

## Job Satisfaction and Stress Among Secondary School Music Teachers in Malaysia

Juriani Jamaludin,  
Ghaziah Mohd Ghazali

Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia

### **Abstract**

*Music teachers are often faced with the task of not only teaching the regular music classes in school, but also a myriad of other tasks and responsibilities which often results in stress. Studies have found that music teachers tend to experience pressure and stress from a variety of sources, many of which are commonly related to the demands and expectations of a workload that is often incomparable with teachers teaching other subjects. In Malaysia, since music was implemented in the National Curriculum in the primary and secondary schools, the expectations towards music activities in school has created extra demands on music teachers to perform and produce proof of the success of their music teaching. This study focused on job satisfaction and related stress among music teachers in selected secondary schools in Malaysia and the factors that contributed to the stress. Results from this study suggest that music teachers are satisfied with their job. However, they do realize that their workload may exceed those of other teachers, with additional administrative tasks they are required to do. Novice teachers are more likely to be overwhelmed and pressured by their workload which often does not give them adequate preparation time. Furthermore, extra activities at school often require music teachers to remain in school for both the morning and afternoon sessions. It is evident therefore that music teachers face many challenges and need to be well trained, competent, proactive, innovative and good managers of time and human resources in order to cope with the demands of the job.*

**Keywords** challenges of music teaching, job satisfaction, music teachers, secondary school music teaching, stress

### **Abstrak**

*Guru muzik sering menghadapi pelbagai tugas yang merangkumi bukan sahaja tugas mengajar muzik tetapi juga banyak tugas yang lain yang boleh menyebabkan tekanan. Kajian yang dijalankan diluar negara mendapati bahawa guru muzik sering mengalami tekanan daripada pelbagai sumber, di mana beban tugas adalah tidak sama dengan guru-guru yang mengajar subjek lain. Di Malaysia, sejak muzik diimplementasikan di kurikulum sekolah-sekolah rendah dan menengah, ekspektasi terhadap aktiviti muzik di sekolah memerlukan guru muzik menunjukkan kemampuan dan membuktikan kejayaan mereka mengajar muzik di sekolah. Kajian ini memfokus kepada tahap kepuasan bekerja dan faktor-faktor penyumbang tekanan dalam*

*kalangan guru-guru muzik di Malaysia. Dapatan kajian dari studi ini menunjukkan bahawa secara amnya guru muzik adalah berpuashati dengan kerjaya yang mereka pilih. Namun demikian mereka sedar yang beban tugas mereka adalah sering melebihi guru-guru yang lain dengan ditambah tugas pentadbiran yang perlu dijalankan selain dari mengajar. Dengan itu, guru baru mungkin akan berasa lebih tertekan oleh bebanan kerja yang sering tidak memberi mereka masa yang secukupnya dalam membuat persediaan mengajar. Tambahan pula, guru-guru muzik sering diperlukan untuk berada di sekolah pada sesi pagi dan petang jika adanya aktiviti tambahan di sekolah. Secara jelas, guru-guru muzik menghadapi lebih banyak cabaran dan perlu menjadi pengurus yang cekap, terlatih, proaktif, inovatif dan mampu mengurus masa serta sumber manusia yang baik untuk berhadapan dengan tuntutan kerja yang sedia ada.*

**Kata Kunci** *cabaran mengajar muzik, guru muzik, kepuasan pekerjaan, pengajaran muzik sekolah menengah, tekanan*

---

**Corresponding author:**

Juriani Jamaludin  
Faculty of Music, Block F, Level 4,  
Universiti Teknologi MARA,  
Section 17 campus, 40200 Shah Alam,  
Selangor Darul Ehsan  
Malaysia  
juria68@yahoo.com

## Introduction

Since music was implemented in the National Curriculum (New Primary School Curriculum - KBSR; and Integrated Secondary School Curriculum - KBSM), the expectations towards music activities in school has created extra demands on music teachers. This has placed pressure on music teachers, especially those teaching in secondary schools to produce music performances when required by the school principal. At the ministerial level, competitions organized and held by the Ministry of Education (MOE) as well as other organizations promote musical activities and music education in school. The creation of music ensembles including: school bands; choral groups; traditional music ensembles such as the gamelan, kompang, and caklempong, as well as other instrumental ensembles such as the wind orchestra is evident that music education in schools does have support from relevant parties.

The MOE or State Education Departments have provided many opportunities for secondary schools to showcase their performing groups. These events often make learning music at school more interesting as performing groups can then showcase their skills in music. This results in the school gaining recognition or a good reputation within their district or zones. Furthermore, proceeding through each level of competition (semi-finals, finals, national levels) often helps music teachers gain better leverage when asking for more allocation of funds from their respective schools. This is important to help sustain the costs of having musical ensembles or performing groups at school. It is therefore understood that with all these activities held each year, music teachers may undoubtedly experience pressure to fulfill the expectations of their school principals.

From the resolution of the First Malaysia National Conference for Music Education (MusEd) 2002, it was stressed that professionalism amongst music teachers needed to be raised in order to fulfill the aims of music education in Malaysia. Historically, the drastic effort to provide the much needed music teachers for the primary schools when the music curriculum was first implemented in the late 1980's saw many untrained music teachers not possessing adequate musical training or music qualifications. These teachers, who had very little background and experience in teaching music in schools were more or less forced to teach a subject which they were not comfortable with. It was mostly a "touch and go" concept where many teachers taught whatever they could in the hope of fulfilling the curriculum designed for that subject.

Research by the Malaysian Ministry of Education (EPRD, 2000) found that teachers' characteristics, students' characteristics and facilities as well as equipments were the main problems in implementing music in the primary school. Meanwhile, the resolution of the first Music Education Conference (MusEd, 2002) had claimed that social perceptions towards music education and music syllabus contents were also the main issues, among others, that contributed towards a less than favourable attitude towards school music, and this has an effect on the motivation of music teachers which eventually leads to stress.

Stress in teaching is not a new phenomenon. Teaching is the type of job where potentially high levels of stress can be generated on a regular basis as it is contributed by many factors within the school environment. According to research conducted by the National Union of Teaching Profession (NUTP) about teacher stress, this issue

needed to be investigated, including the sources of stress and the effect this had on teachers (Abdul Muin Sapidin, 2005). The NUTP mentioned that this study must be performed because they received complaints about teacher stress and workload. A study therefore should examine the elements that contribute towards; teacher stress, teachers' workload, issues surrounding fellow colleagues, parents, the school environment, students and the society. Additionally, problems related to teachers' emotions, student discipline, the general attitudes and perception towards music and musical activities needed to be included.

Teachers in Malaysia often face problems related to stress and job satisfaction. Reports from newspapers, the NUTP and other teachers' unions raised many grievances and dissatisfactions among teachers (The Sun, August 15, 1999). According to Mr. N. Subramaniam, secretary-general of the NUTP, there is a very high incidence of burn-out due to stress among teachers. A few studies have been conducted in Malaysia regarding teacher stress (Abd. Suseela Malakolunthu, 1994; Junaidah Abd. Jamil, 1996; Mat Abg. Masagus, 1998; Mokhtar Ahmad, 1995). These studies, conducted among non-music teachers identified students' attitudes, workload, and having to teach poorly motivated students as stressors. Specifically, a previous study by Juriani Jamaludin (2007) focusing primarily on stress levels of primary school music teachers found that generally, primary music teachers experience only mild job-related stress. An explanation for this could be due to the lower expectations of primary school students that have resulted in music teachers feeling less pressure to conduct musical activities demanding high level skills. Although research on stress in other subject areas have been found in Malaysia, to date, no research on stress among music teachers in the secondary schools have been identified.

Chan and Juriani (2010) conducted a survey entitled "Music Teacher Stress Inventory" based on problems faced by Malaysian music teachers with 44 *stressors* extracted from 99 sources. This study was designed to examine the level of stress according to selected stressors and focused on primary school music teachers. The term *stressor* has been used in previous studies (Chan and Juriani, 2010; Juriani, 2007; Scheib, 2003 and Vickneasy, 1997) and refers to stressors. The stressors in this study were categorized into six subscales; student characteristics, teacher characteristics, administrative procedures, social support, facilities and equipment and music syllabus content. Among the stressors identified, the highest source of stress was lack of music resources and books in the subscale of "Facilities and Equipment" and lack of a trained music teacher in the subscale of "Administrative Procedures". The research findings indicated that generally, music teachers experienced mild stress in their music teaching and learning activities in school. This study also found that music teachers were somewhat content with their work demands and work environment as they did not face pressures from the school management to produce results as with other core subjects which included examinations. The results of this study implied a comparatively good state of the music teachers' well-being, with the quality of music teaching most probably only as high as the demand required for the primary school level. However, it was found that teaching competency or lack of expertise to teach music among primary school teachers has been confirmed to be one of the main problems in music teaching.

Allsup (2005) concluded that music teaching can indeed involve a great deal of stress. Music teachers most often experience stress when they have to: cope with too many classroom duties (music as well as non-music); conduct after-school musical activities; be in charge of clubs and uniformed group activities; prepare the marching band; manage holiday concerts and private lessons; as well as coping with multiple school and related tasks, which gives them insufficient quality time for family and friends.

An interesting study conducted by Baker (2007) showed that administrators do play an important role in teacher job satisfaction, retention, and attrition. His finding also indicated that teachers and administrators' perceptions of methods of support are different. Therefore, the rate of music teacher attrition could be averted by making administrators more aware of the vital role they play in teacher job satisfaction, and by educating them regarding what types of teacher assistance are most likely to be appreciated.

Earlier studies conducted on music teachers' stress from overseas included Hamann, Daugherty, and Mills (1987) who examined applicable job-related factors unique to music teachers' burnout. Hodge, Jupp and Taylor (1994) also found that there are added pressures in terms of teaching from less structured curricula in music than for other subject areas. Heston, Dedrick, Raschke and Whitehead (1996) suggested that student attitudes and behaviors were also key stress factors for music teachers. Bechen (2000) investigated perceptions of pre-service and in-service music educators to sources of stress in the music teaching profession. In addition, Scheib (2003) found six main stressors in music teaching, and Gordon (1997) identified stress factors which music practitioners experienced in the teaching environment. These studies clearly suggested that music teachers experience a lot of pressure and stress whilst teaching music, and performing their day to day duties in school.

Generally, although music teacher stress has been proven through studies conducted by researchers overseas (Bechen, 2000; Dorman, 2003; Gordon, 2002; Hamann, Daugherty, and Mills, 1987; Heston, Dedrick, Raschke & Whitehead, 1996; Hodge, Jupp and Taylor, 1994), studies in music teachers' stress levels in Malaysia are relatively scarce (Chan & Juriani, 2010; Juriani, 2007). There is a need for research on the stress level of music teachers in Malaysia in order to identify and recognize their sources of stress and subsequently learn how some teachers cope with the stress of teaching music in school, as well as performing their other responsibilities as teachers which are non-music related. So far, anecdotal evidence from some novice secondary school music teachers indicate that they hardly have time to focus, prepare and teach their regular music classes due to the hectic workload and schedule, often having to remain in school for both the morning and afternoon sessions.

In view of the current situation mentioned above, this study focused on general job satisfaction and stress among music teachers in secondary schools in selected schools in Malaysia.

## **Method**

This study was conducted using qualitative methods. Interview questions were compiled to explore: the problems that music teachers faced in teaching music as part

of the curriculum or co-curriculum; how they felt towards their workload at school as well as how they managed them; and subsequently how stressed they felt. The set of interview questions were designed based on an earlier study by Chan and Juriani (2010) which was conducted using a survey questionnaire. The questions selected for this study focused on similar issues related to music teacher stress, but with the aim of obtaining rich data from the perspective of secondary school music teachers.

An invitation to participate in this study was sent out to music teachers via a posting on Facebook. The reason this was carried out was due to the existence of a chat group on Facebook among the alumni of UiTM's Music Education Department which was purported to also have a networking of contacts among other music teacher colleagues who graduated from other universities. This provided a good network of contacts which was considered helpful for this current study.

After invitation notices were posted, explanations about the study were given which resulted in 20 positive responses. A set of open-ended questions were then posted on Facebook where participants were able to download the attached file and insert their responses before emailing it back to the researcher by a specified due date. The participants were instructed to respond as honestly as they could to the questions, and to provide with as much information and feedback as possible. It has to be stated here that although actual face-to-face interviews were not carried out due to time constraints, the participants communicated with the researcher regarding their concerns and queries about the questions they had to answer. This transpired over a few days for some of the subjects, thus creating a conversation or dialogue that added greater understanding towards their written responses.

As the sample for this study consisted of members in the Facebook chat group who were music teachers from two main universities offering music teacher training programs at the Bachelor Degree level (Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris – UPSI, and Universiti Teknologi MARA - UiTM), the subjects for this study therefore consisted of graduates from these two universities only. There were no selections done as participation for the study was purely voluntary.

## Results

Out of a total of 20 music teachers who had indicated an interest to participate in this study, only eight music teachers actually submitted their completed responses to the questions posted. The ones who did not, later apologized for their inability to meet the deadline of as they were too busy with other deadlines and school activities. A majority of respondents were females (75%,  $n=6$ ). Generally the respondents' working experience ranged from 1 to 18 years in service. Out of a total of eight teachers who participated in this study, only three (37%) had a background of having achieved graded music certifications from the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) apart from their teaching degree qualification at university.

Opening questions to participants tried to clarify their feelings towards their choice of career as music teachers. All the teachers said that they chose to be music teachers because of a deep interest in music and being a music teacher. All of them said that although they were faced with many tasks and responsibilities at school which included

non-music duties and teaching load, they still enjoyed being music teachers and looked forward to being in service in the years to come. At least 50% said that they wanted to prove that they were capable of meeting the challenges of participating in music events and functions to be held at the school, state or national levels. In fact, all the respondents admitted that they felt very much challenged by the planning, managing and administrating of their performing groups and ensembles. However, seeing how well their students performed, especially followed by compliments from their school principal, parents, colleagues, and perhaps winning some state competitions, were some extremely satisfying examples of experiences for them.

Table 1 shows the breakdown of the respondents, their gender, music teaching experience and extra music qualifications if any. It can be seen that only three teachers had extra music qualifications (ABRSM).

**Table 1** The respondents of the study

Subjects	Gender	Music teaching experience	Extra music qualifications
Teacher A	Male	18 years	Yes, ABRSM
Teacher B	Female	1 year	No
Teacher C	Female	5 years	Yes, ABRSM
Teacher D	Female	5 years	Yes, ABRSM
Teacher E	Female	5 years	No
Teacher F	Female	3 years	No
Teacher G	Male	2 years	No
Teacher H	Female	3 years	No

### Job Satisfaction

Most teachers said that they were generally satisfied with their job as music teacher in their respective secondary school. They were asked to indicate their feelings of satisfaction according to specific criteria including; students, school support, peers, facilities, administrative work, other staff support, teaching content, and how much they earned. Generally the respondents felt that they were satisfied with their students. Some evidence of statements from teachers were:

**Teacher A** Ada ketikanya sangat puas apabila apa yang kita buat seperti pancaragam, koir, gamelan... berjaya menjadi johan atau membuat persembahan yang baik di sesuatu majlis. Saya sangat puas terutamanya Pancaragam kerana saya bermula dari 'zero' (sekolah baru dibuka) hingga berada dalam ranking kebangsaan walau dalam masa hanya enam tahun. Semuanya saya buat sendiri dari menggubah lagu, membuat formasi, melatih pelajar dan semua yang berkaitan.

At times it's satisfying when what we do, especially for band, choir, gamelan succeeded in winning, or the performances were good during events. I am very satisfied especially with my band, which began from zero (newly opened school) and managed to be in the national ranking within six years. I did it by myself from arranging the music, doing the formations, student practices and all.

**Teacher B** Ya, saya sangat berpuas hati. Saya berpuas hati dan berbangga apabila melihat pelajar-pelajar saya berjaya dalam pertandingan dan persembahan yang dianjurkan oleh pihak sekolah.

Yes, I am very satisfied. I am satisfied and proud to see my students doing well in competitions and performances organized by the school.

**Teacher G** Saya sangat berpuas hati dengan kerjaya ini kerana sebagai guru muzik kita berpeluang merasai pelbagai keseronokan dalam mengajar matapelajaran ini.

I am very satisfied with this career because as music teachers we get to see and feel all kinds of excitement in teaching this subject.

Only one teacher said that he/she was not happy with her school principal whilst three teachers stated that they were not satisfied with their colleagues. Basically all teachers were satisfied with their working facilities, although one teacher said that he/she had to buy her own keyboard for use in her music class as the school did not provide one.

Out of the eight music teachers who participated in this study, 50% ( $n=4$ ) said that they were not satisfied with the numerous administrative tasks that they had to do apart from their extra teaching workload and complained that it was often too much. These teachers added that the administrative staff at the school expected them to see to them complete every single process and procedure of documenting activities related to concerts, trips, visits and other events without giving any assistance. Three teachers ( $n=3$ ) reported that they were also often taken for granted by the school and sometimes felt unappreciated especially from among their fellow colleagues. However, two teachers had strong positive support from their colleagues and especially from their school principal. Almost all teachers said that they had no problem teaching the curriculum although two teachers said that they had to know how to pace the teaching and learning so that the syllabus could be finished on schedule at the end of the school year despite all the activities.

When asked if teachers were satisfied with how much they earned as teachers, almost all said that they were generally happy with the amount. Only one teacher commented that the school should consider giving extra allowance for the additional work, usually outside of normal working hours each week such as conducting rehearsals and helping students practice for performances.

### Subjects at University Which Teachers Found Helpful

In order to gain a better idea of music teachers' training at university, the respondents were also asked to list courses which they had taken at university which they found most helpful to them as teachers. All teachers responded that the university courses were useful and helped them preparation to be teachers. The courses which they found to be the most valuable were; music theory, instrumental instruction such as keyboard class, traditional music, vocal ensemble, brass and woodwind method, band management, arranging, aural skills, pedagogy and counseling.

### Job Stress

The issue of stress amongst music teachers was discussed according to categories of stressors including; students, facilities, administrative work, appreciation from the school, teaching content, and support from colleagues. Responses from the eight music teachers are as follows:

Teacher A felt that he was doing alright as a music teacher at his school with not much stress faced except for the extra administrative work that he was always given, and often at short notice. For this teacher, the administrative tasks were the most stressful as he felt the subjects he had taken at university did not in any way prepare him for this, as shown by his statement below:

**Teacher A** Mungkin kerja-kerja pentadbiran kerana ia tidak pernah didedahkan di universiti atau mana-mana institusi.

Maybe administrative work because we were never exposed to it at university or any institution.

Teacher B was also not very stressed despite facing a shortage of musical instruments. She felt that the administrative work was manageable because she had help from her colleagues. In addition, teaching content was also not stressful, although she did emphasize that music teachers need to learn to manage their time and know how to plan ahead so that the syllabus could be completed on time. However, she admitted that she felt most stressed when asked to do tasks that were beyond her knowledge, as stated below:

**Teacher B** Saya dikehendaki membuat sesuatu tugas yang di luar bidang kemahiran saya – membina website sekolah.

I was asked to do a task which is outside of my capability – building the school website.

Teacher C felt some stress as a result of her students who lacked discipline. In addition, the administrative work stressed her tremendously due to the lack of understanding and support from her colleagues. This teacher felt that between her

students, administrative work and the support from fellow colleagues, the most stress came from the administrative work and the performing demands from the school. Her comment about what caused her stress is show below:

**Teacher C** Ada juga stres apabila terlalu byk bebanan kerja yg terpaksa dilakukan. Selalu pulang lambat kerana melatih pelajar melakukan persembahan. Stress apabila dikritik jika persembahan dilakukan tidak berjaya. Stres juga apabila guru lain tidak memberi kerjasama sepenuhnya utk memberi pelepasan kepada pelajar utk membuat persembahan.

There is stress when the workload gets too much. Always going home late due to student rehearsals for performances. Stressed when I am criticized when a performance is not successful. Stressed also when other teachers do not give full cooperation in giving time off for students to do performances.

Mungkin kerja-kerja pentadbiran dan juga mengendalikan terlalu banyak persembahan pelajar yang diminta oleh pihak sekolah tanpa memikirkan guru muzik juga ada tanggungjawab terhadap matapelajaran muzik di dalam bilik darjah.

Maybe administrative tasks and also in handling too many student performances requested by the school without considering that music teachers also have responsibilities towards the teaching of music in classes.

On the other hand, Teacher D reported that she did not have many problems with her students as she could manage them. The music teaching facilities at her school were also conducive to teaching and learning. However she felt most stressed from the administrative work and the lack of support from her fellow colleagues:

**Teacher D** Tekanan memanglah ada. Tetapi kebanyakan tekanan yang ada tiada kaitan dengan tugas guru muzik. Kebanyakannya lebih kepada penerimaan rakan sekerja tentang kerja kita (dan) kepercayaan pihak tertentu kepada keupayaan kita.

Stress is there. But most of it has got no relation to the job as a music teacher. Mostly it's a result of fellow colleagues acceptance of our work and the belief about our capabilities.

Rakan sekerja yang selalu mengganggu kerja dan tak pernah berpuashati.

Fellow colleagues who are always interfering and never satisfied.

Teacher E, on the other hand stated that she was stressed as a result of students who were lazy and lacked discipline. Administrative work was also stressful for her as she had no one to assist her. She had no problems whatsoever with the facilities and teaching content, but felt most stress from the administrative work, which she felt even exceeded her actual music teaching load.

**Teacher E** Kerja2 pentadbiran. Tugas 2 lain lebih banyak drpd P and P.

Administrative work. Other chores are more than our teaching and learning (T&L).

Teacher F stated that she was very stressed with students and the lack of appreciation towards her work, although she had good support from her fellow colleagues:

**Teacher F** Ciri-ciri pelajar sangat teruk – tekanan yang paling hebat.

Student characteristics that are bad – the most stress.

Teacher G felt that if there was any tension that were felt, it was still under control and manageable. However, the most stress was from his students and the administrative work:

**Teacher G** Kerja2 pentadbiran atau pengkeranian yang memerlukan tahap kesabaran yang tinggi....Jika maklumat tidak lengkap, pihak pentadbiran akan marah pada kita.

Administrative or clerical work that requires a high level of patience... If the information is not complete, the administration staff will get mad at us.

Lastly, Teacher H stated that she was very stressed by the attitude of her students and the administrative work which included tasks or assignments beyond her knowledge:

**Teacher H** Arahan daripada pentadbiran untuk melakukan kerja di luar bidang kerja menyebabkan stress yang sangat teruk.

Instructions from administration to do work outside our field causes very bad stress.

### **Managing Stress**

Respondents were also asked to state how they managed their stress. They described how they dealt with the tension and stress of work such as; having “time out” with their family, exchanging ideas with friends, colleagues as well as their spouse, sharing their ideas and concerns among friends, engaging in fun practice and music making with their students. Some statements from respondents can be seen below:

**Teacher H** Cara yang terbaik adalah dengan bercerita dengan rakan sekerja dan juga berkongsi masalah bersama suami. Dengan itu dapat mengurangkan sedikit tekanan yang dialami.

The best way is to tell my fellow colleagues and also to share my problems with my husband. In that way I can reduce the stress I am facing.

However, one teacher felt that negative perceptions from fellow colleagues could be overcome by ensuring that the principal of the school supported music and the music teacher. According to her, once that was achieved, all other staff in the school would not be able to oppose or show resistance when she requested help in organizing music activities:

**Teacher D** Tarik kepercayaan pengetua pada kita dulu. Itu lebih penting. Pedulikan setiap kata-kata mereka dan fokuskan pada pelajar yang menanti. Selain itu membuat pelbagai program yang boleh menunjukkan keupayaan kita bekerja... must be confident in yourself.

Get our principal to believe in us first. That's most important. Ignore whatever anybody else may say and focus on the waiting students. Apart from that having many programs can show them what we can do... must be confident in yourself.

When asked what teachers felt they needed most in order to be better music teachers the respondents said they needed more knowledge in creative teaching skills, keyboard skills, pedagogical skills and knowledge in technology (ICT).

## Discussion

The data collected from eight music teachers from eight different secondary schools in Malaysia indicated a general feeling of satisfaction towards their career as music teachers. As expected, all the music teachers were assigned numerous other duties and responsibilities apart from their teaching load, often demanding a lot of their time outside of music classes. For some teachers though, it seemed that their feelings of dissatisfaction was not so much a result of having so many other duties, but the fact that they needed the assistance, guidance and support from their fellow colleagues.

Satisfaction with their job as music teachers was evident by the positive remarks and statements about the teachers' feelings of pride and satisfaction when students performed well or won various competitions. Their accomplishments and achievements was clearly a result of their extra effort and hard work. This showed that despite facing somewhat unfavourable situations in their school, in terms of student attitudes, peer support and heavy workload, the teachers continue to make effort to improve themselves and set higher standards for subsequent music activities.

Many responded with low or no responses to stress for most of the items of consideration (facilities, teaching content material, fellow colleagues and appreciation from colleagues), with a few saying that whatever problems they faced concerning those aspects was still manageable and tolerable. However, 50% of the teachers admitted that they were stressed with their students' attitude, describing them to be lacking in discipline, lazy or disinterested in the subject matter. This finding therefore is similar to Heston, Dedrick, Raschke and Whitehead's (1996) study which found student attitudes as the most prominent stressor for music teachers.

Similarly, almost all the teachers (75%) were faced with similar dissatisfactions about the additional amount of administrative tasks and duties which they felt were cumbersome and unreasonable. Most of these teachers considered these administrative tasks to be stressful especially when the frequency and quantity of work seemed to be time consuming and often exceeding their teaching and musical responsibilities. This finding is similar to an earlier study conducted by Chan and Juriani (2010) where music teachers, regardless of their gender, training, background and teaching experience, found administrative procedures and tasks to be stressful.

Only one teacher complained about having too many performances, concerts and musical activities to organize which took too much time out from the teaching of the curriculum. Results also showed that recognition for areas needing improvement among the teachers centered around improving their teaching skills, and acknowledging that they need to be more creative in their teaching in order to capture students' interest. Knowledge in technology was also mentioned as a general need that could help them with their day-to-day tasks as music teachers. This point was understood to be referring to the ability to use music software including Sibelius.

## **Conclusion**

It was found that music teachers do have a heavy workload at school, often having to stay back for extra classes and rehearsals in preparation for concerts, performances and competitions. It was also found that while the teachers were satisfied with their job, the sources of stress among music teachers in this study mostly came from two major factors, which were administrative tasks and student attitudes. In short, too much and too frequent demands for music teachers to perform administrative tasks was the main stressors in this present study. This is in contrast to the study by Chan and Juriani (2010) who reported that the major reason for stress was "lack of music resources and books" in the subscale of "Facilities and Equipment". This suggests that most secondary music teachers were satisfied with their working facilities, although only one teacher said that she had to buy her own keyboard for use in her music class.

In conclusion, teaching is a profession that is conducive to high levels of stress. Music teachers in particular experience stress and burnout for different reasons. Plans for student performances, classroom teaching, co-curricular activities and musical events can easily be thwarted by uncooperative students and school administration. Other difficulties including scheduling, large class sizes, lack of recognition for the music program, budgetary and facility constraints, student indiscipline and lack of

general support for the music programs by the school and community all present potential sources of stress.

The above statements show that music teachers have to be skilled and well-trained so that they are ready and prepared to face what awaits them at school. Debra (2002) suggested that teacher preparation programs must include sufficient and adequate practice in methodology, pedagogy and classroom management skills to help music teachers succeed in their career. Music teachers need to practice an active teaching style and create interesting activities in the classroom to attract students' interest and attention. They also must know how to manage indiscipline and unproductive behavior in the classroom. Most importantly, administrators must realize their role in providing support and encouragement to music teachers so as to ensure a pleasant and productive work environment.

## References

- Abdul Muin Sapidin (2005). Stres guru membimbangkan – Akibat banyak perubahan dan bebanan tugas yang keterlaluan – NUTP. *Berita Harian Malaysia*, 18 Ogos. Retrieved 10 February, 2012. <http://s4.invisionfree.com/wantar/ar/t105.htm>
- Allsup, R.E (2005). Stress and the music teacher preventing burnout. *Teaching Music*, 12(5), 50-53.
- Bechen, E. F. (2000). "Sources of stress as perceived by preservice and inservice Iowa music educators", (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, The University of Iowa), Dissertation Abstracts International, DAI-A 61(11), p. 4318.
- Baker, V.D. (2007). Relationship between job satisfaction and the perception of administrative support among early career secondary choral music educators. *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, 17, 77.
- Chan C. J. & Juriani Jamaludin (2010). Stress in music teaching: Identifying the level and sources of stress in the context of Malaysian national primary schools. *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*. 18, 81-92.
- Dorman, J. (2003). Testing a model for teacher burnout. *Australian Journal of Educational & Developmental Psychology*, 3, 35-47.
- Educational Planning & Research Division (EPRD), Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia (2000), *Laporan Kajian Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran Pendidikan Muzik Sekolah Rendah*.
- Gordon, D.G. (1997). *An investigation and analysis of environmental stress factors experience by K-12 music teacher*. Dissertation Abstracts International.
- Gordon, D.G. (2002). Discipline in the music classroom: One component contributing to teacher stress. *Music Education Research*, 4(1), 157-165
- Hamann, D. L., Daugherty, E., & Mills, C. R. (1987). An investigation of burnout assessment and potential job related variables among public school music educators. *Psychology of Music*, 15(2), 128-140.
- Heston, M., Dedrick, C., Raschke, D., & Whitehead, J. (1996). Job satisfaction and stress among Band Directors. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 44(4), 319-327.
- Hodge, G. Jupp, J. & Taylor, J. (1994). Work stress, distress and burnout in music and mathematics teachers. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 64, 65-76.
- Juriani Jamaludin (2007). "Stressors and stress levels of primary school music teachers in Selangor, Malaysia." Unpublished Master's Thesis, Universiti Putra Malaysia.
- Junaidah Abd. Jamil (1995) "Perceived teachers' stress in selected secondary school In Kuala Lumpur", Unpublished Master's Thesis, Universiti Malaya.

- Kyriacou, C. (2001). Teacher Stress: Directions for future research, *Educational Review*, 53(1), 27–35.
- Mohd Razali Othman & Abg Mat Ali Abg Masagus. (1998). Strategi menangani tekanan di kalangan guru-guru Sekolah Menengah Zon A di Bahagian Kuching: Satu tinjauan. Paper presented in Program Seminar Pendidikan Sempena Perayaan Jubli Emas Maktab Perguruan Batu Lintang 17 - 18 Julai 1998. Retrieved date: 26 August 2009. <http://s4.invisionfree.com/wantar/ar/t105>. <http://devadason.tripod.com/seminar/seminar.html>
- Mokhtar Ahmad (1998). “Tekanan kerja di kalangan guru sekolah menengah: Satu kajian di Daerah Kulim Bandar Baharu, Kedah Darul Aman.” Unpublished masters thesis. Bintulu: Universiti Malaysia Sarawak.
- MusEd. (2002). *Resolution of the first Malaysian Music Education conference 2002*. First Malaysian Music Education Conference (UPM, UiTM, UPSI)
- The Sun, (August 15, 1999). *Lack of support make teachers quit*. Educational Report. Retrieved 10, February, 2012 <http://www.educationreport.org/pubs/mer/article.aspx?id=2214>
- Suseela Malakolunthu (1994). “A Study of teacher stress and its correlates.” Unpublished master’s thesis, University of Malaya.
- Scheib, J. W (2003) Role stress in the professional life of the school music teacher: A collective case study. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 51(2), 123-136.
- Vickneasvari Krishnasamy (1997). “A survey of stressors experienced by secondary school science teachers in Penang.” Unpublished masters thesis. University of Malaya

## Biography

### Juriani Jamaludin

Juriani Jamaludin is a lecturer in the Music Education Department, Faculty of Music, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM). She started her teaching career as a music tutor in Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Tanjong Malim, Perak in 2001 after graduating from Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam with the Bachelor of Music. In 2007, she obtained her Masters in Science (Music Education) from Universiti Putra Malaysia. Juriani has written and presented many papers in conferences locally, such as the 5th Malaysian Music Education Conference, UPM Music Colloquium 2008 and UiTM International Music Conference in 2009. Her paper with Dr Chan Cheong Jan, UPM entitled *Stress in Music Teaching: Identifying the Level and Sources of Stress in the Context of Malaysian National primary Schools*” was published in *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* being indexed in SCOPUS (Elsevier) and EBSCO. Her research interests include music teacher in primary and secondary school, music teaching and learning, psychology of music and stress in music teaching.

### Ghaziah Mohd Ghazali

Ghaziah Mohd Ghazali is a lecturer in the Music Education Department, Faculty of Music, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM). She obtained her masters degrees in the field of Music Education and Education from Ohio University, USA, and received her PhD from the University of New South Wales, Australia in 2006. Upon graduating from her masters degrees Ghaziah served as a music teacher for three years in a residential school before joining UiTM. She has written and presented many papers in conferences both locally and abroad, mostly on the subject of teacher training, teaching and learning of music and children’s motivation to learn music. Her paper entitled *Malaysian Children’s Attitudes Towards Learning Music* was published in *Music Education Research* in 2009. Her research interests include music teacher training, voice pedagogy, music teaching and learning, psychology of music, motivation in music as well as music and brain research.