree of empathy, cooperation propensity, and interpersonal skills of a person. Neuroticism (emotional stability) shows a propensity to feel bad feelings including melancholy, worry, and moodiness (Thukral, 2018). The interplay between job stress, temperament, and personality traits provides a multidimensional framework for understanding how individuals respond to workplace challenges. Occupational stress, resulting from work-related demands, triggers various psychological and physiological responses that can affect overall well-being and job satisfaction. This stressful experience is intricately linked to individual temperament and includes inherent emotional and behavioral tendencies (Segerstrom, 2019). Personality traits, on the other hand, provide a lens through which this study can understand how individuals consistently navigate stressors. The Big Five personality trait model, including extraversion, conscientiousness, and neuroticism, sheds light on patterns in how people process and cope with stress. These characteristics influence stress perception, coping mechanisms, and resilience to workplace pressures (Manzoor, 2022).

### **Personality Traits and Temperament-Job Stress Relationship**

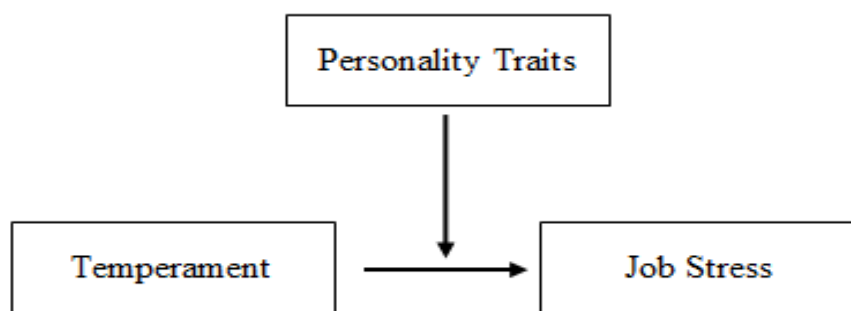
In addition, this theory offers different perspectives on personality traits, further enhancing our understanding of how individuals respond to occupational stress. The inherent traits of each temperament type, whether sanguine, choleric, melancholic, or phlegmatic, shape the perception of stress, emotional responses, and adoption of coping strategies. In this complex tapestry, the way individuals manage work stress is not determined solely by their temperament or personality traits (Angelini, 2023). This relates to the Big Five model, which influences the employees in reacting to the surroundings at the workplace. The context of the work environment, available support systems and opportunities for personal growth also play a crucial role. Recognizing this interdependence allows organizations and individuals to tailor interventions that recognize different temperamental and personality traits (Angelini, 2023).

Building on seminal work, contemporary research confirms personality traits systematically alter how temperament translates to job stress in telecommunications (Angelini, 2023). Personality traits exacerbate stress reactions to innate temperamental sensitivity and provides cognitive-emotional regulation (Luo, 2022). These moderating effects are particularly pronounced in technology sectors where unpredictable stressors are prevalent.

## Conceptual framework and Hypotheses Development

The conceptual framework integrates temperament, job stress, and personality traits. Temperament influences stress perception, while personality traits moderate this relationship (Ahmad, 2017). The best theories that can be used and have an impact on temperament and job stress are the Karasek's demand-control model and the Edwards's person-environment (p-e) fit theory in research (Chu, 2012). The framework provides a basis for understanding individual differences in stress responses and their implications for employee well-being. They emphasized the importance of understanding individual differences in emotional and behavioral tendencies to effectively manage and mitigate job stress, thereby fostering healthier and more productive work environments.

**Figure 1**  
*Research Framework*



Source : Mahmud, 2023

Based on the above theoretical connections and conceptualization, the following hypotheses are proposed.

### Hypothesis I

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant effect of temperament on job stress among telecommunication employees.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant effect of type of temperament on job stress among telecommunication employees.

### Hypothesis II

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no role of personality traits as moderator in the relationship between temperament and job stress among telecommunication employees.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a role of personality traits as moderator in the relationship between temperament and job stress among telecommunication employees.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative research design utilizing a cross-sectional survey approach, which is particularly suitable for capturing data at a specific point in time. This design allows for a snapshot analysis of the relationships between key variables. As noted by Wang and Tang (2020), cross-sectional designs are efficient for identifying correlations and testing moderating effects. The conceptual framework is grounded in established theoretical models, including the Big Five Personality Traits and the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping which together

provide a comprehensive lens to examine the interplay between temperament, job stress, and personality traits (Angelini, 2023).

### **Sampling and Procedure**

A purposive sampling strategy was adopted to ensure the sample accurately represented the target population of telecommunications employees in Petaling Jaya, Selangor. This population was selected due to its high exposure to job-related stress stemming from rapid technological advancements and demanding performance standards. The sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's sample size table, ensuring adequate statistical power for analysis and generalizability (Adjobimey, 2022). Eligibility criteria required participants to have a minimum of one year of tenure, ensuring familiarity with workplace stressors and organizational dynamics. Employees from both operational and managerial roles were included to obtain diverse perspectives. Data collection was carried out over a four-week period, during which participants were invited to complete an online survey distributed via WhatsApp Messenger. The survey was hosted on a secure platform to ensure confidentiality and participant anonymity. Before proceeding with the questionnaire, participants were presented with an informed consent form detailing the study's objectives, ethical assurances, and voluntary nature of participation. Weekly follow-up reminders were sent to encourage participation. A total of 101 respondents completed the survey, meeting the sample size requirements for the planned statistical analyses.

### **Measurement and Instrument**

To ensure validity and reliability, the study employed three standardized instruments to assess the key constructs such as job stress, temperament, and personality traits. Adapted from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH, 1999), the Work-Related Stress Questionnaire (WRSQ) assesses multiple dimensions of job stress, including workload, control, and work-life balance. It has been widely used in occupational health research and demonstrated strong reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.87. The multidimensional structure provides a nuanced understanding of stressors in the workplace. The Fisher Temperament Inventory (FTI) categorizes individuals into four primary temperament types: sanguine, choleric, melancholic, and phlegmatic. This inventory has shown cross-cultural validity and is particularly effective in identifying emotional and behavioral predispositions (Mazidi, 2023), making it suitable for exploring temperament's role in stress experiences. This instrument measures the five core dimensions of personality: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism was identified. The test's reliability is well established, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.78 to 0.88 (Nezu, 2014). Its robust psychometric properties make it highly suitable for examining personality as a moderating variable in psychological studies. The Likert Scale is used to analyze the data more systematically. This Likert Scale assesses the level of agreement with statements related to job stress, temperament and personality traits. Participants will be asked to rate each statement on a 5-point scale, indicating the extent to which they agree or disagree with each statement. The scale captures the range of responses from strongly disagree to strongly agree, providing a quantitative measure of participants' perceptions of job stress.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The demographic analysis revealed that 11.9% of the respondents were male, while 88.1% were female. The majority of respondents were within the 20–30 years old age group (79.2%),

followed by 13.9% in the 31–40 years group, and 6.9% in the 41–50 years category. In terms of marital status, 52.5% were married, while 47.5% were single. Regarding tenure, 73.3% of the respondents had been employed at the company for less than 5 years, 11.9% had between 6–10 years of experience, 7.9% had worked for 11–20 years, and the remaining 6.9% had over 20 years of service. This indicates a predominantly young and relatively new workforce, which may have implications for stress perceptions and coping mechanisms in the organization.

## Descriptive Analysis

A descriptive analysis was conducted to summarize the key features of the dataset. Measures of central tendency (mean), standard deviation, and range (minimum and maximum scores) were calculated for each study variable. These include job stress, temperament types, and the Big Five personality traits.

Table 1 presents the detailed descriptive statistics for all variables, which serve as the basis for further correlation and moderation analyses. These statistics offer an initial understanding of the general trends in the data and help validate the assumptions for subsequent inferential tests.

**Table 1**  
*Mean Score*

| Variable           | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|--------------------|------|--------------------|
| Job stress         | 3.73 | 0.47               |
| Personality traits | 3.75 | 0.49               |
| Temperament        | 3.77 | 0.50               |

The mean score for job stress was 3.73, indicating a high level of job stress among respondents. This suggests that employees perceive significant stress, particularly when facing difficult work scenarios. The mean score for personality traits was 3.75, reflecting that respondents generally saw themselves as possessing strong personality characteristics for managing various workplace situations. Meanwhile, the mean score for temperament was 3.77, suggesting that employees perceive temperament often viewed as biologically rooted and stable since childhood as a factor that is difficult to manage under stress. These findings imply that, while respondents may have awareness and understanding of stress and personality traits, managing biologically inherent temperament in stressful conditions remains challenging.

## Correlation Analysis

Pearson Correlation Coefficients were calculated to assess the relationships between the key variables,

**Table 2**  
*Pearson Correlation Coefficient*

| Variables          | Job stress | Temperament | Personality Traits |
|--------------------|------------|-------------|--------------------|
| Job stress         | 1.000      |             |                    |
| Temperament        | 0.653**    | 1.000       |                    |
| Personality traits | 0.326**    | 0.132       | 1.000              |

\*\*Note:  $p < 0.01$

Based on Table 2, the results indicate a strong positive correlation between temperament and job stress ( $r = 0.653$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and a moderate positive correlation between personality traits and job stress ( $r = 0.326$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). These correlations support further analysis through

regression to test for direct and moderating effects. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient between the explanatory variables was calculated to test the result between the variables (Pearson Correlation Coefficient). Based on Table 3, it shows that the correlation between temperament and job stress is 0.653. The correlation between personality traits and job stress shows 0.326. Due to this, the result is proved that the correlation is coefficient based on the research.

### **Regression Analysis**

A linear regression analysis was conducted to test the study hypotheses in two stages. In Stage 1, temperament was entered as the independent variable to assess its effect on job stress. In Stage 2, personality traits were introduced as a moderator, using the standardized interaction term (Z-score) as proposed by Aiken and West in Ahmad (2017).

**Table 3**  
*Results of Regression Analysis*

| Variable       | Standardized $\beta$ |
|----------------|----------------------|
| Temperament    | 0.653**              |
| Sig-F          | 0.000                |
| $R^2$          | 0.426                |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.420                |

\*\*Notes:  $p < 0.05$

Table 3, the regression results show that temperament has a significant positive effect on job stress ( $\beta = 0.653$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), supporting Hypothesis I,  $H_1$ . The model explains 42.6% of the variance in job stress, indicating a good model fit.

**Table 4**  
*Analysis for Moderating Effect of Job Stress*

| Variable    | Standardized $\beta$ | $p$   | $t$ -value | Result    |
|-------------|----------------------|-------|------------|-----------|
| Temperament | -0.254**             | 0.001 | -3.555     | Supported |

Table 4 shows the interaction term between temperament and personality traits was found to be significant ( $\beta = -0.254$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), confirming that personality traits negatively moderate the relationship between temperament and job stress. Thus, Hypothesis II,  $H_1$  is also supported.

### **Summary of Hypotheses Testing**

The findings confirm both proposed hypotheses are supported, Hypotheses I,  $H_1$ : there is a significant effect of type of temperament on job stress among telecommunication employees and Hypotheses II,  $H_1$ : there is a role of personality traits as moderator in the relationship between temperament and job stress among telecommunication employees. Temperament plays a significant role in influencing job stress, and personality traits moderate this relationship. These results underscore the importance of considering both inherent traits (temperament) and adaptive characteristics (personality traits) in understanding and managing job stress in the telecommunications sector.

## **DISCUSSION**

In the dynamic and competitive landscape of the telecommunications industry, employees encounter numerous challenges driven by rapid technological advancements, high performance demands, and constant pressure to adapt. These factors contribute significantly to job stress, which can adversely affect employee well-being, productivity, and organizational commitment. This study aimed to explore how temperament influences the experience of job stress and how personality traits moderate this relationship.

The findings reveal those employees in the telecommunications sector report high levels of job stress. This aligns with prior research indicating that customer-facing industries, particularly those undergoing rapid technological shifts, are prone to elevated stress levels among workers. For example, the fast pace of technological innovation in the telecom sector compels employees to continuously upskill and adapt to new systems—factors that intensify stress (Chatterjee, 2020). Furthermore, the combination of tight deadlines, performance targets, and demanding customer interactions compounds the pressure on employees. Similarly, stress resulting from balancing innovation with performance metrics contributes to diminished employee well-being and increased risk of burnout in telecommunications roles (Mitcheltree, 2023).

The role of temperament in managing stress was particularly notable. Employees with a phlegmatic temperament, characterized by calmness, patience, and emotional stability, reported significantly lower levels of job stress. Their ability to remain composed under pressure appears to buffer them against the fast-paced demands of the industry. This finding is supported by Shdaifat (2024), who argued that individuals with phlegmatic traits tend to experience less stress due to their laid-back and non-reactive nature, which helps them navigate workplace challenges more effectively.

On the other hand, melancholic employees, known for their perfectionism, caution, and detail-oriented behavior, reported moderate stress levels. While their diligence helps them manage technical responsibilities effectively, they tend to experience stress when faced with ambiguous situations or when their high standards are not met. This observation is consistent with Davis (2018), who found that melancholic individuals are more likely to experience stress when there is a perceived mismatch between their ideal outcomes and real-world results. Their introspective nature and tendency to internalize unmet expectations can contribute to feelings of frustration and anxiety.

The results of this study suggest that personality traits play a significant role in moderating the relationship between temperament and job stress among telecommunication employees. Specifically, personality traits were found to influence the extent to which temperament affects job stress. Individuals who scored higher experienced greater job stress, regardless of their temperament. This was likely due to the emotional reactivity associated with neuroticism, where employees were more likely to feel anxious, irritated, or overwhelmed when faced with typical workplace stressors. These findings are consistent with previous studies by Angelini (2023), which indicated that neurotic individuals are more prone to stress because of their heightened emotional responses to workplace challenges. On the other hand, conscientiousness was found to have a moderating effect in the opposite direction. Employees with higher levels of conscientiousness, regardless of their underlying temperament, tended to experience lower levels of job stress. Conscientious individuals generally exhibit a more organized, detail-oriented, and methodical approach to their tasks, which helps them manage workloads more

effectively and enhances their ability to achieve goals consistently while maintaining high standards of performance.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study underscores the critical role of temperament in shaping how employees in the telecommunications industry experience and manage job stress. Understanding the relationship between temperament and stress responses enables organizations to design more personalized stress management interventions, enhancing employee well-being and organizational effectiveness.

The findings demonstrate that temperament is a foundational factor in how individuals perceive stress. However, personality traits, particularly neuroticism and conscientiousness, significantly moderate this relationship. For instance, employees with high levels of neuroticism are more prone to elevated stress, even if their temperament would otherwise suggest a lower stress profile. Conversely, individuals with high conscientiousness tend to manage stress more effectively, even in high-pressure environments. This highlights the importance of a dual-focus approach, considering both temperament and personality traits in assessing and addressing workplace stress.

A key insight from the study is the moderating effect of personality traits, which can either buffer against or intensify the stress associated with an individual's temperament. These dynamics illustrate the complexity of stress responses and emphasize the need for nuanced, targeted strategies to support employee mental health. By acknowledging the interplay between temperament and personality, organizations can develop tailored interventions that align with employees' unique psychological profiles. Such personalized strategies offer several practical benefits. Tailoring stress-reduction initiatives based on individual differences can enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of these programs, promoting a healthier work environment and improving overall employee well-being. Employees who feel understood and supported in terms of their psychological makeup are more likely to experience greater job satisfaction, engagement, and resilience.

Moreover, these findings have important implications for human resource practices, including personnel selection, training, and ongoing employee support. By integrating assessments of temperament and personality traits into HR processes, organizations particularly in fast-paced sectors like telecommunications can proactively address stress risks and build more adaptable, psychologically resilient teams.

Finally, while this research provides valuable insights into the interplay between temperament, personality traits, and job stress, it also opens avenues for future research. Further studies could explore the underlying mechanisms of these relationships, examine their long-term impacts on employee performance, and investigate how these dynamics unfold across different organizational contexts.

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