THE EFFECTS OF LEADERSHIP, SOCIAL INTERACTION, AND PERCEIVED SUPPORT ON SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING OF ACADEMIC INSTITUTION IN MALAYSIA DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC: MEDIATION ROLE OF SELF-EFFICACY

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THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOPOSHY

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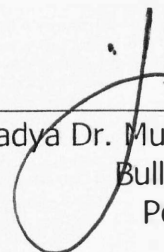
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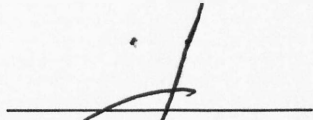
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ABSTRACT

Leadership, social interaction, and perceived support in organisations can either enhance or undermine the employee's well-being, and these have become a national concerned in recent times during COVID-19. This study was aimed to analysed the effects of leadership, social interaction and perceived support on subjective well-being (SWB) with self-efficacy as a mediator in a Malaysian university employee, using both quantitative and qualitative research methods. In the quantitative phase, participants were 522 Malaysian university employees (n= 286 academicians and n= 236 non-academicians). The questionnaires used were, Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire 5X (MLQ 5X), Social Interaction Scale, Perceived Support Scale, Technology Efficacy Scale and Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS). Statistical analysis included was regression. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews were conducted via Google Meet (n = 8). Results showed that employee's low level of subjective well-being were associated with poor leadership, social interaction and inadequate perceived support in an organisation. Moreover, self-efficacy was partially mediated the effect of leadership and perceived support on SWB. Four (4) main themes emerged from the qualitative study: 1) Leadership style; 2) Perceived support; 3) Social interaction; and 4) Technology efficacy. The study's results revealed the following sources of participants' happiness in the workplace: support received from co-workers and leader; positive leadership skill being implemented; constant communication, trust and well-planed task. Within the COVID-19 environment faced by employees in the higher education sector today, leadership style, perceived support and social interaction may help ensure employees' subjective well-being.

Keywords: subjective well-being, university, leadership, social interaction, perceived support, self-efficacy, COVID-19.

ABSTRAK

KESAN KEPIMPINAN, INTERAKSI SOSIAL DAN PERSEPSI SOKONGAN TERHADAP KESEJAHTERAAN SUBJEKTIF INSTITUSI AKADEMIK DI MALAYSIA SEMASA PANDEMIK COVID-19: PERANAN PENGANTARAAN EFIKASI KENDIRI

Kepimpinan, interaksi sosial dan persepsi sokongan dalam organisasi dapat membantu untuk meningkatkan atau menjejaskan kesejahteraan subjektif pekerja, dan ini telah menjadi perhatian negara sejak kebelakangan ini semasa COVID-19 melanda. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kesan kepimpinan, interaksi sosial dan persepsi sokongan terhadap kesejahteraan subjektif (SWB) dengan efikasi kendiri sebagai pengantara dalam kakitangan sebuah universiti di Malaysia, menggunakan kaedah penyelidikan kuantitatif dan kualitatif. Dalam fasa kuantitatif, peserta adalah 522 petugas universiti di Malaysia (n= 286 ahli akademik dan n= 236 bukan ahli akademik). Tinjauan yang digunakan ialah, Kepemimpinan Multifaktor, Skala Interaksi Sosial, Skala Persepsi Sokongan, Skala Efikasi Teknologi dan Skala Kegembiraan Subjektif. Analisis statistik yang terlibat ialah regression. *Tambahan, temu bual separa berstruktur telah dijalankan melalui Google meet (n=8). Keputusan menunjukkan bahawa tahap kesejahteraan subjektif pekerja yang rendah dikaitkan dengan kepimpinan yang lemah, interaksi sosial dan persepsi sokongan yang terhad dalam sesebuah organisasi. Selain itu, efikasi kendiri sebahagiannya menjadi pengantara kesan kepimpinan dan persepsi sokongan terhadap SWB. Empat (4) tema utama ditemui daripada kajian kualitatif: 1) Gaya kepimpinan; 2) Persepsi sokongan; 3) Interaksi sosial; dan 4) Efikasi teknologi. Keputusan kajian mendedahkan sumber kebahagiaan peserta di tempat kerja: sokongan yang diterima daripada rakan sekerja dan pemimpin; kemahiran kepimpinan positif dilaksanakan; komunikasi berterusan, amanah dan tugas yang dirancang dengan baik. Dalam persekitaran COVID-19 yang dihadapi oleh pekerja di sektor pendidikan tinggi hari ini, gaya kepimpinan, persepsi sokongan dan interaksi sosial boleh membantu memastikan kesejahteraan subjektif pekerja.*

Kata kunci: *kesejahteraan subjektif, universiti, kepimpinan, interaksi sosial, persepsi sokongan, efikasi kendiri, COVID-19.*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

*	-	Significant at the .05 level
**	-	Significant at the.01 level
<	-	Less than
>	-	Greater than
≥	-	Greater than or equal to
B/b	-	Beta value
C generations	-	Corona generations
CIPD	-	Chartered Institute of Personnel Development
COVID-19	-	Coronavirus Disease 2019
df	-	Degree of Freedom
FKAL	-	*Fakulti Kewangan Antarabangsa Labuan*
FKI	-	*Fakulti Komputeran dan Informatik*
FKJ	-	*Fakulti Kejuruteraan*
FPEP	-	*Fakulti Perniagaan Ekonomi dan Perakaunan*
FPL	-	*Fakulti Pertanian dan Lestari*
FPP	-	*Fakulti Psikologi dan Pendidikan*
FPSK	-	*Fakulti Perubatan dan Sains Kesihatan*
FSMP	-	*Fakulti Sains Makanan dan Pemakanan*
FSSA	-	*Fakulti Sains dan Sumber Alam*
FSSK		*Fakulti Sains Sosial dan Kemanusiaan*
H	-	Hypothesis
HEI	-	Higher Educational Institution
KPI	-	Key Performance Indicator
IT	-	Information Technology
JFPIU	-	*Jabatan, Fakulti, Pusat, Institut, Unit*
JTMK	-	*Jabatan Teknologi Maklumat dan Komunikasi*
M	-	Mean
MCO	-	Movement Control Order
Max	-	Maximum
Min	-	Minimum
MLQ 5X	-	Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire
N/n	-	Sample Number
p	-	Significant value/ p-value
PS	-	Perceived Support

PERMA	-	Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationship, Meaning Achievement
PSS	-	Perceived Support Scale
POS	-	Perceived Organizational Support
r	-	Correlation
R^2	-	R Square
SCT	-	Social Cognitive Theory
SD	-	Standard Deviation
SE	-	Standard Error
SES	-	Self- Efficacy Scale
SI	-	Social Interaction
SHS	-	Subjective Happiness Scale
SIS	-	Social Interaction Scale
SPSS	-	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SWB	-	Subjective Well-Being
t	-	t-value
TL	-	Transformational Leadership
UMS	-	*Universiti Malaysia Sabah*
UPM	-	*Universiti Putra Malaysia*
USD	-	United States Dollar
UTUMS	-	*Unit Terjemahan Universiti Malaysia Sabah*
WHO	-	World Health Organization

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has already begun to have an impact on people's physical and mental health all around the globe. COVID-19 is an acute respiratory illness with recognised symptoms of fever, cough, and breathing difficulty, according to WHO (WHO, 2021). World Health Organization (2020), at the end of December 2019, the World Health Organization's office in China reported instances of pneumonia-like sickness with an origin in Wuhan City. By January 3, 2020, the number of cases had risen to 44. Wuhan was the starting point for the virus's spread to other nations. As a result, on January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced it as an International Public Health Emergency.

A pandemic is described as "an epidemic that occurs worldwide, or across a very broad region, crosses international borders, and typically affects a huge number of people" (World Health Organization, 2020). The first case of COVID-19 was identified in Malaysia on 25 January 2020 from a Chinese tourist who entered Malaysia from Singapore. Since that moment, the cumulative case chart of Malaysia's COVID-19 began to soar without looking back to slow its pace.

The COVID-19 epidemic has had an impact on public health systems and the worldwide economy (Mckibbin et al., 2020). Globally, social distance has been used to effectively flatten the curve of daily confirmed cases (H. Kim & Florack, 2021). Several countries had announced the travel restrictions and closure of schools, universities, and other places that involved mass gatherings. So thus, Malaysia

has taken preventive measures through the announcement of the Movement Control Order (MCO) on March 16, 2020. According to worldwide figures for March 2020, 87% of registered pupils and more than 60 million teachers were unable to attend school or university (Leal Filho et al., 2021).

This action has been linked to a number of negative outcomes connected to well-being and compliance behaviour (Kim & Florack, 2021). An outstanding downside of remote e-working on well-being in the literature is found. Fundamentally, social support from others and communication have been described as reducing negative outcomes toward well-being. However, sudden isolation rules and global uncertainty challenges might lead to negative social interactions, threatening the expected function of social interaction. In reality, negative social interactions caused by current restrictions such as failing to give emotional or instrumental assistance, invading another's privacy, or robbing someone of confidence or hope, have been largely disregarded in significant social support (H. Kim & Florack, 2021).

As a result, the researcher's goal is to investigate the extent to which social interaction, perceived support, and leadership affect subjective well-being with the function of personnel self-efficacy acting as a mediator. The present literature on working from home is currently still insufficient for an explanation of the enforced telecommuting situations during COVID-19. However, the COVID-19 movement control order contributes a distinctive context which is crucially divergent from previous working from home literature.

A significant difference with the current pandemic is that working remotely is obligatory, affects everyone, initiates limited mobility, and is restricted for a great number of planning. COVID-19 new norm, therefore, provokes obstacles to duty organization, communications, home space negotiations, and well-being. With regards to sustainably operating a business normally, workers need to adjust themselves abruptly to an unfavourable working environment and contemporary digital platforms.

1.2   Research Background

Many more people are working from home under the present COVID-19 framework, with various degrees of results. The explanation for this is that many employees are now obliged to work from home, which is a new norm for most of them. This argument is reinforced by The Chartered Institute of Personnel Development's recommendation that when employees are working from home, companies should "watch out for their well-being" (CIPD, 2021).

Owing to the sudden occurrence and high level of uncertainty and unpredictability, COVID-19 led to a series of situation-specific challenges that particularly threatened teleworkers' well-being (Günther et al., 2022). For instance, the employees experienced a lack of orientation due to uncertainties about the situation and future developments, as well as a jeopardised trust in and commitment to their company during times of crisis. The organizations can support employee well-being through leadership (Lundqvist et al., 2022).

Leaders need to prepare themselves in all aspects when faced with a changing world in order to adapt to any situation (Drucker, 2017). Educational leaders need to be facilitators of change through the dimensions of concern for others, organizational efficiency and change strategies. Today's volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous world requires leaders to always be prepared, sensitive to changes and dynamics in management and leadership. When something unexpected happens, leaders need to be efficient in adapting to sudden changes, improve the decision-making process, be creative, make decisions through collaborative actions and trustworthiness (Drucker, 2017). Leaders also need to prepare themselves from all aspects in order to be able to adapt to any situation in the ever-changing world. The important thing to emphasize is the execution of tasks efficiently and on time. In addition, leaders are no longer dependent on only one option in making decisions.

In times of adversity, job-related stress experience can affect the levels of subjective well-being (Kasser & Sheldon, 2009) as well as the capacity to cope with and adjust to a challenging circumstance owing to exhaustion of psychological and physical resources (H. Kim & Florack, 2021). Previous studies have consistently