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# ICHRD 2024

**THE 4<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
ON HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

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## FROM THE EDITOR'S TABLE

Alhamdulillah. All praise and gratitude to Allah, with His grace and permission, the Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Human Resource Development (ICHRD 2024) have been successfully published. This book is a compilation of insightful articles encompassing perspectives on human resource development and social sciences studies.

Producing research articles offers students and researchers a valuable platform to present their findings, fostering confidence, critical thinking, and research skills. This book serves as a reference for researchers aspiring to publish journal articles, particularly in the fields of human resource development and social sciences studies.

In today's dynamic economic landscape, human resource practitioners face significant challenges in harnessing employees' potential. Balancing efforts to enhance work performance while ensuring employees' mental and physical well-being is a demanding responsibility. We hope the knowledge shared in this book of proceedings benefits students, researchers, academicians, human resource practitioners, psychologists, and social scientists striving for excellence in their respective fields.

On behalf of the School of Human Resource Development and Psychology, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to the dedicated team for their unwavering commitment from drafting research proposals to the final stage of publishing this book.

Lastly, may the readers of this book be blessed with knowledge that enriches their lives both in this world and the hereafter.

Thank you.

DR. FARAH ADIBAH BINTI IBRAHIM  
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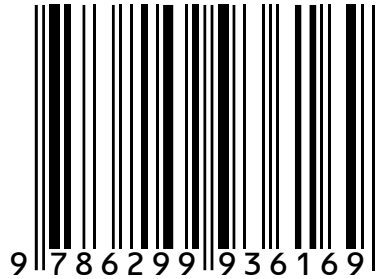
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# HARNESSING TECHNOLOGY AND AUTOMATION FOR HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN ADVANCING ACCOUNTING PRACTICES: A SOUTHWEST NIGERIA PERSPECTIVE

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## Abstract

Southwest Nigeria offers a significant potential for enhancing accounting procedures via the integration of technology and human resource management. This article examines the changing HRM practices in the accounting industry, emphasizing the use of technology and automation. This study explores new ideas for optimizing HRM processes using digital solutions by analyzing the region's specific issues and potential. The study showcases the advantages of automation in optimizing recruiting, improving employee engagement, and aiding performance management in accounting businesses in Southwest Nigeria via case studies and empirical research. The research ends by examining the consequences of technology integration on labor dynamics, skill needs, and organizational culture. Accounting procedures in Southwest Nigeria may enhance efficiency, agility, and competitiveness by adopting technology improvements while taking into consideration local context and socio-economic issues. The paper suggests that accounting firms in southwest Nigeria should automate their HRM operations to enhance accounting practices to meet global standards.

**Keywords:** Technology, Automation, Human Resource Management, Accounting Practices, Southwest Nigeria

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Technology has revolutionized economies and societies. It's created new ways to make money, provided access to a wealth of information, transformed the workplace, and connected the world into a global village. This impact is felt across various industries, including broadcasting, electronics, print media, computers, human resources, telecommunications, and e-commerce. David (2006) opined that the recognition of the pivotal role of Information Technology (IT) for development became eminent in Nigeria with the formulation and approval of the National Information Technology (IT) Policy in March, 2021.

Human resources (HR) are the backbone of any organization, ensuring employees are managed effectively to achieve the company's strategic goals. Technology is revolutionizing HR, offering a toolbox of digital solutions to boost efficiency and employee engagement. By embracing these tools, HR can streamline workflows, automate repetitive tasks, and cultivate a more dynamic and connected work environment.

Efficiency is the lifeblood of HR, and technology is a game-changer. Digital tools streamline administrative burdens like payroll, leave tracking, and data management, freeing HR from paperwork. Automation lets HR pros ditch the mundane and focus on strategic initiatives, becoming champions for employee support.

Tech is supercharging recruitment and talent management. Online job boards, applicant tracking systems (ATS), and AI screening tools help HR streamline hiring, manage candidate data like a boss, and find the perfect matches. This saves tons of time, boosts the quality of new hires, and keeps your top talent happy.

Happy employees equal a thriving business, and technology is the key to unlocking that potential. Communication and collaboration platforms like intranets, chat apps, and project management tools turn information silos into connected teams, boosting teamwork and collaboration. Plus, social recognition platforms and employee feedback tools give you ways to celebrate wins and hear employee voices, keeping morale high and motivation fired up.

Tech isn't just about hiring and chatting; it's also about growing your best people. Online learning platforms, virtual classrooms, and e-learning modules put training at employees' fingertips, anytime, anywhere. This fuels continuous learning, skill-building, and career advancement, keeping them happy and engaged. Plus, tech-powered performance management systems offer a fair and transparent way to track progress, making feedback a breeze. These systems provide real-time feedback, goal tracking, and data-driven insights, allowing for more meaningful performance discussions and development planning (Majin, K., et al, 2023).

## ■ 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Automation in Accounting*

Artificial intelligence (AI) is shaking things up in the world of accounting, especially for repetitive tasks. This deep dive explores how automating things like data entry, bookkeeping, and reconciliation frees up accountants' time, cuts down on errors, and lets them focus on bigger-picture strategy. Gone are the days of spending hours on manual data entry – a process prone to mistakes. The infusion of AI in these domains represents a seismic shift, streamlining operations and bolstering accuracy (Abdallah and Salah, 2024).

AI, especially machine learning, is a data entry whiz. It can suck in information from anywhere, fast and with almost no mistakes, cutting down on both the time accountants spend on this and the errors that creep in with manual work. These automated systems can handle all sorts of data formats, from invoices to inventory numbers. The result? A central, error-free database that's the backbone of solid financial reporting.

AI is also transforming how accountants check their books (reconciliation). Forget spending hours comparing spreadsheets – AI algorithms can handle massive amounts of data, spot mismatches instantly, and fix them automatically. This cuts down reconciliation time and catches errors humans might miss, all thanks to AI's ability to analyze complex data patterns. Plus, AI works in real-time, so any issues get flagged right away, allowing for faster fixes. This has profound implications for financial reporting accuracy and regulatory compliance, mitigating the risks associated with discrepancies in financial records (Himeur et al., 2023).

AI is making report generation a breeze for accountants. Forget crunching numbers for hours – machine learning can compile and analyze data, then spit out clear, comprehensive financial reports. This not only saves accountants a ton of time, but also means fewer errors and more consistent reports. The best part? AI can handle all sorts of data, even messy, unorganized stuff, to give you the full picture. Natural Language Processing (NLP) technologies further enhance the communicative value of reports by extracting insights from textual data, providing stakeholders with a more nuanced understanding of financial performance (Lewis and Young, 2019).

The transformation from transactional to strategic roles encompasses a spectrum of activities, including financial analysis, forecasting, and advising on key business decisions (Von and Langerman, 2022). By ditching the repetitive tasks, AI frees up accountants to use their brainpower for what they do best: analyzing the numbers. They can dig into complex data, spot trends, and give insights that guide smart business decisions. Not only does automation save time, but AI also provides accurate and up-to-date data, making those analyses even more powerful. Accountants can uncover hidden patterns and trends that help paint a complete picture of the company's financial health.

In conclusion, AI is shaking things up in accounting for the better. By automating repetitive tasks like data entry, bookkeeping, and reconciliation, AI frees up accountants' time and makes them more accurate. But the real win? Accountants can ditch the number-crunching and focus on what they do best: using their smarts to analyze data, spot trends, and give valuable advice to guide smart business decisions. AI basically turns accountants into strategic partners, helping companies win big. As technology continues to advance, the symbiotic relationship between automation and human expertise in accounting is poised to redefine the profession, unlocking new dimensions of efficiency and strategic impact (Rkein et al., 2019).

## ■ 3.0 ACCOUNTING PRACTICES IN SOUTHWEST NIGERIA

Accounting practices in southwest Nigeria are said to be undergoing a period of change. Financial experts like Dr. Adeola Ogunwuyi reportedly note a growing emphasis on international standards (Ogunwuyi, A., 2023). Nigeria has adopted International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), which are said to enhance transparency and comparability of financial statements for businesses operating globally. This shift towards IFRS, according to Dr. Ogunwuyi, presents challenges for some businesses, particularly smaller enterprises. Traditional bookkeeping practices may need to be updated to comply with the more rigorous standards. However, Professor Abimbola Oladapo argues that implementing accounting software can streamline the process and improve efficiency (Oladapo, A., 2022). The rise of technology is another reported trend in southwest Nigeria's accounting landscape. Experts like Femi Akinsanmi believe that cloud-based accounting solutions are gaining traction (Akinsanmi, F., 2021). These solutions offer increased accessibility and real-time data, allowing businesses to make more informed financial decisions.

Despite these changes, some familiar practices persist. Cash-based accounting remains common, particularly among smaller businesses, according to financial consultant Bolaji Adeyemi (Adeyemi, B., 2020). This simpler method tracks cash inflows and outflows, but may not provide a complete picture of a company's financial health. In conclusion, accounting procedures in southwest Nigeria are reportedly evolving. International standards and technological advancements are said to be shaping the profession. While challenges exist, particularly for smaller businesses, experts believe these developments will ultimately lead to greater transparency, efficiency, and informed decision-making within the region's business community.

### *Human Resource Management in advancing accounting practices*

Human Resource Management (HRM) plays a vital role in advancing accounting practices, according to experts in the field. Dr. Christopher Okafor, a specialist in HR for accounting firms, emphasizes the importance of attracting and retaining skilled professionals (Okafor, C., 2023). He argues that competitive compensation packages, opportunities for professional development, and a positive work culture are crucial for attracting top talent in the accounting field. A skilled and



motivated workforce is essential for implementing and upholding strong accounting practices. Professor Aisha Ibrahim, an expert in accounting education, highlights the need for continuous learning and development programs for accountants (Ibrahim, A., 2022). These programs can equip them with the latest accounting standards, software applications, and industry best practices. Effective communication between HR and accounting departments is also critical, as reported by financial consultant Emeka Madu (Madu, E., 2021). Clear communication ensures that HR understands the specific skill sets and qualifications needed by the accounting team. This allows HR to target recruitment efforts and develop training programs that directly address the needs of the accounting department.

Furthermore, HR practices can contribute to a culture of ethical behavior within the accounting profession. Lisa Nwaneme, a specialist in HR compliance, emphasizes the importance of a strong code of ethics and clear disciplinary procedures (Nwaneme, L., 2020). By promoting ethical conduct, HR can help ensure that accountants adhere to the highest professional standards and maintain the integrity of financial reporting. Conclusively, Human Resource Management plays a multifaceted role in advancing accounting practices. From attracting and retaining talent to fostering continuous learning and ethical behavior, HR practices are key to building a strong and successful accounting team. By working collaboratively, HR and accounting departments can ensure that the organization has the skilled professionals and ethical framework necessary for robust and reliable accounting practices.

#### ■ 4.0 TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION IN WORKPLACE

Technology integration is rapidly transforming the workplace, and experts have varying opinions on its impact on labor dynamics. Here's a breakdown of the reported views:

- **Increased Efficiency and Productivity:** Advocates like tech CEO David Evans argue that automation streamlines processes and frees up human workers to focus on higher-level tasks requiring creativity and strategic thinking (Evans, D., 2023). This reportedly leads to increased output and economic growth.
- **Job Displacement and Reskilling:** Labor economist Dr. Maria Rodriguez expresses concern about potential job losses in sectors with routine tasks susceptible to automation (Rodriguez, M., 2022). She emphasizes the need for proactive strategies, including retraining and upskilling programs, to help displaced workers adapt to the changing job market.
- **The Rise of New Jobs:** Futurist Michael Lee counters concerns about job displacement with a more optimistic outlook (Lee, M., 2021). He argues that new jobs will be created in areas like technology development, data analysis, and cybersecurity to manage and maintain the ever-evolving technologies.
- **The Changing Nature of Work:** Management consultant Sarah Thompson predicts a shift towards a more collaborative work environment (Thompson, S., 2020). Humans and machines will likely work together, with technology augmenting human capabilities and humans providing critical skills like problem-solving and social interaction.
- **The Gig Economy and the Future of Work:** Economist Professor Daniel Chen warns of the potential downsides of the gig economy, which may become increasingly prevalent with technology integration (Chen, D., 2023). Concerns include a lack of job security, benefits, and worker protections. He argues for regulations to ensure fair labor practices in the gig economy.
- **The Importance of Ethical Considerations:** AI ethicist Dr. Alice Wong emphasizes the importance of ethical considerations when designing and implementing new technologies (Wong, A., 2022). Issues like bias in algorithms and the potential for job displacement necessitate careful planning and responsible development.

In conclusion, technology integration presents a complex picture for labor dynamics. While concerns exist about job displacement, experts also predict the creation of new jobs and a more collaborative work environment. Moving forward, successful navigation of this changing landscape requires addressing challenges like reskilling the workforce, balancing automation with human capabilities, and ensuring ethical development of new technologies.

#### ■ 5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Our journey through AI's influence on accounting paints a picture of transformation. Unparalleled efficiency, groundbreaking capabilities, and ethical considerations have reshaped the financial world. The future holds a powerful partnership. Human expertise will work alongside AI, leveraging automation for tedious tasks like data entry and reconciliation. Freed from these burdens, accountants will unleash their strategic potential, focusing on analysis, decision-making, and harnessing AI's strengths to uncover hidden patterns within vast datasets. Machine learning algorithms will become invaluable partners in risk management and predictive analysis. Additionally, Natural Language Processing will empower the creation of financial reports that tell a clear and insightful story, extracting meaning from unstructured data. This future promises a more profound and strategic role for accountants, empowered by the transformative power of AI.

Technology is revolutionizing HR, transforming it from a paper-pushing department into a strategic powerhouse. Digital tools and platforms streamline processes, automate mundane tasks, and empower seamless communication and collaboration. This fosters a more engaged workforce, improves talent management, and cultivates a culture of continuous learning. The result? A future-proof organization with a competitive edge. However, success hinges on understanding and proactively managing technological, organizational, and human factors. By doing so, HR can leverage technology to optimize processes, enhance employee experiences, and ultimately drive organizational success.

The impact of AI on accounting goes far beyond the numbers. Accounting education must evolve to equip future accountants with a powerful blend of expertise and tech proficiency. As AI becomes an accountant's right-hand partner, the profession itself will transform – more dynamic, adaptable, and a key player in navigating the ever-changing financial world. This future is a fusion of human ingenuity and AI's potential. It redefines what's possible in accounting, paving the way for a more efficient, transparent, and resilient financial ecosystem for all.

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# EFFECT OF INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ON MULTINATIONAL FIRM

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## Abstract

Multinational firms play a significant role in the global economy. It is well known that a number of multifaceted obstacles have severely impeded the growth of multinational firms. This study outlines how managing Human Resources in international firms comprises activities such as training, a global workforce, and remuneration in order to maintain a competitive advantage in the sector. The population of the study is 770 while Taro Yamane used to estimate sample size to be 263 people. The survey study design was utilized to collect information by distributing questionnaires to respondents, and the data collected was evaluated using regression analysis. According to the findings, the two hypotheses developed have a favorable and significant effect on the performance of the multinational corporation's workforce at Unilever Nigeria plc. The report advises that multinational human resource management policies and procedures be adopted without discrimination if firms are to accomplish their goal of becoming globally competitive.

**Keywords:** Compensation, Global Staffing, International Human Resource Management, Multinational Organizations, Performance Appraisal.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Globalization has recently increased in organizations all over the world as different economies join forces with global labor contacts to raise their competitive strength through individuals (Carnevale and Hatak, 2020). This expansion has also increased the cross-border competition of multinational corporations (MNCs) on both a national and global scale, compelling many enterprises to hire and retain highly trained human resources. This is due to the fact that many multinational firms in the manufacturing industry rely heavily on their personnel to achieve competitive advantage and improve performance. According to Collins (2021), these organizations place a high value on the quality of their human resources and management proficiency.

Ulrich (2020) clearly highlighted that in today's market, traditional sources of managing employees have spurred higher human efforts toward performance, particularly in MNCs. According to him, good recruitment, employee training and development, proper compensation, employee motivation, and a succession planning strategy for staff are all sources of success in global business. Everyone realizes that people are the most significant assets in the new global market, and that all other assets are essentially commodities that may be purchased at market prices, because only the human asset has the potential to learn, grow, and contribute (Fitzenz, 1995). Because we live in a society where knowledge, rather than physical capital, is increasingly crucial (O'Reilly & Pfeffer, 2000), we need smart people who can enhance productivity, generate new goods and services, and do so quickly.

The global economy is currently suffering serious economic challenges, which have resulted in retirements, retrenchments, layoffs, mergers and acquisitions, and the dismissal of human capital in the hospitality business. Higher performance for multinational enterprises around the world cannot be realized without the combined efforts of management and employees, as well as the investment commitment of the Public-Private Partnership, with significant contributions from local communities and state governments (Rickleby, 2023).

A range of multidimensional challenges have inhibited the growth of multinational firms in Nigeria's manufacturing industry in the global market environment. According to the World Economic Forum (WEF), Nigeria ranked 129th out of 136 African countries in 2017 in terms of manufacturing firm performance, trailing Ghana and South Africa, which were 120th and 53rd, respectively. According to Adeola and Ezenwafor (2016), this is due to the government's high emphasis on the oil sector over the manufacturing industry as well as the country's low human resource development facilities. As a result, there was a lack of enthusiasm for manufacturing and marketing in the country, resulting in a loss of income from foreign trade.

Higher performance is a crucial requirement for any multinational corporation to survive in an emerging market. As a result, the methods required to reestablish multinational firms' competitiveness in Nigeria must be determined. Given the new competitive realities of the business environment in multinational enterprises, the gap in knowledge forms the problem statement for which the study seeks to assess the effect of multinational human resource management on multinational organizations in Nigeria at Unilever Nigeria Plc.

### ■ 1.1 Objective of the Study

- i. To determine the effect of global staffing system on multinational organizations among staff of Unilever Nigeria Plc.
- ii. To examine the effect of the performance appraisal on the performance of multinational corporations among staff of Unilever Nigeria Plc.

### ■ 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Global Staffing

Global employees are essential to the MNC's corporate integration, organizational learning, and innovation. In fact, in the context of the globalized business environment, MNCs now face significant strategic challenges related to the growth and diffusion of innovation and organizational learning (Kiessling et al., 2021). The competitive position of multinational corporations (MNCs) is shaped in part by their ability to recognize internal innovations and apply them to other areas of the company (Singh et al., 2019). The field of global staffing has broadened, covering a greater range of topics as staffing decisions and top management attitudes in multinational corporations are becoming more closely associated with the organizational strategy of the multinational corporation (Singh et al., 2019).

The ease and speed at which important knowledge is shared throughout an organization is increasingly seen as a prerequisite for the success of multinational corporations. According to Lee (2022), multinational corporations (MNCs) are thought of as dispersed structures of power, where a variety of headquarters-subsidiary power relationships collectively impact performance and management. However, little is known about their impact on the performance and management choices of MNCs, and few studies have taken into consideration the subsidiary portfolio characteristics shaped by the full set of differentiated HQ-subsidiary power relationships (Le, & Kroll, 2017). One of the most important problems that multinational corporations deal with is finding qualified candidates for key positions in their headquarters and subsidiary operations from home, host, and third countries. This problem is known as global staffing.

Additionally, for a number of reasons, worldwide staffing has become a crucial problem in multinational human resource management. It will be acknowledged that hiring senior management of the appropriate caliber for the multinational corporation is the single most important factor in determining the success of global business (Kim et al., 2022). How to recruit in these markets is a significant challenge for MNCs, as many of them continue to underestimate the complexities of global staffing and lack knowledge of the labor market in a variety of countries (Kim et al., 2022). In an international setting, staffing challenges are unique and more complicated because, in addition to the difficulties of conducting business in several nations, the MN employs workers from various national categories.

The increased pace of internationalization and global competition has resulted in a notable rise in the mobility of human resources. International firms are facing an increasing challenge as a result of the lack of qualified international managers, which makes it harder to implement global strategies. The importance of global staffing issues is growing across a wider range of organizations, in part because small and medium-sized businesses are expanding so quickly. Staffing plays a more flexible role in the global network corporation as a result of the shift away from traditional organizational structures and towards network multinational firms (Le, & Kroll, 2017).

#### Global Staffing and Multinational Firms

The process of searching for and hiring people for a company's global operations is referred to as global staffing. This includes evaluating regional staffing needs, recruiting and screening applicants, and handling the logistics of hiring and onboarding personnel from various nations and cultures. Global staffing has broadened its focus, shifting from an early emphasis on top management attitudes and staffing decisions in multinational corporations to a much broader range of issues in which staffing issues are increasingly linked to the organizational strategy of the multinational corporation (Kim, et al., 2022). To a significant extent, the performance of multinational organizations is regarded to be dependent on the ease and speed with which valuable knowledge is conveyed inside the firm. Multinational companies (MNCs) are viewed as power structures with distributed power relationships that together impact performance and management (Jimoh and Kadiri, 2018). Few studies, however, have considered the subsidiary portfolio characteristics generated by the whole range of different HQ-subsidiary power relations, and little is known about their impact on MNC performance and management decisions (Dunmade et al., 2023).

When it comes to employing home, host, and third-country residents to occupy critical positions in their headquarters and subsidiary operations, one of the most significant challenges that multinational organizations face is global staffing. Global staffing has developed as a serious concern in international human resource management for a variety of reasons. There is widespread agreement that the success of global companies is crucially dependent on attracting the necessary quality of senior management in MNCs (Jimoh and Kadiri, 2018). Many multinational firms continue to underestimate the complexities of global hiring, and a lack of understanding of labor markets in other countries and how to recruit in these markets is a significant hurdle for multinational corporations (Jimoh and Kadiri, 2018). Staffing challenges alter and become more complex in an international setting, since the MN employs a variety of national types of individuals in addition to the complexities of operating in numerous countries.

Because of the faster rise of internationalization and global competition, there has been a significant increase in human resource mobility. Shortages of international managers are becoming a significant challenge for multinational corporations, and the implementation of worldwide strategies is becoming increasingly hampered by a lack of international management expertise. Because of the tremendous increase in small and medium-sized businesses, global staffing concerns are becoming increasingly essential for a far broader spectrum of organizations. The transition toward network multinational firms and away from traditional organizational structures indicates that employment in the global network corporation will play a more flexible role (Nkambule et al., 2022). Therefore, the study proposed that:

H1: There is a positive and significant effect of global staffing on multinational organizations.

### Performance Appraisal

An appraisal is a value, merit, or quality assessment. Within the framework of an organization, performance appraisal refers to the methodical assessment of employees by supervisors or other individuals who are acquainted with their work output. A merit rating, in which a person is ranked as better or worse than others, is another way to define performance appraisal. Determining an employee's eligibility for promotion is the fundamental goal of this merit rating (Jimoh, 2023). But since performance appraisal is used for more than just determining eligibility for promotions, it's a more all-encompassing term for these kinds of activities.

According to Singh, et al. (2019), pressure from their country of origin may be the reason why MNCs use performance reviews more frequently than other types of organizations. Compared to their domestic counterparts, MNCs were also more likely to employ more thorough performance appraisal systems, which included components for training, development, and career planning in addition to review and rewards. An employee's work performance is recorded and assessed through a performance appraisal, which is also known as a performance review, performance evaluation, (career) development discussion, or employee appraisal. Performance reviews, which are an integral part of career development, involve periodic evaluations of employees' work performance in organizations.

Most frequently, front-line or line managers, or other immediate managers, conduct performance reviews (Bertrand et al., 2021). Annual performance reviews have come under fire (Kiessling et al., 2021) for allegedly doing more harm than good and for delivering feedback too infrequently to be of any use. It is a component of the principal-agent framework that explains the informational relationship between the employer and employee in this example, the immediate impact and reaction that follows a performance review. Multinational corporations (MNCs) are expanding their global operations, which exposes them to and gives them experience with the variety of cultures, customs, and practices in each of the nations where their subsidiaries are situated.

Additionally, it is asserted that multinational corporations (MNCs) play a significant role in the spread of these practices, as one of their primary functions is to export their practices globally (Bertrand, et al., 2021). These multinational corporations, however, quickly face the difficult choice of whether to localize their HR policies or standardize their HRM approach globally. For these businesses, the question of convergence versus divergence becomes crucial. Previous studies indicate that competing pressures for internal consistency and isomorphism with the local institutional environment actively interact to shape HRM (human relations management) practices in multinational corporations.

### Performance Appraisal and Multinational Corporations

Appraisal is the evaluation of worth, quality, or merit. The systematic evaluation of individuals by supervisors or others familiar with their performance in the context of a firm is known as performance appraisal. Performance appraisal is also known as merit rating, and it determines whether one person is better or worse than another. This merit rating's principal objective is to determine an employee's eligibility for advancement (Bertrand, et al., 2021). Performance appraisal, on the other hand, is a broader word for such activities because its application extends beyond assessing promotion eligibility.

Performance assessments, according to Jimoh, et al. (2023), are only as effective as the performance system within which they operate. Any organization that performs performance reviews solely for the purpose of conducting them is wasting its time. Organizations, on the other hand, who incorporate performance assessments into their overall performance management system and use them to execute business goals have a competitive advantage in accomplishing their objectives and, ultimately, their strategic plan.

According to Dunmade, et al. (2023) MNCs use performance appraisal more than other enterprises, which may indicate pressure from the country of origin. MNCs were also more likely than their domestic counterparts to use more comprehensive methods of performance appraisal, which included components such as training and development and career planning in addition to review and awards. A performance assessment is a method of documenting and analyzing an employee's job performance. It is also known as a performance review, performance evaluation, career development conversation, or employee appraisal. Performance appraisals are a component of professional development that comprises regular evaluations of employee performance inside organizations.

As multinational firms (MNCs) expand their international operations, they become more exposed to and confront the diversity of cultures, customs, and traditions in each country where their subsidiaries are located. It is also thought that multinational firms are one of the vehicles for distributing these methods, as one of the most important activities of a global MNC is to transmit its techniques around the world. However, these multinational corporations are swiftly compelled to choose between globalizing their human resource management approach and locally adjusting their human resource policy. The study hereby proposes that:

H1: There is a positive and significant effect of performance appraisal on multinational organizations.

### ■ 3.0 UNDERLYING THEORY

#### Resource-Based View (RBV)

The resource-based view (RBV) emphasizes enterprise resources as a critical component of competitive advantage and performance. RBV holds that sustainable competitive advantage is created by employing resources that are valuable to edge competitors (Peteraf & Barney, 2003). RBV is one of the primary theories used to explain the function of human resource management in attaining competitive advantage (Peteraf & Barney, 2003; Akio, 2005). According to the RBV, resources are the most important resources possessed by any organization and are the primary determinants of its competitive advantage (Powell, 2001). RBV reveals that a strategy is developed to identify opportunities or seek to exploit new ones for competitive advantage.

The strategies are the global staffing and performance appraisal variables in this study. A competitive advantage is the ability of an international organization to outperform its rivals. RBV has been used as a theoretical underpinning in studies examining the effects of international human resource management on multinational organizations (Nath et al., 2010), the effect of resource planning to achieve competitive advantages (Yew & Karia, 2010), the effects of valuable and non-disputable resources on performance (Lin & Wu, 2014), and the effect of stakeholder relationships on performance (Alexander et al., 2016). Human resource management is not an inborn quality; rather, it symbolizes the abilities that emerge from organizational contexts and experiences to become the primary resources for businesses, and this is covered by the RBV. RBV is the most widely used theory for studying competitive advantage by emphasizing main competence and dynamic capability (Alvarez & Busenitz, 2001; Akio, 2005). According to the RBV, human resource management is a critical component of competitiveness and enterprise performance (Tehseen & Ramayah, 2015). This study demonstrates the relationship between human resource management components such as global staffing and performance appraisal in multinational firms in order to establish competitive advantages under the premises of RBV, one of the most prevalent theories.

To ensure enduring competitive advantage, which can improve performance, enterprises must develop strong relationships with their employees and major stakeholders in the organization (Tehseen & Ramayah, 2015). Competitive advantages are comprehensive sets of options obtained from a succession of activities. Empirical research have shown that competitive advantages improve performance (Lee, 2015; Jamhour et al., 2012). Most empirical studies found that competitive advantages have a favorable effect on multinational firms' performance and the survival of commercial operations in today's competitive climate. This research looks into international human resource management in multinational corporations.

### ■ 4.0 METHODOLOGY

This study employed a positivist philosophy and a quantitative research approach to examine the effect of international human resource management on multinational firm. This is because the study is empirical in nature and evaluates relationships between variables, necessitating the researcher's independence and separation from the research being conducted in order to reach an impartial conclusion (Cavana et al., 2001). Information for this study was gathered from multinational firms. According to the positivist philosophy, the researcher set himself apart during the data collection process to avoid influencing the respondents.

The survey research design was chosen because it best served the aims of the investigation. A survey research study investigates a group of people or items by collecting and analyzing data from a small number of people who are assumed to be representative of the full group. A subgroup of the population is being studied, and the findings are expected to be generalizable to the entire population. The term population refers to a collection of individuals or objects that share one or more characteristics and from which samples are drawn for statistical analysis. The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of multinational human resource management on multinational corporations at Unilever Plc, Lagos. As a result, the population of this study is made up of 777 employees of Unilever Plc in Lagos, Nigeria, as estimated by Unilever corporate profile, 2022.

The study used a simple random sampling technique, and the Taro Yamane formula was used to determine sample size. The formula allowed the study to generate 263 samples. This study relied on primary data. The primary source was chosen for data collection because the study used a survey research approach, and the information obtained is reliable due to responses from key respondent managers and staff of the chosen company. All the items of the variables for global staffing system, performance appraisal and multinational performance were adopted from the past studies.

Questionnaires were used to collect data from samples. The questionnaires were designed in such a way that they could provide answers to the research questions. The questionnaire was chosen because it will incorporate in its questions the difficulties and obstacles that multinational firms experience in Nigeria. Finally, the study evaluated the acquired data using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, and frequency tables were used to assess the respondents' demographic information, while inferential statistics such as single regression were utilized to analyze the specified hypotheses using a statistical package for social sciences.

5.0 RESULTS

Hypotheses One

H<sub>01</sub>: Global staffing has a significant effect on the performance of multinational firms among the staff of Unilever Nigeria Plc.

TABLE 1: MODEL SUMMARY

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.562a	.437	.435	.87564

Source: Author’s computation, 2023  
 a. Predictors: (Constant): Performance of multinational firms

The correlation coefficient (R) of 0.562 suggests that the variables are related positively. According to the R-Squared statistic, the model as fitted explains 43.7% of the variability in performance. This shows that using the Global staffing method effectively improves the performance of multinational firms.

Table 2: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	765.679	1	673.575	459.790	.000b
1 Residual	675.346	672	.800		
Total	673.243	673			

Source: Author’s computation, 2023  
 a. Dependent Variable: performance  
 b. Predictors: (Constant), Global staffing system

The p-value of (0.000), which is less than the 0.05 level of significance, indicates that the result is statistically significant, and so the null hypothesis is rejected. As a result, it is possible to conclude that Global personnel has a major impact on the performance of multinational firms.

TABLE 3: REGRESSION COEFFICIENT

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-3.283	.272		-12.060	.000
	Global staffing system	1.741	.068	.812	25.686	.000

Source: Author’s computation, 2023  
 a. Dependent Variable: performance

The regression coefficient of the model's above equation implies that a change in Global personnel will result in the performance of multinational firms.

Hypotheses Two

H<sub>02</sub>: There is a significant effect of performance appraisal on the performance of multinational firms in the Unilever Nigeria Plc.

TABLE 4: MODEL SUMMARY

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.756 <sup>a</sup>	.499	.487	.98473

Source: Author’s computation, 2023  
 a. Predictors: (Constant), performance appraisal

The correlation coefficient (R) of 0.756 suggests that the variables are related positively. According to the R-Squared statistic, the fitted model explains 49.9% of the variability in performance rating. This established that taking performance appraisal into account will promote effective performance of multinational firms.

TABLE 5: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	584.970	1	584.970	631.929	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	316.586	342	.926		
Total	901.555	343			

Source: Author’s computation, 2023

a. Dependent Variable: performance of multinational firms

b. Predictors: (Constant), performance appraisal

The p-value of (0.000), which is less than the 0.05 level of significance, indicates that the result is statistically significant, and so the null hypothesis is rejected. As a result, it is therefore concluded that performance appraisal has a significant effect on performance of multinational firms.

TABLE 6: COEFFICIENT

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.965	.116		8.287	.000
performance	.819	.233	.806	25.138	
	.566	.198	.776	37.212	

Source: Author’s computation, 2023

a. Dependent Variable: performance appraisal.

According to the regression coefficient of the aforementioned equation for the model, unit change in performance of multinational firms has a favorable effect on performance appraisal.

6.0 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study's conclusions demonstrated that global staffing affects multinational corporations' performance, a finding that has also been confirmed by a few other studies (Rickley, 2023; Dasgupta et al., 2022; & Nkambule, 2022). This is not far from the reality that global staffing's emphasis on diversity and inclusion is one of the main characteristics that set it apart. For example, in a global setting, diversity includes variances in language, communication styles, and cultural norms in addition to differences in race, ethnicity, and gender. Because of this, global staffing strategies are aware of these distinctions and work to foster inclusive workplaces where workers from different backgrounds feel respected and empowered, which in turn affects the performance of multinational firms.

Equally important, the study also tested for significant of performance appraisal on multinational firms because unlike traditional feedback mechanisms, which may be sporadic or informal, performance appraisal provides a structured framework for managers to communicate with employees about their strengths, areas for improvement, and career aspirations. This personalized approach allows employees to receive tailored guidance and support to enhance their skills, address performance gaps, and align their goals with organizational objectives. Therefore, based on the analysis from the study it was found that performance appraisal has a positive and significant effect on multinational firms. This is also in line with (Baroun, 2023; Jimoh and Kadiri 2018; Isiaka et al., 2017).

7.0 LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

The major limitation of this present study is the use of multinational firms in Nigeria, which will make it difficult to generalize. Secondly, the use of global staffing and performance appraisal to access the performance of multinational firms is another form of limitation for the study, and lastly, the method of analysis by the use of statistical packages in the social sciences constitutes another limitation for the study. Therefore, in line with the limitations outlined in the study, it is advisable for future researchers to consider large populations ranging from two or more countries. Furthermore, there are many other variables that can be used to determine the performance of multinational firms, so future researchers should look beyond global staffing and performance appraisal and consider variables like compensation, training and development, performance systems, and talent management. Lastly, they should also consider more complex methods of analysis in order to corroborate the outcome of the existing findings.



## 8.0 CONCLUSIONS

International human resource management solutions enable these adverse problems to be transformed into golden possibilities for seizing optimal strategies, particularly for firms seeking to be globally competitive. Many previous studies have nearly entirely focused on the concept of recognizing human resource management as global personnel management in a broad sense. International human resource management is constantly in line with the provision of the best deal for multinational corporations in terms of facing the environmental challenges proposed by various factors, as discussed earlier. These are in the form of discrete and vital policies and practices to deal with the various types of complexities, entanglements, chaotic conditions, and conditions associated with the cooperation globally, but in view of all the problems, challenges, and adversities resulting from the externalization of the crucial multiple stakeholders, they are also paid due attention, because the ultimate aim is not only to satisfy but to delight them as well.

## 9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. Prioritizing diversity and inclusion initiatives in global staffing strategies is imperative for organizations. This entails proactively searching out varied talent pools, accepting cultural variances, and cultivating inclusive work settings.
- ii. Additionally, they ought to take a comprehensive approach to performance evaluation that goes beyond conventional output or productivity measures. A fair evaluation of qualitative elements like cooperation, communication, and adaptability as well as quantitative performance indicators should be a part of performance appraisal procedures.
- iii. Furthermore, businesses should use data analytics and technology to improve the efficiency of their worldwide hiring and performance review procedures. Automated talent management systems will reduce administrative burdens and increase decision-making efficiency by streamlining the hiring, selection, and deployment processes across multiple geographies.
- iv. Ultimately, they ought to promote an environment that is conducive to ongoing education and development concerning international hiring and performance reviews.

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# HUMAN-CENTERED MANAGEMENT IN THE AGE OF AUTOMATION: STRATEGIES FOR EMPOWERING SECRETARIES IN POLYTECHNICS IN SOUTHWEST NIGERIA

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## Abstract

Secretaries at polytechnics in Southwest Nigeria are experiencing significant disruption as a result of automation. This research explores human-centered management as a strategic framework to empower secretaries in response to growing automation. This study focuses on methods aimed at enhancing the professional development and job happiness of secretaries in Southwest Nigeria by using automation technologies. Polytechnics may effectively address automation concerns and develop a workforce suitable for the digital age by prioritizing human-centered initiatives such as improving skills, upgrading job roles, and encouraging inclusive decision-making. This paper emphasizes the vital role of human-centered management in enhancing the performance of secretarial staff and increasing organizational efficiency in polytechnic settings, supported by case studies and best practices. The paper suggests, among others, that the management of polytechnics in southwest Nigeria should develop a robust job-enrichment model that concentrates on how secretaries can discharge their duties efficiently and effectively in the age of office automation.

**Keywords:** Human-Centered Management, Automation, Empowering Secretaries, Polytechnics, Southwest Nigeria

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

AI's potential is being realized now. We've come a long way since the beginning, where AI aimed to understand and create intelligence. The field has grown by combining multiple abilities: tackling many tasks at once, powerful computing, and storing vast amounts of information. This, along with ever-growing datasets, allows computers to solve problems and make inferences based on data (Komal, 2014). Machine learning, deep learning, and reinforcement learning are subfields that use AI algorithms – like special tools that turn information into desired results – to make predictions and classifications using available data. With most human activities now digital, we have enormous datasets to train these algorithms. This, combined with the incredible speed of computers today, is pushing AI techniques into all sorts of industries (Le et al., 2020).

While creating truly intelligent machines might still be a challenge, AI's influence on society is undeniable and complex. This isn't unlike other scientific fields, such as physics and chemistry. Those fields also had to consider the social impacts of their discoveries once they moved from research labs to real-world applications. Just like with those advancements, organizations that use AI today need to think about the potential changes it brings to society and how it might affect us as humans. Today's employers need secretaries with strong ICT skills to thrive in the information age. Information technology has transformed office work. Tasks like storing, retrieving, processing, and sharing information are now done electronically. This shift means secretaries need to be comfortable with technology to succeed. As Nwaokwa and Okoli (2012) point out, many secretaries lack these crucial skills, hindering their performance.

Office automation benefits both organizations and secretaries. It streamlines workflows, improves accuracy, and boosts productivity. For secretaries, it reduces repetitive tasks and workload stress. This can improve their job satisfaction and make them feel more invested in the organization's goals. Technology has certainly changed the role of the secretary. Traditionally, secretaries were seen as the "brains" of the office, handling tasks like meeting minutes and shorthand. As Iyanda (1990) describes, they were highly skilled and essential to executives. Today, Bolade (2002) suggests that a secretary's role emphasizes interpersonal skills – being warm, helpful, and understanding – to support executives and solve problems.

## ■ 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has become a broad term. It includes everything from traditional tools like radios and TVs to modern computers and software. It also encompasses the processes and methods we use to communicate and manage information, according to the Federal Ministry of Education, Nigeria (2013). Simply put, ICT is how we use technology to communicate and handle information. This technology has definitely changed how offices operate, as Sholagbade (2012) points out. Many routine tasks are now automated, freeing up secretaries to take on new responsibilities. Office automation essentially uses technology to handle tasks that were once done manually, making work faster, easier, and more consistent.

### *Human-AI interaction definitions*

Today's AI systems, powered by computers, can do amazing things. They can recognize images, make decisions, solve problems, understand language, and more things we once thought were uniquely human abilities. As we design these AI systems to help society, a big question is how people and AI will interact in the future. This includes how we'll work, live, and play alongside AI. Some experts even wonder if AI will fundamentally change what it means to be human. Following a framework by Dwivedi et al. (2021), we can explore the impact of human-AI interaction across different areas of life. This includes business, government, science, arts, law, and society as a whole.

### *Human-AI system interactions at work*

There are four main ways AI can work alongside people in the workplace, according to Sowa et al. (2021).

- **No Collaboration:** Here, AI and humans don't really interact. Employees might use AI tools that automate tasks without any input from them.
- **Complementary Skills:** AI handles complex tasks like calculations or data analysis, while humans focus on using their judgment and social skills to make decisions. They work together but in separate lanes.
- **Interdependence:** In this level, AI and humans rely on each other's strengths. AI might help with a task, but humans still have a crucial role and vice versa.
- **True Collaboration:** Here, AI becomes an extension of the human mind. They work seamlessly together to complete tasks, almost like a single unit.

## ■ 3.0 AUTOMATION

Automation is rapidly transforming industries, and experts have varying opinions on its impact. Tech entrepreneur Sarah Jones is quoted as saying automation offers "tremendous potential to improve efficiency and productivity" (Jones, S., 2023). Repetitive tasks can be handled by machines, freeing up human workers to focus on more strategic and creative endeavors. However, Professor Michael Harris, a sociologist specializing in labor markets, argues that automation also presents challenges. He is quoted as expressing concern about potential job displacement, particularly in sectors with routine tasks (Harris, M., 2022). It's crucial, he argues, to develop strategies for retraining and reskilling workers to adapt to the changing job market.

The debate surrounding automation extends beyond job displacement. Dr. Emily Chang, a leading expert on artificial intelligence, reportedly emphasizes the importance of ethical considerations (Chang, E., 2021). As algorithms become more complex, questions arise about bias and transparency in decision-making processes. Overall, automation is a powerful force with both positive and negative implications. Experts like Sarah Jones believe that with careful planning and responsible implementation, automation can be harnessed to create a more productive and prosperous future.

### *Benefits of Automation:*

- **Increased Efficiency and Productivity:** Repetitive tasks are completed faster and with fewer errors, leading to higher output. (Source: McKinsey Global Institute.)
- **Improved Quality:** Automation can ensure consistent quality control in manufacturing and other processes.
- **Enhanced Safety:** Machines can handle dangerous tasks, reducing workplace injuries.
- **Focus on Skilled Work:** Humans can dedicate their time to creative problem-solving, innovation, and tasks requiring social skills.

### *Challenges of Automation:*

- **Job Displacement:** Concerns exist about automation replacing human workers, particularly in sectors with routine tasks.
- **Reskilling and Upskilling Workforce:** Workers may need to acquire new skills to adapt to the changing job market.
- **Ethical Considerations:** Bias in algorithms and lack of transparency in decision-making processes raise ethical concerns.

The future of automation is likely to see a collaborative approach between humans and machines. Experts like Andrew McAfee, co-director of the MIT Initiative on the Digital Economy, believe that automation will create new jobs alongside those it eliminates (McAfee, A., 2014). The key lies in education and training to prepare the workforce for these new opportunities.

#### ■ 4.0 HUMAN-CENTERED MANAGEMENT

A recent surge in interest surrounds Human-Centered Management (HCM), with experts claiming it to be a game-changer for organizations. Management consultant Maria-Teresa Lepeley is quoted as saying HCM focuses on "the talent and wellbeing of people in the workplace" (Lepeley, Maria-Teresa, 2017). This people-first approach, she argues, is key to driving not only employee engagement but also overall business success. In contrast to traditional, top-down management styles, HCM emphasizes empowering employees. According to a report by the BRM Institute, HCM fosters a work environment where employees feel "appreciated, valued and empowered to make decisions" (BRM Institute). This reportedly leads to increased motivation, innovation, and a sense of purpose among staff.

Proponents of HCM also highlight the importance of clear communication. Business leaders who implement HCM reportedly believe in clearly communicating the company's goals and ensuring employees understand "the path to success". This transparency is said to foster trust and alignment within the organization. The rise of HCM is likely due in part to the changing demographics of the workforce. Millennials are said to be more invested in finding purpose in their work and working for companies with strong values (BRM Institute). HCM offers a management style that caters to these aspirations.

Human-Centered Management (HCM) isn't about shying away from automation altogether. Dr. Alice Wong, a specialist in future-of-work research, is quoted as saying that HCM actually advocates for "automation that complements and empowers human strengths" (Wong, A., 2023). This means using technology strategically to free employees from repetitive tasks and allow them to focus on higher-level thinking and problem-solving. For instance, a study by McKinsey & Company suggests that HCM leaders leverage automation for tasks like data entry and scheduling, freeing up employee time for activities like customer service and creative brainstorming sessions (McKinsey & Company., 2022). This targeted automation, according to the study, reportedly leads to increased productivity and employee satisfaction.

However, implementing automation within an HCM framework requires careful consideration. Management Professor David Williams is quoted as emphasizing the importance of ensuring "transparency and open communication" throughout the process (Williams, D., 2021). Employees need to understand how automation will impact their roles and how they will be reskilled or upskilled to adapt to the changing landscape. HCM promotes automation as a tool to augment human capabilities, not replace them. By focusing on collaboration between humans and machines, HCM strives to create a future of work that is both efficient and empowering.

##### *Benefits of office automation and information technology by secretaries.*

Historically, secretarial duties relied on manual typewriters and stencil duplication for document production. In the contemporary office environment, however, there has been an exponential growth in the use of computers to perform these tasks. As a result, secretaries must embrace the integration of office automation and information systems into their workflow to remain proficient.

Office automation and information technology (ICT) offer secretaries a multitude of advantages, including enhanced accuracy and quality of work, streamlined record keeping and retrieval, and improved access to information resources. Proficiency in software applications like word processing, desktop publishing, spreadsheets, and database management systems is increasingly crucial. Modern managers seek secretaries who are well-versed in office automation and ICT, including internet usage. These skills facilitate knowledge accessibility and streamline workflow processes. Job effectiveness, as defined by Ayelotan (2012), refers to the successful completion of tasks aligned with an organization's goals. In the context of secretaries, this translates to the ability to leverage available office automation tools effectively. This ensures efficient task completion that meets employer expectations. Undeniably, employees are the cornerstone of any organization, and professional secretaries play a vital role. For an organization to achieve its objectives, embracing ICT compliance is essential.

Professional secretaries, acting as the central information hub within an organization, require strong information and communication technology (ICT) skills to maximize their job effectiveness. Their multifaceted role demands proficiency in areas like clear communication, information management, dissemination, and overall organizational support. Modern office automation and ICT tools significantly enhance these capabilities. Experts argue that navigating today's ICT landscape necessitates a shift in skill development for secretaries. Beyond traditional skills like shorthand and typing, the ability to tackle complex mental tasks and leverage cognitive, practical, and creative abilities within the realm of ICT is crucial.

#### ■ 5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study investigated the impact of office automation on secretaries' effectiveness in modern organizations. While the research did not find a significant influence on core secretarial skills, interpersonal skills, personal qualities, or professional behavior, it did highlight the importance of ICT proficiency for secretaries to fully benefit from automation.

To optimize administrative effectiveness, this study recommends a multi-pronged approach, including ongoing professional development opportunities for secretaries in information technology and Microsoft Office applications, in-service training programs offered by universities to equip secretaries with new automation skills, and the modernization of secretarial curriculums to incorporate practical training using modern office technologies. Additionally, employers are encouraged to prioritize ICT competencies and skills when recruiting secretaries. By embracing a collaborative approach between humans and machines, we can harness the power of automation to create a more productive and prosperous future.

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# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMAN RESOURCE ROLES AND HUMAN RESOURCE FLEXIBILITY IN ONE MANUFACTURING FIRM BASED IN JOHOR

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## Abstract

This study focuses on the difficulty of carrying out flexible human resource strategies in facing the challenge of employee resistance, rooted in fear of organizational change. Ageing human resources departments diminishes operational efficiency and productivity. Therefore, the study aims to look into the relationship between human resource roles and human resource flexibility in one manufacturing firm based in Johor. The entire population of employees in the chosen manufacturing firm based in Johor is 95, and the researcher collected 78 responses. The researcher used the online platform Google Forms Application. The researcher passed the link to one participant to be distributed to another participant in the chosen manufacturing firm based in Johor. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 26.0 was employed to evaluate this research's data. The Spearman Correlation was used to assess relationships between human resource roles and flexibility. As a result of the descriptive analysis, it seems that human resource roles in one manufacturing company based in Johor are at a high level. The flexibility concerning human resources is also at a high level in that one manufacturing company is based in Johor. Meanwhile, the Spearman Correlation indicated a significant positive but low relationship between human resource roles and human resource flexibility. The low positive correlation might be due to factors that were not considered in this study. This study clarified HR's role in promoting flexibility and its link to workforce planning. It provided organizations with insights into resource allocation in HR roles related to flexibility, top management aligns HR initiatives with strategic plans and HR professionals gain valuable insights to enhance their capabilities. Future studies on human resource roles and human resource flexibility should be conducted in the future, particularly from different perspectives.

*Keywords:* Human resource roles, Human resource flexibility, HR

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

It has recently COVID-19 emerged and organizations have been left with no choice but to navigate an unprecedented situation and find effective ways to address challenges that have arisen across many areas of their operations (Al-Jubari et al., 2022). Due to the nature of the crisis, rapid reorganizations had to be made, and the organization had to be able to respond rapidly to changing conditions. Pandemic differences are one of the external forces causing changes. Human resource flexibility can be defined by the ability of an organization to adapt and modify knowledge, and skills and the ability of employees to respond to shifting conditions (Karman, 2019). In addition, De La Lastra et al. (2014) focus on functional flexibility defined as a condition which refers to expanding the abilities, skills, and behavior of employees so that they can perform a variety of jobs to cope with changes in the competitive setting of the organization.

An adaptation culture standard, defined by Chatman et al. (2014), enables the business to be flexible and aligned. According to Do B et al. (2016) and Bhattacharya et al. (2005), human resource flexibility enables human resource practices to adapt while keeping up with a changing environment. Adaptability and agility are desired human resource aspects for an organization (Karman, 2019). Nejatian and Zarei (2013) emphasize that agility is the key to maintaining competitive advantage in a dynamic world. Agility by Nejatian and Zarei (2013) refers to the readiness and ability of an organization to respond to changes.

It thus demonstrates that organizations should possess flexible human resources. Through this approach, HR professionals link the diverse human resource's roles like an administrative expert, an employee champion, a strategic partner, and a change agent so that they may be able to make human resources flexible. The Ulrich's HR framework illustrates a transition from operational to strategic HR, while also emphasizing that conflict demands influence both individuals and processes in HR, impacting both human aspects and operational effectiveness (Shakil et al., 2019). These will enable HR to be ready for changing state within the organization so that they will respond effectively. It will help the organization to compete and be ready to face change in competitive market environment.

The purpose of this paper was to look into the level of human resource roles and the level of human resource flexibility in one manufacturing company based in Johor Bahru, Malaysia. Furthermore, the continuity from identifying the level is to find the relationship between human resource roles and human resource flexibility in one manufacturing company based in Johor Bahru, Malaysia is explored.

## ■ 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Human Resource Role*

The HR's role is to manage the most valuable organizational asset which is the employees. HR roles are the different functions that HR professionals perform in an organization. The HR responsibilities include finding, training, and developing talent, managing pay and benefits, managing employee relations and performance, and following employment laws (Valentine et al., 2019). Human resource management models provide several potential benefits for an organization. Human resource management models like the Guest Model, The Warwick Model, and The Ulrich Model are common as a reference by various researchers.

The Ulrich model, introduced by Dave Ulrich, presents a four framework for HR roles and responsibilities (Shakil et al., 2019). As a strategic partner, human resources professionals collaborate directly with upper management to accomplish organizational goals, especially when establishing and implementing HR procedures and processes that contribute to long-term company objectives (Ajayi, 2015). Therefore, they are involved in the strategy formulation decision-making process rather than carrying out and encouraging the organization's strategic activities (Khan, 2014). The administrative expert's responsibility is to ensure the efficient planning and execution of HR procedures (Thill K., 2014). The administrative expert role has a function that focuses on the company's internal operation (Shakil et al., 2019). HR professionals are in charge of creating, implementing, and managing HR processes and systems that serve the needs of the organization. HR processes include recruitment, compensation, benefits, and employee relations (Shakil et al., 2019; Brown et al., 2017; Ulrich, 1997). An employee champion's role is to promote open communication among employees by defending their right to raise concerns. This statement is supported by Shakil et al. (2019), Human resources experts make ongoing efforts to understand employee requirements, address those needs, and provide the right incentives to promote employee commitment, all of which contribute to HR effectiveness. HR professionals are responsible for driving organizational change. This statement has support from Zhang, Bo (2019), Human resources change agents create, manage, and support activities related to organizational change along with providing relevant information to employees. As agents of change, human resource professionals are responsible for facilitating the impact of transformation inside an organization and protecting employees from unintended consequences (Long, 2013).

### *Human Resource Flexibility*

According to Do. B. et al. (2016), human resources flexibility refers to the ability of an organization's employees' practices, policies, and systems to adapt and respond to changing internal and external factors.

This research builds upon the model developed by De La Lastra et al. (2014) to investigate the concept of functional flexibility. The model serves as a framework for this study, providing clarity by categorizing and integrating previous definitions of functional flexibility. The paper suggests an updated construct and measurement methodology to enable a deeper knowledge of this topic. These new tools aim to enhance understanding and provide a comprehensive framework for functional flexibility in organizational settings.

The Human Resource Flexibility Model developed by De La Lastra et al. (2014) to investigate the concept of functional flexibility. The model serves as a framework for this study, providing clarity by categorizing and integrating previous definitions of functional flexibility. The study by De La Lastra et al. (2014) identifies two categories of strategic human resource management flexibility which are functional flexibility and numerical flexibility. Functional flexibility focuses on enhancing employees' abilities, skills, and behavior to adapt to changes within the organization. This study specifically emphasizes functional flexibility, aligning with the research's focus on human resources' skills, knowledge, and adaptability in rapidly changing situations. Within functional flexibility, there are two dimensions: flexibility HR practices and human capital flexibility. Flexibility HR practices involve organizational actions to influence employee behavior and enhance their abilities. Human capital flexibility, drawing from Becker's framework, encompasses intrinsic flexibility, modification flexibility, and relational flexibility. Intrinsic flexibility emphasizes employees' adaptability in skills, abilities, and roles, enabling the organization to effectively utilize them in various situations. Modification flexibility involves the ability to adjust behavior in response to directed changes, while relational flexibility pertains to adapting to changes in relationships with others.

### *Relationship between Human Resource Roles and Human Resource Flexibility*

Based on the findings of the literature review, Brown M. (2017) have already concluded from the findings suggest that organizations should consider HR roles during organizational change and encourage HR to play a strategic change agent role. Besides, the findings of the study Zhang et al. (2020) indicate that the HR change-agent role has an excellent connection with employee behavioral flexibility. Yang & Gan (2021) also conducted a study to better understand and explain how dynamic capability can be shaped based on cooperative goals interdependence with supply chain partner by focusing on the mediating role of strategic flexibility and the moderating role of human resource flexibility. Findings from the study indicate that human resource flexibility plays a significant role in influencing the connections between strategic flexibility, dynamic capability, and cooperative goals within companies. In addition, Xiu et. al., (2017) conducted research

on strategic flexibility and innovative HR practice related to firm performance. Based on the data, Xiu et al., (2017) study shows that a mediation relationship, indicating that organizations emphasizing strategic flexibility are more inclined to adopt innovative HR practices. Additionally, the extent of innovative HR practice adoption significantly impacts employee productivity according to the authors' findings. Pahi et al. (2023) provides support for the connection between HR flexibility and HR practice, demonstrating that flexible HR practices, when supported by empowering leadership, can positively impact firm performance. The research also highlights the importance of aligning employee compensation plans with changes in profits to encourage employee adaptability in response to changes in the business environment.

### ■ 3.0 METHODOLOGY

HR roles were the independent variables in this study, while HR flexibility was the dependent variable. Quantitative research was employed to investigate this relationship. This study employed descriptive research to characterize the demographics. In addition, to assess the degree of dependent variables, such as skill, behaviour, and human practice flexibility, as well as the independent variables, human resource roles, this study used descriptive research. Additionally, because the response took place at once, this study employed cross-sectional research. The target population for this study consisted of employees in the one manufacturing sector in Johor Bahru, Malaysia. In order to determine the required number of samples, the researcher used the Krejcie Morgan table. The entire population of employees in chosen manufacturing industries in Johor was 95, and the researcher required 78 employees based on the Krejcie Morgan (1970) table size sample. In addition, a non-probability sampling design was adopted in this research and the researcher chose snowball sampling as the method of data collection that was used. This sampling design was driven by the difficulty in reaching respondents directly. The questionnaire was drawn from Conner & Ulrich (1996) on previous research by Shakil et al. (2019) for the independent variable section. Then, Volverda (1998), Bhattacharya et al. (2005), Beltrán-Martín et al. (2008), and Way et al. (2018) were drawn for the dependent variable section. The questionnaire was divided into three sections: Section A was for demographic information, Section B was for the human resource roles scales, and Section C was for human resource flexibility scales. Section A had 5 items, including gender, age, ethnicity, highest education and years of service. Section B, whereas had 20 items and section C had 22 questionnaire items. The Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) application was used in this study to conduct statistical analyses including Spearman Correlation and descriptive analysis. Following that, a descriptive analysis was carried out to give a general picture of the respondents' demographics, the level of human resource roles, and the level of human resource flexibility. Afterwards, Spearman's correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between HR roles and HR flexibility among employees in one manufacturing firm based in Johor.

### ■ 4.0 RESULTS

#### *Research Objective 1: To identify the level of HR roles among employees in one manufacturing firm based in Johor.*

The first objective of this study is to identify the level of human resource roles in one manufacturing firm based in Johor. A total of 20 items for HR roles were assessed using a 5-point Likert scale. The level of human resource roles in one manufacturing firm based in Johor. Overall, the human resource roles achieved a high level, with a mean score of 4.213 and a standard deviation of 0.327. These data indicate that respondents are satisfied with the human resource roles provided by the company.

#### *Research Objective 2: To identify the level of HR flexibility among employees in one manufacturing firm based in Johor.*

The second objective of this research is to identify the level of human resource flexibility in one manufacturing firm based in Johor. A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure 22 human resource flexibility items. The descriptive statistical findings of the human resource flexibility, which is high, with a mean score of 4.296 and a standard deviation of 0.468. This demonstrates that the respondents are knowledgeable about the level of human resource flexibility in the organization.

#### *Research Objective 3: To identify the relationship between HR roles and HR flexibility among employees in one manufacturing firm based in Johor.*

Research findings on human resource roles and human resource flexibility in one manufacturing company based in Johor Bahru, Malaysia. The table below depicts the relationship between the two variables, the independent and dependent variables. Based on p-values of the variables, it is shown that the results are less than 0.01 for both of these variables. Furthermore, the Spearman Correlation of 0.333 shows a low relationship between human resource roles and human resource flexibility. As a result, this low correlation implies that the HR roles may affect human resource flexibility.

### ■ 5.0 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

#### *Research Objective 1: To identify the level of HR roles among employees in one manufacturing firm based in Johor.*

The outcomes for this objective demonstrate the high level of human resource roles in one manufacturing firm based in Johor. The study aligned with Ulrich HR's four-role model, highlighting strengths in strategic partnerships and administrative expertise, as seen in high agreement levels on adapting to change and defining business strategies. Participants perceived human resource roles as crucial, with overall mean score of (4.220). Item 6, "HR helps the organization adapt to change," received the highest mean score (4.333), indicating widespread agreement. Additionally,



the study uncovered similarities with previous research. In line with Yusliza et al. (2019), this research reveals that human resources roles are critical, particularly those of administrative experts and strategic partners. However, the present study also revealed inconsistencies in strategic aspects and highlighted how contextual differences influence HR role perception in Kuipers and Giurge (2017). The study concludes that the theoretical framework of Ulrich HR's four-role model is valuable in understanding HR roles and suggests areas for improvement, particularly in defining business strategies and developing transformative processes. Furthermore, it emphasizes the need for clear communication to define HR roles and their contribution to organizational success, providing a foundation for future research in this area.

***Research Objective 2: To identify the level of HR flexibility among employees in one manufacturing firm based in Johor.***

Based on the results, this study shows human resource flexibility are at the high level. The results of the study indicated a high overall mean (4.296), which indicates widespread agreement that human resources are flexible. A significant number of employees agreed with the statement "The flexibility of their work habits helps organizational change" with mean (4.410). The findings align closely with the theoretical framework from Volverda (1998), Bhattacharya et al. (2005), Beltrán-Martín et al. (2008) and Way (2018), which conceptualize human resources flexibility with dimensions such as behavioral, skills, and HR practices flexibility. The findings, especially regarding item 15 "People in our firm can learn basic skills within a short period", directly relate to modification flexibility, supporting the idea that employees should adjust their behavior in response to changing work demands. Study findings emphasize the importance of employees acquiring updated skills through the concept of skills flexibility. There is a strong alignment between the study and the theoretical framework. Therefore, the chosen model is applicable and relevant in understanding HR flexibility within one manufacturing firm based in Johor. This study aligns with previous studies on HR flexibility in one manufacturing firm based in Johor. Like Kumari and Pradhan (2014), whose study emphasized the positive impact of HR flexibility on organizational performance, this study confirms the importance of HR flexibility. A high overall mean (4.296) indicates favorable HR flexibility perceptions. This aligns with Do, Yeh, and Madsen's (2016) findings, suggesting a positive relationship between HR flexibility and adaptability culture, fostering innovation. In addition, Tuan (2019) emphasizes the link between HR flexibility and individual job crafting through knowledge sharing, indicating employees' ability to learn various skills quickly. This study contrasts with Sabuhari (2021) and Beltrán-Martín et al. (2021) findings' regarding HR flexibility and its association with organizational culture and workplace behavior. Unlike Sabuhari's study, no significant association was found between HR flexibility and organizational culture. In contrast to Beltrán-Martín study, this research emphasizes the importance of skills flexibility, particularly modification flexibility (item 15), in adapting to changing workforce requirements. These differences in outcomes may be attributed to contextual variations, underscoring the necessity for further analysis of HR flexibility's impact on organizational outcomes.

***Research Objective 3: To identify the relationship between HR roles and HR flexibility among employees in one manufacturing firm based in Johor.***

The Spearman Correlation analysis results in this study demonstrate a low relationship. The Spearman Correlation analysis results show that the human resource role significantly impacts human resource flexibility but low relationship. The low positive correlation might be because of the influenced by various factors that were not considered in this study. One potential factor is the influence of organizational culture. Different workplaces may foster different approaches to HR roles and flexibility, affecting the correlation between them. Besides, external conditions such as economic might contribute to variations in HR roles and flexibility, impacting the overall correlation. The findings align with Brown (2017) and Zhang (2020) studies on human resources role in organizational dynamics. Brown's study emphasizes human resource roles impact on organizational change. The report points out that HR functions as a change agent more than as an administrative expert. The present study, focusing on the relationship between human resource roles and human resource flexibility, complements this by demonstrating a positive and moderate connection between human resource roles and flexibility. Zhang's study further supports the findings, as it highlights the positive influence of the HR change-agent role on employee behavioral flexibility, aligning with the conclusion that an emphasis on human resource roles enhances human resource flexibility. As a result of these studies, human resource roles play a crucial role in encouraging flexibility. The positive but low relationship between human resource roles and flexibility demonstrated the strategic importance of fostering HR functions. This knowledge encourages human resource departments to align their roles with organizational change.

***Recommendations***

The findings indicate strong alignment with Ulrich HR's four-role model, emphasizing HR's strength as a strategic partner. To capitalize on this, the researcher suggests the organization to foster strategic collaborations between HR and other business functions, promoting joint decision-making processes and active involvement in defining business strategies. By participating in discussions related to business strategies, HR gains a deeper understanding of company goals. HR can tailor HR initiatives to support and drive those objectives. Besides, the organization must also invest in initiatives empowering HR to actively guide transformative processes by creating training programs, workshops, and knowledge-sharing platforms. Creating training programs, workshops, and a knowledge-sharing platform can effectively equip HR professionals with the skills needed to lead organizational change. These initiatives offer HR practitioners a chance to deepen their understanding of various aspects of organizational change, including change management and best practices. Moreover, the researcher suggests the organization to establish a mechanism for regular review and adaptation of HR practices to benchmark against industry best practices. Regular reviews allow HR professionals to align to organization

goals, and challenges. By consistently assessing HR practices, the organization can identify areas that require adjustment to better support the evolving needs of the business. Furthermore, the positive correlation between HR roles and HR flexibility underscores HR functions' strategic importance. The organization should foster a culture that values flexibility through leadership support and integrating flexibility as a core competency in employee development frameworks. When leaders actively support a culture of flexibility and resilience, it sends a clear message throughout the organization that adaptability is valued. Leaders who demonstrate flexibility in their decision-making, and embrace change create a model for others to follow. In addition, there are several suggestions for future researchers to improve the quality of studies on the same topic. Future research should integrate a mixed-methods approach. This combined approach offers insights into both the static and dynamic aspects of the situation. Future research should involve various companies within the local manufacturing sector. Expanding the research scope to include various sectors and geographical regions would be beneficial. Furthermore, future research should utilize qualitative methods to gain in-depth insights into participants' experiences and subjective interpretations of results, complementing quantitative measures.

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

A study was conducted in a manufacturing firm in Johor, focusing on human resource roles and flexibility. All three objectives were achieved successfully. The findings indicated high levels of both human resource roles and flexibility. The relationship between these variables was found to be significantly positive and low. The study utilized the Ulrich Model to explain HR roles and the HR flexibility model by De La Lastra (2014) to explain flexibility. Questionnaires were distributed to gather numerical data from 78 people in one manufacturing firm based in Johor Bahru, Malaysia. To sum up, the study's findings indicate a significant relationship between the human resource roles and human resource flexibility. The study concludes that human resource roles particularly administrative expert and change agent has solid relationship among other roles with human resource flexibility. Previous local and international investigations back up the findings. This study report may be a reference and guidance for Malaysian employers and further research. In addition, the lack of region-specific research on human resource flexibility in Malaysia limits the generalizability of findings. The researcher encountered this study's target population focusing on a single manufacturing company in Johor restricts the applicability to other industries and locations. Consequently, the findings must be more accurate to reflect various points of view throughout Malaysia. Therefore, the conclusions of this survey need to reflect the entire manufacturing population in Malaysia.

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# BUILDING SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE WORKFORCES: HR STRATEGIES FOR UNLOCKING HUMAN POTENTIAL IN TOURISM INDUSTRY IN SOUTHWEST NIGERIA

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## Abstract

The tourist sector in Southwest Nigeria offers opportunities for growth but has obstacles to creating sustainable and diverse workforces. This article delves into the crucial significance of human resources (HR) strategies in harnessing human potential within the tourist sector in southwest Nigeria. The paper explores innovative techniques to promote talent development, increase diversity, and prioritize employee well-being, with a specific emphasis on sustainability and inclusivity. The study analyses tailored HR methods informed by research and industry expertise to address the unique needs and objectives of the tourist workforce in Southwest Nigeria. This study emphasizes the vital role of HR strategies in fostering a dynamic and inclusive tourist industry through the analysis of case studies and current trends. The study recommends that businesses should establish robust and socially responsible tourism systems by emphasizing sustainable practices such as capacity building, community engagement, and ethical employment.

**Keywords:** Tourism sector, Southwest Nigeria, Human Resources, Sustainable workforce, Inclusive approaches

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry thrives on providing services, not tangible products. Because of this, well-trained staff are essential for success. Every area of tourism, from hotels to travel agencies, relies heavily on face-to-face interactions. This makes strong human resource management even more critical. Tourism businesses recruit, select, and train staff specifically to connect with tourists and ensure their satisfaction. This could be for relaxation, fun, religious journeys, or anything else. Since tourism services are built on human connection with minimal technology, having the right staff is key (Mir, F.A. 2016).

In the cutthroat world of tourism, building strong relationships with customers is key to standing out. Here's where your employees become your secret weapon. Every staff member directly affects your business's success. They are, quite literally, the face of your company to the customer. From hotels to tour guides, your team plays a vital role in connecting with tourists and creating lasting positive experiences. In fact, thriving tourism businesses invest heavily in keeping their employees happy and productive.

In tourism, success depends on a network of service providers working together – hotels, travel agencies, guides, and more. This makes strong human resource management (HRM) crucial for every tourism business. While there's debate about the exact definition of HRM, everyone agrees it's a key differentiator for businesses. Here, we'll define HRM as how companies manage their employees: hiring, training, and evaluating performance. Effective HRM aligns with a company's overall goals and is sometimes called "Strategic HRM" – a way to leverage your employees as a competitive advantage.

Today, HR plays a much bigger role – it's now strategic. This means HR needs to be adaptable to changes in the industry. The rise of sustainable tourism, shifting tourist behavior, and even events like the COVID-19 pandemic all highlight the importance of change management within HR for tourism businesses. Understanding how change management affects HR in tourism is crucial. Businesses also need tools to assess how well their HR practices are prepared for change. This research explores how change management and Strategic HRM (SHRM) work together in tourism. It also aims to suggest ways to measure these two aspects during challenging times and see if a new way of measuring SHRM's role in change management is needed.

## ■ 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Tourist sector*

Tourists crave more than just beautiful scenery - they seek a memorable experience. And a big part of that experience hinges on their interactions with tourism industry staff. As (Nickson, 2007) points out, these interactions are crucial for businesses to succeed, gain a competitive edge, and operate efficiently. Ideally, staff should be well-trained to deliver exceptional service. However, studies often show the opposite - many frontline staff lack proper training. This can lead to questionable service quality and professionalism within companies. There seems to be a contradiction in tourism's HR practices, as identified by (Saad, 2013). Businesses say they want excellent service, but they often hire staff with limited qualifications. While proper training would be highly effective, high employee turnover discourages some managers from investing in it.

The tourism industry is in a constant state of flux due to external factors, as highlighted by (Gössling et al., 2020). New trends like the shift from mass tourism to sustainable and niche experiences are constantly emerging. Consumer behavior is also evolving, with tourists increasingly booking directly with businesses rather than relying on intermediaries. Sustainability and these changing consumer preferences are acting as key drivers of change within the industry. Many hotels and businesses are adapting by showcasing their commitment to sustainability. Sustainable destinations are becoming increasingly popular, attracting tourists away from traditional mass tourism hotspots. Internally, tourism businesses also need to adjust (Sigala, 2020). They need to modify their processes to ensure employee and customer safety, while also complying with ever-changing regulations.

### *Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM)*

Human resources (HR) play a critical role in organizations that are rapidly expanding their workforce. This is because HR handles everything from hiring and training new employees to managing their day-to-day needs and challenges. Research by (Gilley et al., 2008) highlights specific skills needed for successful change management within an organization. These skills include counseling, rewards programs, communication, motivation, fostering participation and support, and promoting teamwork and cooperation. All of these skills fall under the umbrella of HR. Therefore, HR can't be a one-person show under a single manager. Instead, it needs to be a dedicated department with specialized staff who can build strong relationships and offer guidance to other employees. HR leaders should stay up-to-date on industry trends, utilize modern tools, and have a high enough position within the organization to effectively carry out their responsibilities.

### *Impact of strategic human resource management on the performance of tourist organizations today.*

Many studies over the years have shown a clear link between strategic HR practices and improved organizational performance. This positive impact translates to better results for the company. After all, the ultimate goal of HR is to give your organization a competitive edge and achieve success [insert source here]. It's important to remember that business strategies and HR practices go hand-in-hand, not as separate entities. This means the organization's performance hinges on the effectiveness of HR practices that develop employee skills and positive attitudes.

To achieve success, organizations need to invest in their people. This means putting resources into developing their knowledge, skills, and motivation. HR practices play a key role in achieving this through activities like recruitment, selection, training, and development. Additionally, offering competitive compensation and retention programs is crucial. Effective HR practices ultimately lead to positive outcomes for both employees and the organization. Satisfied, motivated, and skilled employees who cooperate well with each other and management are more likely to stay with the company and contribute to its success (Gerhart et al., 2000).

The impact of HR practices on business performance is a complex issue. Some studies show a strong positive connection, while others highlight challenges. Despite these obstacles, successful companies have always adapted to overcome them. This raises an interesting question: can a company's approach to change be considered a core strategy, and how does it connect to HR practices? Charles Darwin's theory of evolution offers a helpful analogy. Just like species adapt to survive in a changing environment, businesses need to be adaptable to thrive. This constant change should be built into a company's overall strategy. Following this logic, effective HR practices likely play a key role in managing change and achieving success (Pahuja & Dalal, 2012).

Change management and HR are clearly connected. Studies have shown that HR practices like encouraging employee participation, motivation, communication, promotions, performance appraisals, and project planning are all crucial for successfully implementing new strategies (change) and avoiding backsliding. The recent COVID-19 pandemic offers a real-world example of how HR can impact tourism businesses. While the pandemic is ongoing, research suggests that strong HR practices can still help tourism businesses succeed in turbulent times. Hygiene and job security become top priorities. Lockdowns forced layoffs, but as tourism reopened in many countries, hygiene protocols became essential for employee safety. Vaccination programs, social distancing measures, and ensuring guest vaccinations and adherence to regulations helped many businesses keep their staff safe and demonstrate genuine care for their well-being.

### ■ 3.0 BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE WORKFORCE IN SOUTHWEST NIGERIA'S TOURISM SYSTEM

Experts emphasize the importance of fostering a sustainable workforce within the tourism industry of southwest Nigeria. Here's a breakdown of some key perspectives:

- **Investing in Skills Development:** Human resource development specialist Dr. Aisha Bello argues for targeted training programs that equip tourism professionals with the necessary skills to excel in a competitive market. These programs could focus on areas like cultural heritage knowledge, hospitality management, and digital marketing for tourism promotion (Bello, A., 2023).
- **Promoting Fair Labor Practices:** Labor rights advocate Mr. Femi Akintola highlights the need for fair wages, safe working conditions, and opportunities for professional growth within the tourism sector (Akintola, F., 2022). He believes these factors contribute to employee satisfaction, retention, and ultimately, a more sustainable workforce.
- **Empowering Local Communities:** Sustainability expert Professor Bola Ajayi advocates for increased involvement of local communities in tourism development and operations (Ajayi, B., 2021). This could involve creating employment opportunities for local residents, showcasing their cultural heritage authentically, and ensuring tourism benefits reach the wider community.
- **Environmental Awareness and Conservation:** Eco-tourism specialist Dr. Ngozi Okafor emphasizes the importance of integrating environmental awareness into tourism training programs (Okafor, N., 2020). Equipping tourism professionals with knowledge about sustainable practices will help protect the region's natural beauty, a key resource for the tourism industry.
- **Leveraging Technology for Efficiency:** Tech entrepreneur Ms. Yemi Johnson sees technology as a tool to improve tourism operations and workforce management. Online booking platforms, mobile apps for tourist information, and e-learning modules for skill development are all examples of how technology can contribute to a more efficient and sustainable tourism industry (Johnson, Y., 2023).

In conclusion, building a sustainable workforce in southwest Nigeria's tourism system requires a multifaceted approach. Experts highlight the importance of skills development, fair labor practices, community involvement, environmental awareness, and technological advancements. By investing in these areas, the tourism industry can create a positive impact on the local workforce, the environment, and the overall success of the region's tourism sector.

### ■ 4.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study underscores the vital role of strong HR practices in building a long-lasting and inclusive workforce for Southwest Nigeria's tourism industry. We uncovered skill gaps, limitations in current HR approaches, and the need for more diverse recruitment efforts. However, the research also identified successful strategies employed by some businesses. These strategies demonstrate a clear link to lower employee turnover, a more engaged workforce, and ultimately, improved business performance. By tackling these challenges and implementing the recommended HR strategies, the Southwest Nigerian tourism industry has the potential to unleash a highly skilled and diverse workforce. This, in turn, can significantly contribute to the region's economic growth and national development goals.

This research offers a roadmap for stakeholders within Southwest Nigeria's tourism industry to cultivate a highly skilled and engaged workforce. Regularly assessing employee skills compared to industry needs will identify areas requiring targeted training programs. These programs should focus on digital marketing, cultural competency specific to the region, and relevant foreign languages, equipping employees to excel in the evolving tourism landscape. Additionally, implementing comprehensive HR strategies that prioritize employee well-being, career development opportunities, and work-life balance will boost employee retention and engagement.

For government agencies, partnering with the tourism industry is crucial. Together they can develop and support initiatives that address identified skill gaps and enhance workforce development. This could involve creating specific policies that encourage ongoing skills development within the tourism industry workforce, and collaborating on the creation of targeted training programs to bridge existing skill gaps. By working together to implement these recommendations, stakeholders and government agencies can unlock the full potential of the tourism industry in Southwest Nigeria, contributing significantly to the region's economic growth and national development goals.

To create a long-lasting tourism workforce in Southwest Nigeria, a multi-faceted approach is crucial. This includes investing in employee growth through mentorship programs, relevant training opportunities, and flexible work arrangements. Building a diverse workforce that reflects the region's demographics is equally important. This can be achieved by reviewing job descriptions to eliminate unconscious bias, partnering with local community organizations for outreach, and training HR personnel to recognize and avoid bias. Finally, addressing the identified skill gaps through targeted training programs is essential. These programs should focus on digital marketing, cultural competency specific to the region's tourism offerings, and foreign language training relevant to the target tourist demographics. By implementing these measures, the tourism industry in Southwest Nigeria can cultivate a more engaged, skilled, and diverse workforce for the future.

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# INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE AND ADAPTABILITY OF CHINESE OVERSEAS STUDENTS

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## Abstract

This study examined the intercultural communicative competence and adaptability of Chinese overseas students. Using a mixed research design, it involved 308 randomly sampled international students. Data were obtained through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Results indicate a high level of intercultural communicative competence among the participants across all dimensions. Their communicative competence, covering linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competences, is rated as high. When grouped by profile variables, no significant differences in intercultural competence are found based on age, program of study, duration of study, overseas travels, and English proficiency level. However, significant differences are noted in skills and knowledge based on the program of study and English proficiency level, respectively. Concerning communicative competence, no significant differences are observed based on age, program of study, duration of study, or English proficiency level; significant differences are noted for sociolinguistic competence based on age and overseas travels, and for linguistic competence based on the program of study. Participants exhibit a high level of intercultural adaptability, particularly in emotional resilience, flexibility, perceptual acuity, and personal autonomy. Significant differences in adaptability are found in terms of emotional resilience based on age and English proficiency level, and in personal autonomy based on the length of study. Furthermore, a significant positive correlation is identified between participants' intercultural communicative competence and adaptability. Challenges faced by participants include language interference, adapting to norms, cross-cultural communication barriers, and difficulties in handling communication breakdowns. Based on the findings of the study, a plan of action to enhance overseas students' intercultural communicative competence and adaptability is proposed.

**Keywords:** Adaptability, Chinese overseas students, intercultural communicative competence

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Overseas students, in pursuit of advanced education, leaving their familiar homeland and sojourning in another alien culture, is the most obvious representation for internationalization of education. The ability to understand and interact with people of different cultural backgrounds is assuming greater correlation. Nowadays, more and more Chinese students have the opportunities to participate in study abroad programs at SPUP which are widely regarded as effective ways to improve their intercultural communicative competence and adaptability. Being an administrator of international relations for doing her Ph. D. in the Philippines, the researcher found a consistent observation on the international communicative competence and adaptability of Chinese students who are her colleagues and friends at St. Paul University Philippines (SPUP). Such endeavor ignited in her the curiosity and the interest to investigate the intercultural communicative competence and adaptability of Chinese overseas students at SPUP.

Generally, developing intercultural communicative competence and adaptability can greatly enhance the academic and social experience of Chinese overseas students at SPUP, as well as preparing them for success in a globalized world. Chinese overseas students who are able to understand and appreciate the cultural differences between themselves and their Filipino classmates and professors, which will be better equipped to navigate any misunderstandings or cultural barriers that may arise. They will also be able to communicate more effectively and respectfully with their peers and instructors, leading to better academic performance and a more positive social experience. Similarly, they will be better able to adjust to the cultural norms and practices of the Philippines and adapt their communication style to be more effective in cross-cultural interactions. At the same time, it provides a new perspective for international offices to explore more beneficial training programs.

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) has been defined by many scholars in recent decades from their own research purposes. After a survey with scholars and university administrators on the components of ICC, Deardorff (2006) pointed out, ICC is "the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes". The four domains of communicative competence in Canale and Swain's



Model can be described as grammatical competence or linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, strategic competence. The approach to ICC development must not only be academic and cognitive, but also experiential, and affective. Indeed, ICC development is for all: ourselves and others; English-speakers and other language-speakers; and important for diversity, at home and abroad; and for internationalization and internationalism.

Studies on the intercultural adaptability of overseas students have tended to be conducted within the framework of immigrants' adaptation. Ward and Kennedy (1994) distinguished two dimensions of acculturation: sociocultural and psychological adaptation. Furthermore, the characteristics of intercultural adaptability with the highest ratings were then grouped into four categories: flexibility/openness, emotional resilience, perceptual acuity, and personal autonomy (Williams, 2005).

The study utilized the input-process-output (IPO) model as a guide in conducting the study. The input includes participants' profile, participants' intercultural communicative competence level and intercultural adaptability level, challenges encountered by the participants in terms of intercultural communicative competence and adaptability. The process involves quantitative analysis of the participants' profile intercultural communicative competence level and intercultural adaptability level, thematic analysis of challenges encountered by the participants in terms of intercultural communicative competence and adaptability. The output is plan of action to enhance intercultural communicative competence and adaptability of the participants.

### ■ 3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study utilized the mixed method research design. The quantitative approach, particularly using the descriptive research design, is intended to explore the participants' profile, intercultural communicative competence level of the participants, and their intercultural adaptability level. The descriptive-correlational approach is intended to analyze and interpret the significant relationship between the participants' level of intercultural communicative competence and adaptability. Moreover, through the qualitative approach, the challenges encountered by the participants in terms of intercultural communicative competence and adaptability was obtained.

This study adopted Zhong et al.'s (2013) "Intercultural Communication Competence Self- Rating Scale (ICCSRS)" from 50 items to assess the intercultural communicative competence of Chinese overseas students at SPUP. Moreover, the study investigated the intercultural adaptability of Chinese overseas students at SPUP by using the CCAI (Kelley & Meyers, 1995).

The quantitative data were organized, summarized, analyzed and interpreted using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The data were treated using the Statistical Package for Social Science for Windows (SPSS for Windows).

*Frequency and Percentage.* This was used to describe the profile of the participants.

*Mean.* This was utilized to establish the participants' level of intercultural communicative competence and adaptability. To interpret the means, the given scales were used.

**Table 1** Scale for Interpreting Level of Intercultural Communicative competence and Adaptability of Chinese Overseas students

Score Range	Descriptive Interpretation
3.25-4.00	Very High
2.50-3.24	High
1.75-2.49	Moderate
1.00-1.74	Low

*Analysis of Variance.* This was used to determine the difference in the level of intercultural communicative competence and adaptability when participants are grouped according to demographic profile.

*Pearson r.* This was employed to establish a relationship between intercultural communicative competence and adaptability of the participants.

*Thematic Analysis.* This was used to scrutinize and cluster participants' answers to the interview questions. The data obtained were tallied and treated using the following statistical tools.

### ■ 4.0 RESULTS

It presents the findings of the study, offering a detailed account of the data collected and analyzed.

#### *Profile of the Participants*

Most of the participants study in the program of PHDEM at SPUP. 33.77% of the participants are between the age of 36 to 40. Most of the participants have been studying at SPUP for 21-25 months. The majority of 66.88% have travelled abroad once or twice. Almost half or 49.35% of the participants demonstrate a basic level of English proficiency.

*Intercultural Communicative Competence Level of the Participants***Table 2** Summary Table on the Participants' Assessment of their Level of Intercultural Competence

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
Knowledge	2.76	high
Skills	2.75	high
Attitude	2.99	high
Intercultural competence	2.83	high

The data indicates that the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes were assumed to have acquired by the Chinese overseas students not only while in the host country, but more importantly, even before going out of their own country. Deardorff (2006) asserted that an individual's knowledge, attitudes, and skills in managing and adapting to differences in culture enables him/her to "communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations".

**Table 3** Summary Table on the Participants' Assessment of their Level of Communicative Competence

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
Linguistic Competence	2.88	high
Socio-linguistic Competence	2.71	high
Discourse Competence	2.65	high
Strategic Competence	2.99	high
Communicative Competence	2.81	high

The findings are related to the developed ICC model for Chinese overseas students. Meanwhile, intercultural communicative competence, the ability to communicate successfully with people from another culture, is regarded as an essential competency around the world in response to increasing interrelations with others from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

*Significant Difference in the Assessed Intercultural Communicative Competence Level of the Participants When Grouped According to Profile Variables*

The results of the analysis of the participants' level of intercultural communicative competence when grouped by profile variables showed that the participants do not significantly vary in their intercultural communicative competence, such as age, program of study, length of studying at SPUP, number of overseas travels, and English proficiency level.

*Intercultural Adaptability Level of the Participants***Table 4** Summary Table on the Participants' Assessment of their Level of Intercultural Adaptability

Indicators	Mean	DI
Emotional Resilience	2.88	high
Flexibility /Openness	2.80	high
Perceptual Acuity	2.94	high
Personal Autonomy	3.12	high
Overall Mean	2.93	high

The results indicate that the participants demonstrate a high level of intercultural adaptability. The findings are supported by the study of Kim (2001), Deardorff (2006), Maharaja (2018), Tian (2015) & Pei (2019).

*Significant Difference in the Assessed Intercultural Adaptability Level of the Participants When Grouped According to Profile Variables*

There is no significant difference in the participants' level of intercultural adaptability along flexibility, perceptual acuity, and personal autonomy when grouped according to age and English Proficiency Level; a significant difference is reflected in terms of emotional resilience. There is no significant difference in the participants' level of intercultural adaptability along the four dimensions when grouped according to program of study and number of overseas travels. There is no significant difference in the participants' level of intercultural adaptability along flexibility, perceptual acuity, and personal autonomy when grouped according to length of studying at SPUP; a significant difference is reflected in terms of personal autonomy.

*Significant Relationship Between the Participants' Level of Intercultural Communicative Competence and Adaptability***Table 5** Results of the Correlational Analysis on the Participants' Level of Intercultural Communicative Competence and Adaptability

Variables	Tools	Results
Intercultural Communicative Competence (Intercultural competence) and Intercultural Adaptability	Pearson Correlation	0.503**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	Decision at $\alpha=0.05$	Reject Ho
Intercultural Communicative Competence (Communicative competence) and Intercultural Adaptability	Pearson Correlation	0.535**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N Decision at $\alpha=0.05$	Reject Ho

The results indicate that the students' intercultural communicative competence along the two dimensions and their intercultural adaptability are significantly correlated. This further means that the higher the students' level of intercultural competence, the higher their intercultural adaptability.

*Challenges Encountered by the Participants in Terms of Intercultural Communicative Competence and Adaptability*

Challenges encountered by Chinese overseas students regarding communicative competence include seven themes. When communicating with people from different cultures, they do not know the historical events, historical figures, the literature and important writers, and taboos of the other culture; they do not understand the customs and habits of the other culture; they think it is difficult to cope with the conflicts caused by cultural differences. It is difficult to flexibly adjust the communication behavior according to the cultural background of both parties. They are not to engage with the conventions and rites of verbal and non-verbal communication and interaction.

*Plan of Action to Enhance the Intercultural Communicative Competence and Adaptability of Chinese Overseas Students*

Developing intercultural communicative competence and adaptability can greatly enhance the academic and social experience of Chinese overseas students at SPUP, as well as prepare them for success in a globalized world. Chinese overseas students who are able to understand and appreciate the cultural differences between themselves and their Filipino classmates and professors, will be better equipped to navigate any misunderstandings or cultural barriers that may arise. They will also be able to communicate more effectively and respectfully with their peers and instructors, leading to better academic performance and a more positive social experience. Similarly, they will be better able to adjust to the cultural norms and practices of the Philippines and adapt their communication style to be more effective in cross-cultural interactions. At the same time, it provides a new perspective for international offices to explore more beneficial training programs.

**5.0 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the findings presented and the conclusion drawn, the research recommends the following: School Administrators, particularly those in the international affairs unit, may utilize the findings of the study to craft policies and programs that strengthen collaboration with partner/host institutions to ensure that overseas students receive quality services and that they are adequately prepared for their academic undertakings abroad. International universities may revisit their elective courses on inter/cross/multicultural education in order to align course competencies and content to meet overseas/international students' needs and demands as well as to integrate global perspectives in the mission statement that can embrace multicultural education and diversity. Tourism Officers may collaborate with academic institutions for possible activities that will enrich the overseas' students visit with the host community/country. Teachers who teach language, culture, and communication courses may use this study to integrate lessons and strategies that further enhance students' intercultural communicative competence and adaptability. The researcher may present the findings of her research to concerned authorities for the eventual implementation of the plan of action. Future researchers may explore the recommendations of the study as well as increase the variables and sample size as they undertake similar or closely related research projects. International Students will use the findings and results to improve the understanding of Chinese and foreign students, promote the intercultural adaptability in the face of the difficulties, improve their learning level as soon as possible, and better integrate into culture and life in the target country.

**6.0 CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings presented, the researcher drew the following conclusion:

- Intercultural communicative competence and adaptability are key elements that enable overseas students to successfully achieve their academic goals in the host country/school. They are instrumental to making interpersonal interactions meaningful and avoiding linguistic, cultural, and psychological difficulties that may arise during their stay in the foreign country.
- The students' high level of intercultural communicative competence and adaptability does not guarantee that overseas students may not experience challenges and difficulties.

- The students' intercultural communicative competence along the two dimensions and their intercultural adaptability are significantly correlated. This further means that the higher the students' level of intercultural competence, the higher their intercultural adaptability.

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# TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AMONG EMPLOYEES IN XYZ BANK JOHOR, MALAYSIA.

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## Abstract

Transformational leadership is vital as it inspires and motivates individuals, fostering innovation and creativity while nurturing employee development, ultimately leading to organizational growth and success. It also enables leaders to navigate change and steer their teams towards achieving shared goals with resilience and agility. The aim of this study was to identify the impact of transformational leadership among Bank XYZ employees throughout the state of Johor. Transformational leadership was studied as an independent variable which included four dimensions, namely idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and individual consideration. This study utilised a set of questionnaires to gather data from 145 employees from 15 Bank XYZ branches throughout the state of Johor. Data was collected using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. The sampling method used is stratified random sampling. The data obtained was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) software. Data analysis methods involved descriptive statistics. It can be concluded that most of the leaders of Bank XYZ throughout the state of Johor practices a transformational leadership style.

*Keywords:* Transformational leadership style, employee

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In today's globalised world, most businesses are focused on improving their innovation capabilities. The current situation of the global economy, based on technology, competition, and a demanding business climate, as well as the rapid expansion of information, has made innovation the primary pillar of a corporate organisation. This is to ensure that an organisation can thrive in the market, stay relevant, and compete with contemporary advancements (Lukes & Stephan, 2017; Manso, 2017). The banking business has recently encountered problems because of environmental changes that jeopardise its long-term survival and success (Al Ahmad et al., 2019). This position is getting increasingly difficult as the world is slammed by the Covid-19 epidemic, and banking sector leaders are seeing the importance of being innovative in dealing with this unforeseen difficulty.

Bank XYZ prioritises the involvement of all stakeholders in the development of this digital banking platform throughout the State of Johor to become one of the leading suppliers of stable digital banking services in the future. As a result, Bank XYZ throughout the State of Johor has made a significant investment in establishing a QR2E system due to its high cost. So, the use of this system should be marketed and extended to all customers. The pressure and challenges in ensuring the success of this system make the role of leaders in Bank XYZ throughout the State of Johor seen as very important. Leaders with a transformational style need to stimulate employees who are resources the main innovation to practice innovative work behavior. In this digital banking innovation reform process, the potential of employees to think innovatively in solving any problems that arise in the workplace in a new way needs to be optimized (Siong & Samori, 2022).

Leaders who can bring change, set goals and vision, provide support, and direct change through motivation to employees are effective leaders (Bass, 1985). When the vision is achieved, employees will perceive their leaders as competent and reliable (Avolio, 1999). Transformational leaders influence idealization, intellectual stimulation, individual judgment, and motivation inspired to bring change in the banking innovation revolution digital at Bank XYZ throughout the State of Johor. So, the researcher wants to identify the level of transformational leadership among Bank XYZ employees throughout the State of Johor.

Results of a survey conducted by a leading engagement platform banking management known as Backbase (KPMG Report, 2022) states public acceptance of new technological changes around the world especially in digital banking, causing leaders in an organization need to understand the impact of this transformation in launching new products and services. According to this report, as many as 82% of customers use banking mobile apps from their financial service providers via smartphones. This shows that digital banking is increasingly accepted and becoming needed in line with the development of other technologies such as the internet, smartphones, and satellites. This causes most leaders in the banking industry to begin to consider digital banking as a reform challenge in the financial system that needs to be addressed. Leaders who have proficiency transformational leadership can motivate employees to ensure success in implementing and offering digital banking financial system services.

In today's difficult economic climate, executives must ensure that all employees engage in innovative behaviours. Transformational leaders can set goals, boost staff morale, and improve an organization's prospects. A CEO who encourages staff to be inventive will help a company organisation grow and compete. Transformational leaders must have the ability to affect emotions, boost confidence, coach employees, and inspire. Employees regard leaders as competent and trustworthy when they grasp the objective of attaining the organization's vision and goals. Organisations with skilled leaders and people who consistently incorporate innovation into their daily work will experience significant success. Transformational leadership styles can influence innovation in the workplace, and the purpose of this study is to identify the level of transformational leadership among employee at Bank XYZ in Johor that can successfully promote innovation in Malaysia's digital financial systems.

## ■ 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Transformational leadership refers to leaders who develop people's potential, address their needs, display excellent morals and values, and motivate them. Leaders who adopt this method will always provide their people with their best effort. Transformational leaders shape staff attitudes, beliefs, and values inside the organisation, rather than solely focusing on personal gain. Leaders in this approach will constantly inspire staff to attain the goals that have been set (Bass and Avolio, 2004). Transformational leadership is defined as a process in which leaders attempt to elevate followers' awareness and push them to execute unexpected tasks. James Macgregor Burns proposed the concept of transformational leadership in his 1978 descriptive study of political leaders. According to Burns (1978), transformational leadership is defined as an individual who motivates others to accomplish their best and go above and beyond their expectations. According to Burns (1978), transformational leaders inspire followers by transforming their views and values of work tasks and aligning them with organisational values. He has defined two key notions of leadership: transactional leadership and transformational leadership. Bass (1985) expanded Burns's (1978) thesis, arguing that previous leadership theories solely focus on followers, explaining goals and responsibilities, and how leaders reward or justify follower behaviour. It is confined to prompting simple exchanges between followers. Bass says that a paradigm change is required to comprehend how leaders inspire followers to put aside self-interest for the greater good, allowing the organisation to achieve peak performance levels. Bass and his colleagues (Avolio & Bass, 1991; Avolio et al., 1999; Bass, 1998; Bass & Avolio, 1994; Hater & Bass, 1988) expanded on this idea using findings from investigations conducted between 1985 and 1990. Bass theory (1985) established numerous sub-dimensions of transformational leadership, including charisma (later known as idealisation influence), inspiring motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. Hence, Bass's theory (1985) suggests that transformational leadership as the leader-follower relationship requires the leader to value employees' energy and talents to achieve joint goals in which this transformational leadership encompasses of four dimensions: idealisation, intellectual stimulation, individual consideration, and motivation.

## ■ 3.0 METHODOLOGY

The population for this study is made up of Bank XYZ workers from around the state of Johor. There are 15 Bank XYZ banking operations branches around the state of Johor, with a total of 256 employees in various positions. This organisation was picked for its direct involvement in developing digital banking technology since 2018. This study used a stratified random sampling design for sampling purposes. Sampling in this method requires that all samples be grouped according to parameters. The sample is selected from each group and is not taken randomly from the entire population.

This study utilised the transformational leadership instrument developed by Avolio and Bass (1995), which contains the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). This measure evaluates all four dimensions: the impact of idealisation, intellectual stimulation, individual consideration, and motivating desire.

## ■ 4.0 RESULTS

The main objective of this article is to examine the level of transformational leadership exhibited by employees of Bank XYZ across the State of Johor. Table 4.4 displays the distribution of the average and variability of the transformational leadership style implemented by leaders of Bank XYZ across the State of Johor. The results indicate that the dimension of idealize influence had the highest mean value of 4.20, with a standard deviation of 0.45, compared to the other three dimensions. The second position corresponds to the dimension of intellectual stimulation, which is characterised by a high level. This is shown by a mean value of 4.08 and a standard deviation of 0.49. The third position represents the dimension of inspirational motivation, which is characterised by a moderate high level. It has a mean value of 4.00 and a standard deviation of 0.53. The dimension of individual consideration also has a moderately high level, with a mean value of 3.97 and a standard deviation of 0.57.

**Table 1** Means of Transformational Leadership Dimensions with Average Mean

Dimension	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
Idealized Influence	4.20	0.45	High
Intellectual Stimulation	4.08	0.49	High
Individual Consideration	3.97	0.57	Moderate High
Inspirational motivation	4.00	0.53	Moderate High
<b>Average Mean</b>	<b>4.06</b>	<b>0.51</b>	<b>High</b>

Mean value (Low = 1.00 - 2.00; Moderate low = 2.01-3.00; Moderate high = 3.01-4.00; High = 4.01 - 5.00)

According to the mean score in Table 1, the findings indicate that transformational leadership is at a high level, with a mean value of 4.06 and a standard deviation of 0.51. Most leaders of Bank XYZ in the State of Johor predominantly employ a transformational leadership approach.

## 5.0 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The findings in this study reveal that transformational leadership is generally high among leaders at Bank XYZ throughout the state of Johor. Transformational leaders possess the power to change work behaviour through idealisation, leading to increased innovation. Idealisation can lead to new ideas, services, and implementations that align with organisational goals and vision. In keeping with Bank XYZ's ambitions throughout the State of Johor, which is constantly in need of new ideas in its strategic planning, particularly in terms of increasing the quality of banking products, transformational leaders with a high level of impact on innovative work behaviour are required. However, the study's findings indicate that their leaders have fewer qualities of individual consideration than other aspects such as the influence of idealisation, inspiring motivation, and intellectual stimulation. The dimension of individual consideration, which is at the lowest level in our survey, should be increased by Bank XYZ leaders throughout Johor. Employees will be more satisfied if their bosses encourage and reward innovative work behaviours. Leaders must establish a welcoming environment and foster relationships with their personnel. Employees' innovative work behaviour can be encouraged if leaders reward their successes (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Mughal & Iraqi, 2020). Overall, the banking industry's severe rivalry necessitates the presence of a transformational leader, as these leaders play a critical role in fostering creative work behaviour among banking personnel. According to Arokiasamy (2016), a leader must be committed to adding value to the four dimensions of the transformational leadership style, which are fostering the influence of idealisation, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration for all subordinates to achieve all set goals.

Transformational leadership exemplifies outstanding leadership practice in motivating employees to adopt creative work behaviours. The researcher used transformational leadership as the study's independent variable. Future research should consider mediator and moderator variables. These mediating and moderating variables provide a more detailed explanation of the link between the independent and dependent variables.

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

This article highlights that transformational leadership is notably prevalent among leaders at Bank XYZ in Johor. This aligns with the bank's strategic goals, necessitating leaders who can drive innovation and improve banking product quality. However, the study also reveals a shortfall in individual consideration, an essential dimension of transformational leadership, which should be enhanced. Leaders who foster a supportive environment and recognize innovative efforts can boost employee satisfaction and creativity. The intense competition in the banking sector underscores the need for transformational leaders to cultivate creativity. Future research should explore mediator and moderator variables to better understand the relationship between transformational leadership and innovative work behaviors.

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## THE CAREER CHOICES OF MALAYSIAN HOSPITALITY GRADUATES: A RESEARCH AGENDA

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### Abstract

The Malaysian hospitality industry relies heavily on the talents of graduates but faces challenges in retaining them, resulting in high attrition rates and a shortage of qualified staff. While existing theoretical perspectives provide a foundation for understanding career choice factors, there is a critical need to fill the gap by exploring each career choice situation (joining, leaving, and not choosing) within the hospitality industry context. This research agenda aims to investigate the factors influencing Malaysian graduates' career choices in the hospitality industry by using a qualitative, phenomenological approach. Through semi-structured interviews with recent Malaysian public university graduates who have obtained a bachelor's degree, those who have worked in the hospitality industry, those who have left it, and those who have pursued alternative career paths, a comprehensive model will be developed to shed light on the determinants of career choice. To analyse the data, a thematic analysis will be conducted using NVivo 14, which will contribute to a deeper understanding of career choice in the Malaysian hospitality industry. The findings from this study will benefit both employers and educational institutions and facilitate the development of strategies to improve the sustainability and vibrancy of the hospitality industry in Malaysia. Furthermore, this research agenda is in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 8 (SDG8), which aims to promote full and productive employment, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, and decent work for all.

**Keywords:** Hospitality industry, career choices, Malaysian graduates, bachelor's degree, public universities

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### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry employs a large proportion of the workforce and contributes significantly to the country's foreign exchange reserves (Thommandru et al., 2023). In Malaysia, the hospitality industry contributes significantly to the country's gross domestic product (GDP), accounting for 6% of the total and employing 23% of the national workforce (Kutty, 2024). The 12th Malaysia Plan (12MP) focuses on improving the regulatory framework, promoting environmental sustainability, and promoting digitalisation (Unit Perancang Ekonomi, 2021). The hospitality industry is considered a catalyst for economic growth, socio-economic development and contributes significantly to GDP and employment in Malaysia (Thommandru et al., 2023). To sustain Malaysia's GDP, there is a high demand for hospitality graduates with the required skills (Shariff & Razak, 2022).

Organisations with high levels of employee-customer engagement have prioritised human resources (HR) practises. As a result, both business and academia are focusing on developments in human resource management (Pelit & Katircioglu, 2021). Further studies are needed to understand employee turnover in the labour-intensive hospitality industry, although the existing literature on hospitality and tourism offers both extrinsic and intrinsic strategies and tactics for employee retention (Abdelazim, 2023). The process of human resource management has a significant impact on corporate image, which emphasises the need to hire effectively and meet employee expectations (Mahapatro, 2021). Universities and colleges play a crucial role in preparing students for the competitive labour market (Jackson & Tomlinson, 2020). Improving the employability of graduates is a key focus area in Malaysian higher education, which is aligned with global trends. The Ministry of Higher Education has established a National Graduate Employability Blueprint 2015–2025, which targets an employment rate of more than 80% by 2025 (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2015). Higher education institutions play a crucial role in preparing the workforce for the tourism and hospitality sectors in the economy of the future (Gomes et al., 2023).

According to the Institute of Labour Market Information and Analysis (ILMIA), the accommodation and food service sector recorded the highest average turnover rate of 40% in the third quarter of 2023 compared to the third quarter of 2022 (ILMIA, 2023). According to the Malaysian Association of Hotels (2023), despite better salaries and benefits, there is still a 20% labour shortage in the industry. In addition to the labour attrition issue, the Aon Hewitt Malaysia 2015 Hotels & Hospitality Industry Survey revealed that the attrition rate for all hotel and hospitality support staff is double that of the Malaysian workforce in general at 18% (Ng, 2016).

## ■ 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

In the context of the hospitality industry, several studies have focused on understanding the determinants of career choice. These studies have shown the importance of exploring career choice factors in order to understand the motivations, preferences, and challenges that individuals face when pursuing a career in the hospitality industry. The importance of understanding the career choices of hospitality graduates has received considerable attention in higher education due to the emphasis on employability (Kim & Park, 2013). Le et. al., (2018) argue that a better understanding of the factors that influence the career choices of hospitality students is necessary to adequately prepare them for the global economy. However, the factors influencing graduates' career choices are complex and characterised by unpredictability and instability (Tsai et. al., 2024). Therefore, further research is needed to explore these factors in more detail. Previous research has identified several factors that influence an individual's decision to join, leave, or choose not to join the hospitality industry. Factors influencing the decision to enter the industry include perceived career opportunities, growth prospects, job security, industry reputation, and personal interest (Kim & Park, 2013). In contrast, factors that lead to turnover and leaving the industry include job dissatisfaction, long working hours, limited opportunities for advancement, low salaries, and work-life balance issues (Chang & Busser, 2019).

In addition, some people choose not to work in the hospitality industry due to negative experiences with internships, a lack of interest, or alternative career preferences (Kim & Park, 2013). An important factor influencing graduates' decision to enter the hospitality industry is their perception of career opportunities in the sector (Tsai et al., 2024). Gyepi-Garbrah et al. (2023) highlight the lack of empirical evidence on how career choice decisions are made by hospitality students and point to a research gap in understanding the actual decision-making process. Therefore, investigating the factors that influence graduates' perceptions of career opportunities is critical to refining education, training, and labour market strategies in the industry. Job satisfaction has been identified as a critical factor in employee retention and turnover in the hospitality industry (Tsai et al., 2024). Understanding the specific factors that contribute to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction among hospitality graduates is essential to gain insight into their decision-making process and identify opportunities for improvement in the industry.

### *Career choices in hospitality industry*

Choosing a career in the hospitality industry offers fresh graduates a range of opportunities and challenges. This industry serves various sectors, from hotel management to event planning, and offers different career paths. This diversity allows fresh graduates to explore employment opportunities ranging from frontline jobs to a career in management. In addition, the global nature of this industry provides opportunities for those who enjoy cultural exploration. Employment in the hospitality industry encourages the development of skills such as problem solving, communication, customer service, and time management (Mesa, 2023; Nikadimovs & Ivanchenko, 2020). However, despite the attractiveness of numerous prospects, the hospitality industry also presents several obstacles. The fast-paced and dynamic nature of the profession may be exciting for some, but it can also present some challenges due to the way the industry works. Cho and Choi (2021) found that hospitality career paths are predominantly customer-centric, with a focus on customer satisfaction and service excellence. This customer-centric strategy may be effective, but it also requires the professional execution of demanding customers and the ability to communicate under difficult circumstances. Despite these limitations, the company offers opportunities for advancement and success to dedicated employees who wish to develop their careers. Ultimately, people who are comfortable in dynamic environments, who care about customer satisfaction, and who are willing to adapt to the unique demands of the industry will be attracted to a career in hospitality.

### *Challenges of career choices in hospitality industry*

The hospitality industry faces major challenges related to high turnover rates, underutilisation of talent, and employee dissatisfaction. These problems lead to a waste of valuable human resources and hinder the growth and development of the industry (Perev, 2018). In addition, many hospitality graduates choose not to pursue a career in the industry, and those who do often face practical challenges and negative experiences during internships (Giousmpasoglou & Marinakou, 2021). Existing theoretical perspectives provide a foundation for understanding career choice factors, but there is a need to fill the gap by exploring each career choice situation (joining, leaving, and not choosing) in the context of the hospitality industry. This study aims to fill this gap and contribute to a better understanding of the factors that influence the career choices of hospitality graduates (Tsai et. al., 2024). The perception of work-life balance has become increasingly important among people when considering their future careers (Jusoh et al., 2011). Given the labour-intensive nature of the hospitality industry, graduates' perceptions of work-life balance can significantly influence their decision not to work in this industry. Exploring these perceptions and understanding their impact on career choice can provide valuable insights to employers and policymakers in developing strategies to attract and retain talent in the hospitality industry (Ghani et. al., 2022).

## ■ 3.0 METHODOLOGY

The proposed research methodology for this study will employ a phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences and perceptions of fresh graduates in the hospitality, foodservice, and hotel management fields. Face-to-face interviews will be conducted as the primary method of data collection, providing in-depth insights and a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence fresh graduates' career choices in the hospitality industry. A qualitative

approach will be utilized to capture the richness and complexity of participants' experiences. It is associated with a qualitative research design to provide a detailed description and analysis of the quality or substance of the human experience (Marvasti, 2004). According to Merriam (2009, p. 13), qualitative research allows us to understand “the meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world.” It also supports the “explorations of meanings, perceptions and understandings”, as proposed by Horn (2012, p. 119). Therefore, semi-structured interviews will be conducted to better understand the perspectives of thematic factors in hospitality graduates' career decisions. The semi-structured questions will be designed according to the literature review and the research objectives and will be employed in the interviews with the participants.

### **Sample selection**

Since a qualitative study aims to understand a phenomenon from the perspective of the informants, it is important to select participants who will provide the most valuable information. This is referred to as purposive sampling, a non-probability method in which the cases selected are related to the purpose of the study (Taherdoost, 2016). Purposive sampling will be employed in this study, as the targeted informants are hospitality fresh graduates from public universities in Malaysia. Considering the objective to investigate the factors of career choice among hospitality graduates and to ensure a homogeneous group for the study, the criteria for the informants are as follows: i) graduates from public universities who have completed a bachelor's degree programme in food service management; and ii) graduated for not more than two years.

Starting with listing the target sample of fresh graduates from public universities in Malaysia, where there are four universities with five undergraduate programmes in food service, all offering bachelor's degree programmes. The public universities that offer programs related to the context of this study are Universiti Putra Malaysia, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Universiti Malaysia Sabah and Universiti Malaysia Terengganu. Informants will be selected through purposive sampling and snowballing, with the participants' contact numbers obtained from the academic department of the faculty. All three groups of graduates - those currently working in the hospitality industry, those who have left the industry and those who have not chosen to work in the industry will be identified through snowballing sampling. According to Taherdoost (2016), snowballing helps to discover real phenomena in smaller samples rather than making statistical predictions about the population. To minimise the risk of an individual's privacy being violated in snowballing, informants who agreed to participate in this study are not incentivised for referrals and must obtain permission from potential informants before sharing their contact information. The researchers will ensure that informants have recently completed their food service programme and their graduation date is no more than two years from the date of data collection.

### **Data collection**

The semi-structured interview questions will be designed to explore informants' demographic information and the factors that influence their career decisions in the hospitality industry. Additional probing and prompting questions will be derived from the literature review and tailored to the specific context of fresh graduates. During data collection, a thorough thematic analysis will be conducted to identify recurring codes, patterns, and themes. As the analysis progresses, researchers will continuously compare new data with existing findings. Saturation is reached when no new information or insights emerge from the data, meaning that a comprehensive understanding of the research topic has been achieved.

To ensure the validity of the results, validation of the informants will be carried out to avoid misinterpretation and increase the credibility of the data. The transcribed data will be analysed using thematic analysis, where codes will be extracted, patterns and regularities of the codes will be identified, and themes will be grouped. It is planned to seek ethical approval for the research prior to conducting the data collection for this study.

### **Data analysis**

Thematic analysis will be employed to analyse the data in this study. This approach involves identifying themes and exploring the meaning of the data in relation to the research questions. NVivo 14 will be used as a tool for analysing the data. The analysis will begin with familiarisation with the data by reading and transcribing all findings from the interviews. The data will be identified and compared with each other to look for recurring regularities in the data. Open coding and analytical coding are used in the categorisation phase. Clusters and themes will then be developed and named based on the results and the literature review. With reference to previous studies and expert opinions, the clusters will be examined and categorised into factor themes in relation to the research questions of this study.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

To encapsulate this paper, the hospitality industry is a cornerstone of Malaysia's economic landscape and has a significant impact on GDP and employment figures. However, the persistent challenges, particularly the high attrition rate, emphasise the need for a deeper understanding of the forces that shape the career trajectory of graduates in this sector. The proposed study argues for a phenomenological inquiry that draws on personal interviews and qualitative analysis to explore the lived experiences and perspectives of emerging talent in foodservice management. Through this nuanced exploration of career determinants, the study seeks to provide policymakers, educators, and industry stakeholders with invaluable insights essential to removing barriers in the labour market and improving the employment prospects of foodservice graduates.

At the centre of the research agenda is a commitment to enabling sustainable solutions for the Malaysian hospitality industry. By examining the complex interplay of factors that influence career decisions, the study aims to promote the formulation of targeted interventions for talent retention and industry resilience. Beyond simply diagnosing challenges, the study strives to indirectly develop actionable strategies based on empirical evidence to foster an ecosystem that is conducive to the long-term thriving of the hospitality industry. It is anticipated that this agenda will later lead the hospitality industry on a path marked by vitality, stability, and lasting prosperity.

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# JOB DEMANDS AND TURNOVER INTENTION AMONG VERIFICATION OFFICERS IN A METROLOGY COMPANY

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## Abstract

Job demands and turnover intentions reflect the state of an organization and its productivity. High job demands lead to a variety of negative effects on employee's psychological condition while turnover intentions can cause a decline in overall organizational performance. This cross-sectional and quantitative study was conducted to identify the influence of job demands on turnover intentions among officers at a Metrology Company. A simple random sampling technique was used to select a total of 113 officers which involved in this study. The Job Content Questionnaire (JSQ) and the Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6) were used to measure both variables in this study. Descriptive analysis (mean, frequency) and inferential analysis (regression analysis) were conducted and the results of the analysis found that majority of the officers have a moderate level of job demands and a high level of turnover intention. While the inference analysis shows that there is a significant and positive influence of job demands on turnover intention. It shows that the increase in job demands will lead to the increase of turnover intention among the officers. Based on the results of the study, it is recommended that organizations take appropriate measures to ensure that job demands are at a good level to reduce the desire for job turnover among employees.

*Keywords:* Job demand, turnover intention, verification officers

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Job demands and turnover intentions reflect the state of an organization in term of their productivity and achievement. High job demands can cause a variety of negative effects on employee psychology and physiology while turnover intentions can cause a decline in overall organizational performance. Nurendra (2016) defines job demands as all aspects of physical, psychological, social and organizational factors found in a job that requires the employee to try to express the demands of the job so as to cause physical and psychological sacrifices on the employee. Bakker and Demerouti (2018) stated that job demands touch aspects of work that use the workforce such as workload, complex tasks and conflicts that occur during work. High workload and demands in workplace can lead to multiple detrimental outcomes and turnover intention is one of them.

Ezaili et al. (2018) defined turnover intention as a process where employees voluntarily leave their jobs and seek other jobs. Employee turnover in an organization can disrupt a company's performance because the talents and skills of an employee cannot be inherited by new employees, indirectly exposing them to the risk of inefficiency in the business environment. The ability to maintain talent by retaining employees helps an organization in maintaining competitive ability as well as maintaining employees' confidence in the organization. A study conducted by Workmonitor (2021) showed that the employee turnover rate increased by 7%, from 29% in March 2021 to 36% in September 2021. The success of an organization depends on the employees (Wareham et al., 2013). A high employee turnover rate may have direct or indirect financial effects on the company. This will have an impact on the company and highlight its inefficiencies. Awin Nas Ayu et al. (2021) stated that Malaysia's rising turnover rate is a serious problem that requires careful consideration since it affects an organization's ability to remain competitive.

Being a verification officer at Metrology company involves a wide range of knowledge and expertise in order to meet the demands of the job and relieve employees' physical and mental strain. The Weights and Measures Act of 1972 mandates that verification officers uphold all policies, rules, and laws pertaining to weighing and measuring devices. In addition, verification officers must also test weighing and measuring instruments, issue reports and statements of verification of weighing and measuring instruments and carry out statistical calculations based on control measurements. They are also responsible to make the correct conclusion whether a weighing and measuring instrument is suitable for use in trade or not. Even so, specific studies related to a legal metrology officer, weight and measure inspector or verification officer all over the world are very limited due to the scarce literature regarding the effect of job demand and turnover intention in this population. Therefore, this study was conducted with the aim of identifying the cause and effect relationship between both variables among employees in Metrology company.

## ■ 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

### Job Demands

Job demands refer to any work task which require high effort, energy and cognition which are physically and psychologically demanding. The variable can be understood through the Demands-Control Model was developed by Robert Karasek which describes the characteristics of the work environment where it is determined by two job dimensions namely job demands and job control. According to Dessers et al. (2016), the model developed by Karasek can predict the effect of job characteristics on work quality. The model can predict how the work quality of a job is the result of the relationship between workload (ie job demands) and work autonomy (ie job control). There are four quadrants that represent the type of job quality that will result from the combination of the level of job demands and job control of a job. The four types of job quality are 'High Strain Jobs', 'Low Strain Jobs', 'Active Jobs' and 'Passive Jobs' ('Passive Jobs'). If the level of job demands is high and job control is low, the quality of the job is a 'High Stress Job' and causes a risk of psychological stress and physical illness. Conversely, if job demands are low and job control is high, then the quality of the job is 'Low Stress Jobs'. If job demands are high and job control is also high, it shows the quality of active work that drives high motivation among employees and learning opportunities are high. Whereas if job demands and job control are low, it is in the passive job quality quadrant.

### Turnover Intention

Mobley's Intermediary Relationship Model (1977) conceptually shows the process of employee's turnover intention. It starts when an employee begins to evaluate his current job whether he is satisfied or not with his job at that time. Then the employee starts thinking about quitting and arbitrating the benefits and costs of leaving the current job such as finding a job in the same salary range, losing health benefits or losing a better bonus. Once the benefit and cost evaluation is done, the employee will begin to intend and search for job alternatives and then evaluate and compare the alternatives with the existing job. Finally, the employee will either intend to quit or stay at their job. The continuation of this turnover intention process will end when the employee takes action to quit or remain in their organization. AlBattat et al. (2013) stated that an employee begins to think about turnover when experiencing dissatisfaction with his job at that time. They agree with the view of Dario (1989) that the method of reducing the turnover rate that an organization needs to do is to improve the recruitment process, evaluate the employment policy to maintain a high value workforce, introduce a reward system for the work done by the employee, a supervisory system to maintain the level supervisor motivation and improving the organization's communication system so that employees need can be fulfilled and their intention can be managed effectively. Mobley's Intermediate Relationship Model (1977) has been the basis for the formation of the Turnover Intention Scale items ('Turnover Intention Scale') developed by Roodt (2004).

### The Relationship between Job Demands and Turnover Intentions

Azharudeen and Arulrajah (2018) conducted a study testing the relationship between emotional demands, job demands, emotional exhaustion and job turnover intentions on 153 machine operators in several manufacturing firms in Sri Lanka. Based on the study, they found that the relationship between the two variables is significant and positive with the Pearson correlation value,  $r = 0.60$  ( $p < 0.05$ ). A study among chinese teachers found that conflicts at workload will directly predict teachers' turnover intentions and that job burnout mediates between multiple job demands and turnover intentions (Zhao, ShouChen, & Hong, 2024). Other study found that job satisfaction, turnover intention and burnout were all strongly inter-correlated and the significant outcome of the job demands including the emotional demands, shiftwork and work-home interference (Scanlan, & Still, 2019).

The finding from previous studies support the relationship between job demand and turnover intention, therefore, the current study will test the hypothesis as follows:

H1 There is a positive and significant influence of job demands on job turnover intentions among verification officers in Metrology company.

## ■ 3.0 METHODOLOGY

The design of this study is cross-sectional, quantitative and causal because it identifies the influence of job demands on job turnover intentions involving as many as 113 verification officers at Metrology company. The study sample was obtained by using a simple random sampling method in order to effectively chosen the samples and the findings can be generalized to the population. The Malaysian version of the Job Content Questionnaire (M-JSQ) by Edimansyah et al. (2006) was used to measure the independent variable which is job demands. It has only 5 items that focus on employees' perceptions of the demands in their jobs. While Version 6 of the Turnover Intention Scale Item (TIS-6) by Bothma and Roodt (2013) was used to measure the dependent variable of the study which is turnover intention. M-JSQ uses 4 scales starting from 1 'strongly disagree' to 4 'strongly agree'. While TIS-6 uses 5 scales starting from 1 'never' to 5 'always'. Both questionnaire has good internal reliability with Cronbach's Alpha value of  $\alpha = 0.79$  for M-JSQ and  $\alpha = 0.89$  for TIS-6. For the purpose of analyzing the data, the 'Statistical Packages for Social Sciences' (SPSS) software was used to conduct the descriptive and inferential analysis in order to achieve all the research objectives.

#### 4.0 RESULTS

The results of the study obtained were analyzed using the descriptive analysis. The current study involved 113 officers in which majority of them are male, age between 30-40 years old, Malay and local employees. It was found that majority of respondents have a moderate level of job demands (56%) but high level of turnover intention (65%). While, some of the respondents have high level of job demand (38%) and moderate level of turnover intention (32%). Only few respondents give low score on both variables.

**Table 1** Level of Job Demand and Turnover Intention

Variables	Level (%)		
	Low	Moderate	High
Job Demand	6	56	38
Turnover Intention	3	32	65

Mean value (Low = 1.00 - 2.33; Moderate = 2.34 - 3.67; High = 3.68 - 5.00)

Further analysis was conducted by using inferential statistics to determine the influence of job demand on turnover intention. It was found that there is a significant and positive relationship between job demands and turnover intention ( $R=0.5$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). The result shows that Job demand predicts the turnover intention by 32% ( $R=0.32$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) among the officers in the Metrology company. It shows that the increase of one unit of job demands will lead to the increase of turnover intention by 1.22 units. Findings show that Hypothesis 1 (H1) is accepted.

**Table 2** The Relationship between Job Demand Level and Turnover Intention

Variables	Turnover Intention			
	R	R <sup>2</sup>	$\beta$	sig
Job Demands	0.50	0.32	1.22	0.02

\*significant level  $p < 0.05$

#### 5.0 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the analysis of the findings of the study, it was found that the high psychological demands of work can cause emotional exhaustion and intention to quit among employees. A short period of time to complete a task causes a pile of new tasks that come to the verification officer which causing overload among them. Verification officers also face problems when given too many task which require more energy and time to complete and also causes their actual task was. In addition, the increase of unrelated tasks also cause the verification officers perceived that their work was highly demanding. Based on the results of the study, it was found that the level of turnover intention among the verification officers was high. It shows that most of verification officers constantly consider quitting their jobs. When there are many tasks that are delayed and cannot be completed within the time period required by the management, there is a tendency for verification officers to look for other job opportunities if they receive the same level of compensation or maybe more.

The results of the Regression analysis that has been carried out on this study show that there is a significant and positive influence of job demands on turnover intentions among the verification officers of Metrology company. It is in line with the study conducted by Azharudeen and Arulrajah (2018) which found that there is a significant and positive cause and effect relationship between job demands and turnover intentions. The higher the work pressure, the more often employees face negative problems such as time pressure, conflicts between roles and work-related tensions that ultimately cause employees to intend to leave the organization. The finding shows that verification officers who feel burdened by additional tasks in addition to their essential tasks also tend to feel frustrated and dissatisfied with their jobs, tend to perceived high job demand in workplace which in turn causing them to frequently think about resigning and tend to find other jobs in future.

From the study, it shows that in order to reduce turnover intentions is to give trust or autonomy to employees in determining their responsibilities, help them to manage their task properly in order to control job demand and workload. The employees should be given tasks according to their ability so that they can efficiently contribute to achieve the goals and targets set by the organization. It will give birth to a sense of belonging to their work and feel the significance of their presence in the organization. In addition, providing non-monetary rewards such as the opportunity to further education or attend high-profile courses not only provides added value to employees, but also increases the credibility of the organization. The improvement of the employee and management feedback mechanism system will improve social support for them and also help reduce the psychological burden of their work. By implementing these recommendations, it can indirectly reduce work pressure and reduce turnover intentions among employees. At the same time, it reduces the risk of losing talent, expertise and work experience needed for the operation of an organization.

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

This study was conducted with the aim of exploring the influence of job demands on turnover intentions among employees, especially verification officers at Metrology company. Despite the moderate level of job demand and high level of turnover intention, it was found that job demands have a moderate and positive influence on turnover intention. The increase of job demand will lead to the increase of turnover intention among employees. The research proves that in order to decrease the turnover intention, the organization should manage their employee's job demand as it remain a significant predictors of turnover intention.

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# SUSTAINABLE HRM: INCORPORATING ESG FOR ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

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## Abstract

Integrating Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles into Human Resource Management (HRM) is essential in today's ever-changing corporate environment. It is not just a strategic decision but also a must for promoting sustainable organizational performance. Corporate responsibility now encompasses more than just financial gains, and the integration of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) concepts with Human Resource Management (HRM) practices is a revolutionary method to attain long-term viability for organizations. This study examines the complex connection between ESG principles and the diverse field of HRM, investigating the complex ways in which this integration can have significant and enduring effects on both the employees and the overall values of the organization. Through the analysis of these relationships, our objective is to reveal the ways in which HRM practices influenced by Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) factors can foster a workforce that is more adaptable, morally upright, and committed, consequently enhancing the organization's long-term prosperity.

**Keywords:** Human Resource Management (HRM), Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG), Integration of ESG

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Organizations are increasingly recognizing the necessity of aligning their operations with sustainable practices in an era marked by heightened awareness of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) challenges. The strategic strategy of integrating ESG concepts into HRM is examined in this article as a means of promoting long-term organizational success.

The incorporation of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) concepts into Human Resource Management (HRM) is not only a strategic decision, but also a prerequisite for promoting sustainable organizational performance in the fast-paced corporate environment of today (Orlitzky et al., 2011). The goal of this essay is to thoroughly examine the mutually beneficial link that exists between ESG principles and HRM practices, revealing the possibility of significant benefits for both workers and the larger organizational ecosystem.

The combination of Human Resource Management (HRM) techniques with Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles is not just a trend, but a transformative approach to organizational sustainability in an era where corporate responsibility extends beyond profit margins (Jones & Felps, 2013). This essay delves deeply into the complex interplay between ESG principles and the diverse field of HRM, revealing the subtle ways in which this integration may have a significant and enduring impact on the workforce as well as the culture of the organization.

Ultimately, this article seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how integrating ESG principles into HRM can lead to sustainable organizational success, fostering a more ethical, engaged, and forward-thinking business environment.

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review section in a journal article is a critical component that offers a comprehensive examination of existing research relevant to the study's topic. Its primary function is to establish the broader context for the research by presenting an overview of the existing body of knowledge in the field. This involves outlining key themes, concepts, and theories related to the research topic, providing readers with the necessary background for understanding the study. Within the literature review, scholars evaluate the current state of the literature to identify gaps, inconsistencies, or unresolved issues. By doing so, they not only contribute to the ongoing scholarly conversation but also set the stage for the study's unique contribution to the field. This section also serves to provide a theoretical framework for the study by integrating relevant theories and concepts from existing literature. It demonstrates how the current research builds upon, extends, or challenges existing theoretical perspectives.

## ESG Principles

### Environmental Responsibility

It is imperative that businesses embrace sustainable resource management, cut back on their carbon footprints, and implement eco-friendly procedures (Aragon-Correa & Sharma, 2003). By putting these policies into practice, businesses support environmental conservation and show that they are dedicated to sustainable growth and resource management (Epstein & Roy, 2003). Businesses that uphold environmental responsibility must be aware of their influence on the environment and take proactive steps to reduce unfavorable effects. Organizations help to preserve ecosystems and natural resources by putting into practice eco-friendly practices including waste reduction, energy conservation, and sustainable resource exploitation (Aragon-Correa & Sharma, 2003). This reduces adverse effects while also improving long-term sustainability and adaptation for the business and the environment (Epstein & Roy, 2003). Businesses need to adopt eco-friendly practices to tackle issues like resource depletion, biodiversity loss, and climate change in the ever changing global landscape of today (Rockström et al., 2009). By using these strategies, organizations can meet stakeholder demands for accountability and transparency while also increasing productivity and cutting costs (Jones & Felps, 2013). Businesses that disregard environmental concerns run the danger of losing customers and coming under government scrutiny; on the other hand, companies that embrace sustainability can become more competitive and draw in environmentally sensitive customers (Hart & Milstein, 2003; Dangelico & Pujari, 2010).

### Social Impact

According to Gardner et al. (2018), organizations are essential in tackling social concerns like diversity and inclusion, employee well-being, and community participation. Organizations support social cohesiveness, economic growth, and the general well-being of society by implementing programs that promote diversity, employee well-being, and community engagement (Porter & Kramer, 2011).

By integrating diversity, inclusion, and equity into their daily operations, organizations can effectively address social challenges (Gardner et al., 2018). Organizations may help their workforce reach its full potential and make a positive impact on a more just and equitable society by fostering diverse and inclusive workplaces (Thomas & Ely, 1996). Prioritizing employee well-being through programs like work-life balance policies, mental health support, and health and wellness initiatives not only increases morale and productivity but also demonstrates a sincere concern for the welfare of employees (Bernthal & Wellins, 2006). Additionally, by engaging in volunteer work, philanthropic activities, and partnerships with local entities, organizations can positively influence their communities, strengthening social cohesion and addressing pressing societal concerns (Porter & Kramer, 2011). Businesses can demonstrate their commitment to CSR and help create a more just and inclusive world by becoming involved with social concerns (Carroll, 1999). Fostering employee well-being and community engagement through HRM strategies.

### Governance Excellence

According to Huang and Wilkinson (2013), strong governance frameworks, moral leadership, and openness in decision-making are crucial for the long-term viability of an organization. Organizations that maintain high standards of governance and ethics guarantee responsibility, honesty, and adherence to moral and legal requirements; this builds stakeholder trust and reduces risks (Kolk & Perego, 2014).

Transparency, moral leadership, and robust governance frameworks are essential for both organizational success and sustainability (O'Leary & Gerard, 2019). By guaranteeing accountability, integrity, and conformity to moral and legal requirements, effective governance builds stakeholder trust and lowers risks (Aguilera et al., 2018). The cornerstone of organizational culture and behavior is laid by ethical leadership, which is defined by honesty and integrity. This inspires stakeholders to trust and remain loyal (Brown & Treviño, 2014). Open and accountable cultures are promoted by transparent decision-making procedures, which include explicit disclosure of objectives and performance metrics (Huang & Wilkinson, 2013). Prioritizing governance excellence helps organizations become more credible and lays the groundwork for sustained growth and sustainability (Kolk & Perego, 2014). By promoting moral conduct, transparency, and accountability, creating clear governance frameworks, and assisting with training and communication initiatives, HRM can help with this (Huang & Wilkinson, 2013; Kolk & Perego, 2014; Brown & Treviño, 2014; Aguilera et al., 2018).

### HRM and Sustainable Workforce Practices

Talent Acquisition and Retention: Human resource management (HRM) is essential to sustainability because it draws, nurtures, and maintains a talented, diversified workforce that is in line with Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles (Gardner et al., 2018). In addition to improving their capacity to adjust to shifting market needs, companies that place a high priority on diversity and inclusivity in their workforce acquisition and retention strategies also make positive contributions to environmental stewardship and societal well-being (Thomas & Ely, 1996).

Employee Welfare Initiatives: Work-life balance, mental health support, and wellness initiatives are essential components of HRM strategies that promote employee well-being (Bernthal & Wellins, 2006). Organizations that put employee well-being first not only boost morale and productivity but also show a dedication to the overall health and happiness of their workforce (Porter & Kramer, 2011). Programs for employee well-being are essential parts of HRM tactics meant to advance workers' mental, emotional, and physical health (Bernthal & Wellins, 2006). HRM helps to create a

pleasant work environment where employees feel appreciated, encouraged, and driven to perform at their best by putting in place wellness initiatives, work-life balance policies, and mental health support programs (Porter & Kramer, 2011). Here's how HRM can carry out these initiatives successfully.

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI):** By guaranteeing equitable opportunities and representation inside the company, HRM is essential in cultivating an inclusive culture (Jones & Felps, 2013). Organizations can foster a work environment where all employees feel appreciated, respected, and empowered to share their distinct viewpoints and abilities by implementing proactive DEI programs (Howard-Grenville et al., 2014). The implementation of Human Resource Management (HRM) is crucial in cultivating an inclusive organizational culture that guarantees equitable opportunities and representation. HRM fosters justice, respect, and a sense of community among workers by putting diversity, equality, and inclusion (DEI) policies into practice. This fosters innovation, creativity, and organizational success.

### **ESG Integration in HRM Policies**

Human Resource Management (HRM) can effectively tackle social challenges like diversity and inclusion in organizations by proactively aligning with Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) goals. Investors assess a company's sustainability and societal effect using a set of criteria known as ESG (Orlitzky et al., 2011). Organizations can promote diversity and inclusion through efforts like equitable promotion policies, inclusive leadership training, and diverse recruiting procedures by incorporating ESG concepts into HRM practices (Jones & Felps, 2013). Furthermore, HRM can work with other departments to create and put into action plans that support an inclusive workplace culture that values every worker, regardless of identity or background (Gardner et al., 2018). Organizations can show their dedication to social responsibility by integrating HRM with ESG ideals.

### **Policy Development**

Organizations devoted to sustainability, social responsibility, and ethical governance must integrate Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles into their Human Resource Management (HRM) policies (Orlitzky et al., 2011). Organizations can match their HRM practices to their broader ESG goals and values by incorporating ESG principles into policies like ethical guidelines, training programs, and performance evaluations (Jones & Felps, 2013). The following is an example of how HRM may incorporate ESG principles into policies:

#### **1. Performance Evaluations:**

**Objective Setting:** HRM can include ESG-related goals in performance goals and assessments for staff members. These could include standards for social impact initiatives, environmental programs, or moral leadership practices.

**Metrics Alignment:** HRM has the ability to match ESG goals and indicators with performance measures. Performance reviews may cover, among other things, an employee's efforts to lower carbon emissions, advance diversity and inclusion, or improve community involvement.

**Feedback Mechanisms:** HRM can set up systems that incentivize managers to comment on how well staff adhere to ESG guidelines. This could entail evaluating how well staff members adhere to company principles, make ethical decisions, and contribute to sustainability initiatives.

#### **2. Training Programs:**

**ESG Education:** HRM can incorporate training on ESG issues and awareness into already-existing programs for employee development. This involves teaching staff members about the company's ESG obligations, the value of sustainability, and their part in accomplishing ESG goals.

**Skill Development:** HRM can provide training courses that concentrate on fostering the growth of abilities pertinent to ESG projects, including ethical decision-making, stakeholder involvement, and sustainability reporting. This aids staff members in comprehending how to include ESG ideas in their regular tasks and decision-making procedures.

**Diversity and Inclusion Training:** To encourage an inclusive and respectful work environment, HRM can offer diversity and inclusion training. This entails advocating actions that support diversity and inclusion, cultivating empathy and understanding, and increasing knowledge of unconscious bias.

#### **3. Ethical Guidelines:**

**Code of Conduct:** HRM is able to create an extensive code of conduct that embodies the company's adherence to Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) values. This entails defining the code's moral principles, beliefs, and expected conduct from employees as well as the penalties for breaking it.

**Whistleblower Protection:** HRM is able to set up systems to shield anyone who expose unethical activity or ESG policy infractions. This entails protecting whistleblowers' privacy, offering avenues for anonymous reporting, and outlawing reprisals.

**Compliance Monitoring:** HRM can put procedures in place to keep an eye on and enforce adherence to ethical standards and ESG regulations. Regular audits, investigations, and reviews may be necessary to find and fix any infractions or departures from set standards.

Human resource management (HRM) makes ensuring that workers are aware of their roles and duties in promoting sustainability, social responsibility, and ethical governance by developing policies that reflect the organization's commitment to ESG values and their influence on day-to-day operations. The organization's reputation, employee engagement, and long-term success are all strengthened by this integration of ESG concepts into HRM policy, which also serves to uphold the organization's values.

### Leadership Development

Putting tactics into action to use HRM procedures to foster a culture of accountability and responsibility. Developing a culture of accountability and responsibility inside firms is a major task for human resource management, or HRM. Human resource management (HRM) may foster an atmosphere in which workers are held accountable for their actions, understand their obligations, and uphold ethical standards by putting strategic HRM strategies into place. The following techniques can be used to use HRM procedures to establish a culture of accountability and responsibility:

1. Clear Expectations are Communicated: HRM makes clear expectations for moral conduct, adherence to rules and laws, and responsibility for both individual and group performance. This entails giving staff members formal policies, educational materials, and frequent updates on the standards and ideals of the company.
2. Performance Management Systems: HRM creates systems for performance management that match the values and goals of the organization with the goals and objectives of the individual. Setting SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) goals, carrying out frequent performance reviews, and offering praise and acknowledgment for accomplishments that show responsibility and moral conduct are some examples of this.
3. Ethical Leadership Development: HRM funds initiatives that help managers and executives build moral leadership abilities and dispositions. This involves mentoring and coaching to reaffirm ethical leadership ideals, as well as training on subjects including integrity, transparency, decision-making, and dispute resolution.
4. Whistleblower Protection: HRM sets up procedures to shield workers who reveal unethical activity or policy infractions. In order to maintain accountability and openness, this entails offering means for confidential reporting, shielding whistleblowers from reprisals, and carrying out in-depth investigations into reported instances.
5. Training and Education: HRM offers all employees, regardless of their position or level within the company, training and education on ethics, compliance, and accountability. This include e-learning courses, workshops, and awareness campaigns on subjects like data privacy, anti-corruption laws, conflicts of interest, and codes of conduct.
6. Incentives and Recognition: HRM gives incentives and recognition to staff members who carry out their jobs with responsibility, honesty, and moral conduct. To support a culture of accountability and responsibility and to reinforce desired behaviors, this includes performance-based rewards, prizes, and public recognition.

HRM establishes an organizational culture where accountability and responsibility are respected, encouraged, and rewarded by putting these principles into practice. This contributes to the long-term profitability and sustainability of the business by strengthening stakeholder trust and credibility as well as promoting ethical behavior and regulatory compliance.

### ■ 3.0 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Organizations can achieve sustainable success by strategically incorporating Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles into Human Resource Management (HRM). As was mentioned, HRM is essential to advancing corporate responsibility and sustainability activities. Organizations can gain a number of advantages by harmonizing HRM processes with ESG objectives, such as better stakeholder interactions, more employee engagement, and better talent attraction and retention. But there are a number of obstacles to this integration, such as lack of knowledge, resource limitations, and opposition to change. Organizational leadership commitment and a strategic approach are needed to overcome these obstacles.

Organizations can apply a number of concrete solutions to effectively traverse these hurdles and fully achieve the promise of incorporating ESG concepts into HRM. First, they should prioritize leadership commitment and stakeholder involvement in order to create cultural transformation and align HRM practices with ESG goals. Second, firms should create customized methods for incorporating ESG considerations into recruitment, training, and development, performance management, and employee engagement efforts. Third, they should invest in measuring and reporting tools to effectively track progress, assess outcomes, and convey the impact of sustainable human resource management strategies.

Looking ahead, this field has a number of areas that warrant more investigation and study. Future research might examine how ESG integration affects financial performance, organizational resilience, and employee well-being. Further research might concentrate on defining best practices in ESG-aligned HRM, advocating for diversity, equity, and inclusion, and analyzing how ESG affects employer reputation and branding. Organizations can continue to use HRM as a strategic tool to drive sustainable organizational success and advance ESG goals by expanding expertise in these areas.

### ■ 4.0 CONCLUSION

Integrating ESG concepts into HRM stands out as a critical tactic for promoting sustainable performance inside firms in the complicated world of today's global issues. HRM is essential in steering organizations toward a future characterized by social impact, environmental stewardship, and excellent governance by cultivating a culture of responsibility, inclusion, and ethical leadership.

The integration of ESG and HRM principles is becoming increasingly important as businesses grapple with the challenges of the twenty-first century. It is a force for sustainable growth. Organizations can achieve a balance between corporate progress and societal well-being by exploring this integration in depth and finding opportunities for innovation, resilience, and ethical leadership.

In the current environment, maintaining success requires not only a business imperative but also a moral need to link ESG principles with HRM. This thorough analysis shows how incorporating ESG concepts into HRM procedures not only promotes organizational growth but also establishes companies as moral stewards that favorably impact society well-being. Organizations that adopt this revolutionary strategy manage complexity, encourage innovation, and create a legacy of long-term success that transcends financial advantages.

This comprehensive analysis highlights how integrating ESG principles with HRM practices has the potential to be transformed. Organizations handle the complexities of the modern corporate climate while creating a lasting legacy marked by innovation, moral leadership, and societal well-being by carefully examining these intersections. The incorporation of ESG into HRM is a commitment to a future where success is assessed not only in monetary terms but also in terms of its good influence on the planet we live in, as firms embark on this transformed journey.

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# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEARNING ATTITUDE AND LEARNING PERFORMANCE AMONG EMPLOYEES IN ONLINE TRAINING

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## Abstract

In today's era of rapidly changing technology, the field of education is an important example of where technology is leading the way and the hallmark of educational technology is online learning, however, when employees participate in online training, their attitude toward learning can have a significant impact on learning performance. For example, employees who participate in online training and have a negative attitude toward learning may not achieve the desired results, whereas employees who have a positive attitude toward learning may achieve the desired training objectives and improve their skills. The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between employees' attitudes toward learning and their learning performance in online training. Then, the impact of learning attitudes toward employees' learning performance is also being investigated. The quantitative research method was used in this study. Through implementing convenience sampling, the questionnaires were sent by mail to the managers of the selected target organizations, who in turn distributed the questionnaires to the employees. The data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive analysis including percentage mean scores and standard deviation was used for data analysis. The Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was performed to identify the relationship between the variables. The results of the study showed that there is a positive correlation between employees' attitudes toward learning and their academic performance in online training. On top of that, learning attitudes also have an impact on employee learning performance. It is hoped that this study will be useful to researchers conducting future studies in this area.

*Keywords:* Learning Attitude, Learning Performance, Online Training

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

As technology continues to advance and develop, more and more new technologies are beginning to be used in everyday life, as was also demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many organizations used online training to train their employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. In today's era of rapidly changing technology, the field of education is an important example of where technology is leading the way and the hallmark of educational technology is online learning, however, when employees participate in online training, their attitude toward learning can have a significant impact on learning performance (Lee et al., 2021). For example, employees who participate in online training and have a negative attitude toward learning may not achieve the desired results, whereas employees who have a positive attitude toward learning may achieve the desired training objectives and improve their personal skills (Maurer, 2002).

While online training provides convenience to employees, employees are free to choose the medium and location. But the most important thing is the learning attitude of employees. Only a positive learning attitude can maximize the benefits of online training (Sun et al., 2008). The learning attitude of participating in online training will greatly affect the learning performance of employees (Zhu et al., 2020). According to previous research, it can be concluded that when employees have a positive learning attitude and support change during training, the employees learn far more knowledge and skills in training than employees who participate in training with a negative attitude (Elnaga & Imran, 2013). However, these findings may vary due to several factors, such as employees' inability to take training seriously, or a negative attitude towards learning. These will cause the training results to fail to output normally (Grossman & Salas, 2011).

The use of online training by organizations, where employees are free to choose when and where to attend training, greatly reduces the investment in training costs for both the organization and the individual (Peralta, 2022). The employee's attitude toward learning in online training is crucial for both the individual and the organization, which is related to the success of the individual or the organization regarding this online training. Meanwhile, there is a close relationship between employees' learning attitudes and learning performance in online training. Positive or negative attitudes toward learning produce a relationship with learning performance (Mensah et al., 2013).

Therefore, online training is a double-edged sword. Online training can greatly facilitate employees' participation in training and reduce the company's expenditure on training (Chirikov et al., 2020). However, when employees develop a negative attitude toward online training, it may directly affect learning performance (Zhu et al., 2020). Hence, it is significant to about the relationship between learning attitudes and learning performance in online training. On top of that, it is also important to find out the impact of positive and negative learning attitude toward employee learning performance.

#### **Learning Attitude**

Learning attitude is one of the important factors for employees in the process of attending training and attitude toward learning can have a direct impact on employees (Zubaidah et al., 2021). A positive attitude toward learning may increase the efficiency of learning and also increase the certainty of learning performance (Chang, 2007). However, a negative attitude toward learning may directly affect training outcomes for individuals and organizations (Navimipour & Zareie, 2015).

#### **Learning Performance**

According to Kraiger et al. (1993) formulation, learning performance is the ability of an individual to apply newly acquired knowledge or skills. Learning performance is the achievement of learning relevant knowledge or skills and can objectively represent the learning outcomes of an individual (Lipsey et al., 2017). In addition, learning performance involves outcome expectations, which are personal beliefs about an action and the achievement of a particular effect or goal (Lippke, 2020)

### **2.0 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between employee learning attitudes and learning performance in online training. This study also determines the level of the independent variable in the study, which is learning attitude, and the dependent variable which is learning performance. Then, this study also investigate the impact of positive and negative learning attitude towards the employee learning performance in online training.

### **3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Learning Attitude**

Learning attitudes consist of three psychological components: cognitive, affective, and behavioral (Sherif & Hovland, 1961). Cognition refers to an employee's evaluation and understanding of training programs and expectations. Affect, on the other hand, represents employees' emotions and feedback about the content of the training while participating in the online training and is the core of learning attitudes. In addition, the behavioral component refers to employees' reactions and behavioral tendencies toward online training.

Furthermore, learning attitudes toward is categorized into negative and positive, positive attitude toward learning will bring high level of learning performance to employees and on the contrary negative attitude toward learning will bring a low level of learning performance to employees (Elnaga & Imran, 2013).

#### **Theory of Learning Attitude**

Self-perception theory was originally proposed by Bem (1972). Self-perception theory proposes that the way individuals explain their behavior is the same as the way others explain the behavior of others, and that each individual is likely to be influenced by the social environment rather than by personal will. For example, employees have a great interest in online training because it always allows them to learn new knowledge and skills while being recognized by their colleagues (Inzer & Crawford, 2005). According to Farahnak et al. (2020), employees' perceptions of their attitudes toward learning while participating in online training is how employees think about and explain their attitudes toward learning in a way that other people may not be able to understand their own attitudes toward learning.

In addition, self-perception theory assumes that a person takes his or her behavior as data and makes judgments accordingly, and colleagues have described how people perceive and interpret themselves, explaining what they do about their daily behavior (Petty & Briñol, 2010). In conclusion, self-perception theory is closely related to learning attitudes which presents how people feel and behave about the learning.

#### **Learning Performance**

Soderstrom (2015) proposed a definition of learning performance as a relatively permanent change in knowledge or behavior that supports retention and transfer. Learning performance can be defined as the transformation of an individual's competencies, skills, and knowledge demonstrated during the learning process (Zimmerman, 2013). However, learning performance can lead to different outcomes and standards depending on the training. Learning performance is not limited to an employee's score in online training but can also be the skills and transfer of knowledge and the ability to think creatively that an employee learns in online training (McDonald, 2021).

**Theory of Learning Performance (Expectancy Theory)**

Vroom (1964) proposed the Expectancy Theory. Expectancy Theory suggests that a person acts in a certain way because they are motivated to choose a particular behavior and expect the result of the chosen behavior. However, the core of the theory is the cognitive process of how an individual deals with different motivational factors and the outcome is not the only factor that determines the behavioral pattern. The Expectancy Theory for learning performance is that the employee believes that there is a positive correlation between effort and performance and that a high level of performance will result in a desirable reward for the employee.

In addition, the Expectancy Theory can fulfill the expectations of employees to participate in online training, which will lead to the desired results of their efforts (Jalagat, 2016). When employees perceive that the training does not fulfill their needs, employees' training expectations are rapidly reduced and ultimately lead to low levels of learning performance or abandonment of participation in online training (Paillé & Valéau, 2021).

**Learning Attitude and Learning Performance**

Based on the results of the literature review, Cabrera & Estacio (2022) have concluded from the findings that learning attitudes have a substantial impact on learning performance. In addition, Velnampy (2008) has shown that a positive learning attitude will have a positive and significant effect on learning performance. Miradipta (2013) has shown that the learning attitude have effect on learning performance. Besides, Hilao & Wichadee (2017) demonstrated a positive correlation between learning attitude and learning performance at medium level. In addition, Truitt's (2011) experiment investigated the relationship between employees' learning attitude toward training and job proficiency in three organizations, Maryland, Delaware and Arizona, to determine the impact of learning attitude on learning performance. The results of this study were different from those of Velnampy (2008). The results of the latter study were found that attitude toward learning does have a direct effect on learning performance and that the two influence each other. However, they did not investigate the influence of positive and negative learning attitudes toward learning performance.

**Research Framework**

The results of previous studies have helped researchers to develop a research framework.

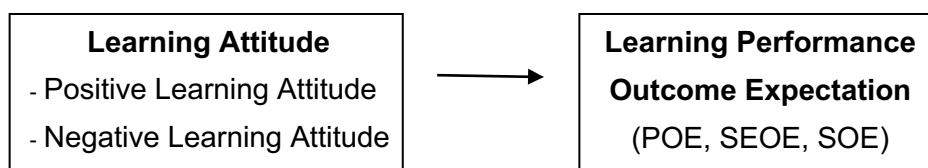


Figure 1 Research Framework

The research framework was created to better demonstrate the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Figure 1 depicts the research framework with an independent variable learning attitude and a dependent variable learning performance. The arrows in the frame indicate the association between learning attitudes and learning performance. The association between learning attitude and learning performance is complex and multifaceted. The "Self-Perception Theory" and "Expectancy Theory " used in this study can provide explanations for the relationship between the two variables from different angles. Self-perception theory holds that when employees perform well at work, they develop positive attitudes about their abilities and skills. Conversely, failure can develop negative attitudes or self-doubt (Munyon et al., 2010). Expectancy Theory believes that employees will make certain expectation judgments on training and judge whether the training results can meet their expectations. Employees may use their own experience to perceive the difficulty of training. If the difficulty exceeds the employee's ability, they may be lowering expectations for training or refusing to attend training (Mathieu & Martineau, 2014). Therefore, the association between both variables is further investigated in this study.

■ **4.0 METHODOLOGY**

**Research Design**

This study used quantitative research to explore the link between the independent variable (learning attitudes) and the dependent variable (learning performance). This study used a descriptive study to describe the demographic profile of respondents and to measure the level of the independent variable as well as the dependent variable. In addition, a correlational study will be used in this study as the link between the dependent and independent variables will also be examined, i.e., attitude toward learning and learning performance.

**Research Population and Sample**

The target population of this study is the employees of Shaanxi Yun Chuang Sheng Shi Network Co, Ltd, it is a big data cloud storage as the main business enterprise. The researcher used Krejcie & Morgan's (1970) sampling table to determine the sample size. The total number of employees of Shaanxi Yun Chuang Sheng Shi Network Co., Ltd is 196, and the researcher determined the sample size based on Krejcie & Morgan's (1970) Sampling table. sampling table to determine



the sample size of 131 employees. In addition, this study utilized a non-probability sampling design. The researcher chose convenience sampling as the method of selecting respondents.

### Research Instruments

The questionnaire for this study was adapted from Liaw (2007) Learning Attitude Scale for the independent variables and Niederhauser & Perkmen (2010) Learning Performance Scale for the dependent variables. Both questionnaires use the 5-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was divided into five sections: Section A was Demographic Profile of Respondents, Section B was Learning Attitude, Section C was Employee Learning Performance: Performance Outcome Expectations (POE), Section D is Employee Learning Performance: Self-evaluative Performance Outcome Expectations (SEOE), Section E is Employee Learning Performance: Social Outcome Expectations (SOE). Section A has 4 items including Gender, Age, Academic Qualification, and Number of training attended. Section B consists of 14 items with code PLA1 and PLA2 to differentiate between positive and negative attitudes toward learning. Section C, Section D and Section E consist of 3 different items in the questionnaire.

### Data Analysis

Descriptive and inferential analysis were used in this study using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Then, descriptive analyses including percentage, mean and standard deviation were conducted for the Demographic Profile of Respondents, Learning Attitude Level, and Learning Performance Level, respectively, and the results of the analyses are summarized. After that, this study used Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient analysis to determine the relationship between employees' learning attitudes and learning performance in online training. Lastly, linear regression was conducted to determine the impact of learning attitudes on learning performance.

## 5.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS

### Level of Learning Attitude

The first objective of this study was to identify the level of employee learning attitude in online training. The data analysis of the perceived level of employee attitudes toward learning in online training was based on two dimensions: positive and negative attitudes toward learning. Table 1 describes the level of employee Positive Learning Attitude in online training. Overall, the level of positive employee learning attitude in online training reached a medium level with a mean score of 3.53 and a standard deviation of 1.303. This data indicates that the respondents showed some positive learning attitudes in online training. Meanwhile, employees' negative learning attitudes in online training reached the medium level with a mean score of 3.45 and a standard deviation of 0.969. This data indicates that the respondents showed some negative attitudes toward learning in online training. It shows that most of the respondents showed a medium level of negative learning attitudes in online training.

**Table 1** Level of Positive and Negative Learning Attitude among employees

Variable and Dimension	Findings	Level
Positive Learning Attitude	Mean: 3.53	Medium
	SD: 0.979	
Negative Learning Attitude	Mean: 3.45	Medium
	SD: 0.964	

### Level of Learning Performance

The second objective of this study was to determine the level of employees' attitudes toward learning in online training. The data analysis of employees' perceived level of learning performance in online training was based on three dimensions: performance outcome expectations (POE), Self-evaluative performance outcome expectations (SEOE) and Social Performance outcome expectations (POE), Self-evaluative performance outcome expectations (SEOE) and Social outcome expectations (SOE).

Table 2 describes the level of employee Learning Performance: Performance Outcome Expectations (POE), Self-evaluative Performance Outcome Expectations (SEOE) and Social Outcome Expectations (SOE). Overall, the level of employee positive attitude toward learning in online training is medium with a mean score of 3.45 and a standard deviation of 1.285. These data indicate that there is some average level of Performance Outcome Expectations (POE), but also some variation. This may indicate that there is some expectation of learning performance, but some variation or uncertainty between individuals.

On the other hand, the overall level of employee Learning Performance: Self-evaluative Performance Outcome Expectations (SEOE) for online training is at the medium level, with a mean score of 3.47 and a standard deviation of 1.282. These data indicate that there is some average level of Self-evaluative Performance Outcome Expectations (SEOE) with some variation. This could mean that individuals have some expectations of their learning outcomes, but there is some variation or uncertainty between individuals.

Lastly, the overall level of employee Learning Performance: Social Outcome Expectations (SOE) for online training is also medium, with a mean score of 3.51 and a standard deviation of 1.29. This data suggests that there is some average level of social expectations for learning performance with some variation. This may indicate that individuals are focusing

on social expectations in their training, which may, but are not limited to, working with others, gaining recognition, or building good relationships. The medium level may reflect a balance of social expectations, but the exact interpretation may need to take into account other factors, such as cultural background, learning environment, and so on.

**Table 2** Level of employees' Learning Performance

Variable and Dimension	Findings	Level
Learning Performance:	Mean: 3.45	Medium
Performance Outcome Expectations (POE)	SD: 1.028	
Learning Performance:	Mean: 3.47	Medium
Self-evaluative Performance Outcome Expectations (SEOE)	SD: 1.067	
Learning Performance:	Mean:3.51	Medium
Social Outcome Expectations (SOE)	SD:1.056	

**Relationship between Learning Attitude and Learning Performance**

According to the results shown in Table 3, the result of Spearman correlation analysis between learning attitude and learning performance shows that there is a significant relationship between the two, and the correlation is 0.476. This value indicates that there is a medium positive correlation between the two variables of learning attitude and learning performance. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between learning attitude and learning performance among employees in online training.

**Table 3** Coefficient Correlation between Learning Attitude and Learning Performance

		Learning Attitude	Learning Performance
Spearman's rho	Learning Attitude	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<0.001
		N	131
	Learning Performance	Correlation Coefficient	0.476**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001
		N	131

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

**Impact of learning attitude towards learning performance in online training**

Table 4 presents a model summary of the linear regression analysis of employee learning attitudes and learning performance in online training. The model was chosen because both learning attitudes and learning performance were listed among the variables in the input table at p<0.05 and no deletion of any variable was recommended. The R-values in the model indicate that the variables are correlated, with an overall correlation of r=0.935<sup>a</sup> (p>0.05). Also, the R<sup>2</sup>=0.874 value of the model indicates that 87.4% of the changes in employees' learning performance in online training are caused by changes in learning attitudes.

**Table 4** Model Summary<sup>b</sup>

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.935 <sup>a</sup>	0.874	0.873	3.09737

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Positive Learning Attitude, Negative Learning Attitude
- b. Dependent Variable: Learning Performance

In addition, Table 5 presents the results of the coefficients of the linear regression analysis of employees' learning attitudes and learning performance in online training. The results show that the t test for both learning attitude and learning performance is significant at p<0.05. Using the standard equation for linear regression, i.e., Y=A+BX. Therefore, based on the results of this study the standard regression equation can be derived as follows:

$$Learning\ Performance = 1.207 + 0.616\ Learning\ Attitude$$

The above equation explains the exact extent to which employee learning attitudes influence learning performance in online training, where for Learning Performance to increase by 1 unit, Learning Attitude needs to change by 0.616 units.

**Table 5** Coefficient results for linear regression analysis of learning attitude towards learning performance in online training

		Coefficients <sup>a</sup>				
Model		Unstandardized B	Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	sig.
1	(Constant)	1.207	1.041		1.159	0.249
	Learning Attitude	0.616	0.021	0.935	29.899	<0.001

a. Dependent Variable: Learning Performance

According to the results of linear regression analysis, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between learning attitude and learning performance. In addition, according to the results of linear regression analysis, it is found that the Unstandardized B value of Learning Attitude is 0.616. Therefore, we can infer that learning attitude has a great impact on learning performance.

## 6.0 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

### Level of Learning Attitude

The results of this objective proved that the overall descriptive statistics of the perceived level of employees' attitudes toward learning in online training are at a medium level. This is also reflecting the results of the positive attitude to learning, which is also at a medium level. This result may be related to the level of employees' background knowledge about online training (Zhu et al., 2020). Employees should especially think about the purpose and expectations of online training, as evidenced by Dong et al.'s (2023) study, which also proved that employees should have a positive learning attitude toward online training and think positively about the purpose of online training and what can be achieved through the training.

According to the results of research and descriptive statistics of negative learning attitudes, it is also at a medium level. This indicates a lack of motivation of employees to participate in online training, which is supported by Wijaya et al. (2020), who found that when ICT (Information and Communication Technology) is used too infrequently in online training will leads to a lack of motivation of employees to participate in online training and that there is a need to incentivize and encourage employees to increase their attitude. There is a need to motivate and encourage employees to increase their interest in online training. In addition, Girdwichai & Sriviboon (2020) conducted the same study and found that when respondents had a positive attitude toward learning, they were motivated to participate in online training and vice versa.

### Level of Learning Performance

The results of the second objective proved that the overall descriptive statistics of employees' learning performance in online training were at a medium level. According to the findings and descriptive statistics of Performance Outcome Expectations (POE), the level is at a medium level. Hashem et al. (2022) found similar findings and stated that this may be related to the environment provided by the organization, which should provide a good working environment and maintain a high level of respect for the employees. And, Yang's (2021) study also found that when employees' job satisfaction increases, productivity also increases as a result.

Next, the findings and descriptive statistics of Self-evaluative Performance Outcome Expectations (SEOE) showed that the level of this dimension is also at a medium level. According to Chanana & Sangeeta's (2021) research findings and support, organizations that add more interest components to online training and make the training consistently follow the interests of the employees will result in a richer online training experience and increased employee interest. Furthermore, Ma et al.'s (2023) study found that when more technology is used in online training, such as the use of VR/AR technology, this makes the experience of attending online training more fulfilling and interesting for the employees, and consequently increases employee satisfaction. To add, Yang's (2021) study also found that when employees' job satisfaction increases, productivity also increases as a result.

On the other hand, according to the findings and descriptive statistics of Social Outcome Expectations (SOE), it remains at a medium level. This result is consistent with the finding of Martins et al. (2019) that some of the training strategies and methods of online training will involve Social Outcome Expectations (SOE), where employees can fully demonstrate their competencies and be appreciated by their coworkers and leaders. Employees are more interested in participating in online training when they believe that online training can quickly improve their social skills (Liu, 2021).

### Relationship between Learning Attitude and Learning Performance

The results of Spearman's rank correlation coefficient analysis in this study indicate that there is a correlation between employees' attitudes toward learning and learning performance in online training and this result is supported by Elfaki et al. (2019).

In addition, Liu et al. (2022) showed that attitude toward learning in online training has a significant relationship with learning performance, and a negative attitude toward learning leads to a low level of learning performance. In addition, the environment of online training can lead to a relationship between learning attitude and learning performance. Khalid & Abdul Wahab (2021) conducted a similar study and proved that employees' learning attitudes in online training do have an impact on learning performance and some employees may have negative learning attitudes because online training does not allow them to communicate with the instructor in a timely and face-to-face manner.

Similarly, this result is also supported by Zhu et al. (2020), whose study proved that there is a relationship between employees' attitudes toward learning and learning performance in online training, and that positive attitudes toward learning will lead to a high level of learning performance during online training. Moreover, employees tend to be interested in online training when they have higher expectations for the results of online training and want to improve themselves through online training. This reflects the Expectancy Theory which it fulfill the expectations of employees to participate in online training, which also leads to better learning performance (Jalagat, 2016).

#### **Impact of learning attitude towards learning performance in online training**

The fourth objective of this study is to investigate the impact of learning attitudes towards learning performance in online training. The results of the study showed that employees' attitudes towards learning in online training do have an impact on learning performance.

This finding is supported by Elfaki et al. (2019), where they found that online training significantly improves employees' attitudes towards learning. Similar to findings by Herguner et al. (2020), who stated that learning attitudes can influence learning performance, while low levels of learning performance are associated with negative learning attitudes. This aligns with the self-perception theory which assumes that when an employee shows negative or positive attitude, it will reflect on how they behave and feel about the learning process which further gives implications to their learning performance.

To add, the findings for this study were also supported by Tan et al. (2021). They pointed out that timely and effective adjustment of learning attitudes and strategies as well as greater efforts in time management and learning environment tend to have a good impact on learning performance and consequently result in high levels of learning performance. Moreover, the mean score was also at medium level in their study. On the other hand, Sinaga & Pustika's (2021) study similarly supports the findings that attitude towards learning is an important consideration that motivates learning performance in online training. Thus, the study proved that learning attitude affects learning performance.

#### **Recommendations**

Future researchers may consider using a different research methodology when conducting similar studies; this study only used quantitative research, which may have prevented the researcher from focusing on some additional information beyond the topic of this study. It is recommended that future researchers combine quantitative and qualitative data collection methods when conducting research. On the one hand, data information can be collected quickly, and at the same time, respondents' information about the research topic can be obtained more comprehensively. Finally, it is recommended that future researchers conducting similar studies choose larger target organizations whenever possible, which will lead to more accurate data collection and thus make the study more credible and authoritative.

### **7.0 CONCLUSION**

In summary, all three objectives of this study were met. The focus of this study was to explore the relationship between employees' learning attitudes and learning performance in online training, and the results showed that there is a strong relationship between learning attitudes and learning performance. It is also found that learning attitudes have influence on employees' learning performance. Therefore, it is suggested to the organizational leaders to set clear goals and tasks for online training when planning online training, and provide clear evaluation criteria and desirable reward policies to motivate employees to participate in online training. Different types of online training should be offered to employees in different positions to meet their different training needs and preferences and to increase their experience and satisfaction with the training. Hence, organizations need to invest more in developing positive attitudes toward online training to improve employees' learning performance in online training and to ensure the success of the training. In addition, organizational leaders should strengthen the interaction between online training and society, promote cooperation and communication among employees, enhance employees' sense of belonging and honor, and create a more excellent training and working environment for employees.

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# UNLOCKING EMPLOYEE POTENTIAL: THE INTERPLAY OF AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP, WORK MEANINGFULNESS, WORK ENGAGEMENT, AND REFERENT POWER IN PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT

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## Abstract

The importance of psychological empowerment in the workplace cannot be overstated. Psychological empowerment is crucial in fostering employee motivation, well-being, and productivity. Therefore, organizations need to understand the factors influencing psychological empowerment, such as authentic leadership, work meaningfulness, and work engagement. This study aims to explore the relationship between authentic leadership, work meaningfulness, work engagement, and psychological empowerment, explicitly focusing on the moderating role of referent power. A quantitative survey was conducted on 141 employees from Indonesian State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) using the Innovative Work Behaviour Scale, Authentic Leadership questionnaire, Utrecht Work Engagement Scale, Work Meaningfulness Scale, and Personal Power Scale. Data was collected through Google Forms, and the analysis utilized partial least squares. The results indicated that work meaningfulness acts as a mediator between authentic leadership and psychological empowerment. Additionally, the study found that work engagement does not mediate the relationship, except when considering referent power as a moderator. This underscores the significant role of referent power in the relationship between work engagement and psychological empowerment. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the intricate interplay among authentic leadership, work meaningfulness, work engagement, and psychological empowerment, mainly when moderated by referent power. The research provides valuable insights for organizations seeking to enhance employee psychological empowerment.

**Keywords:** Authentic leadership, psychological empowerment, referent power, work engagement, work meaningfulness

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In today's fast-paced and competitive work environments, there is a growing emphasis on psychological empowerment (PE) in organizational behaviour research. This increased focus is due to the significant influence of PE on employee drive, well-being, and overall performance (Llorente-Alonso et al., 2024). PE comprises four key elements: competence, impact, meaning, and self-determination (Spreitzer, 1995). It is closely linked to proactive behaviour, high motivation, and work dedication among employees, demonstrating individuals' belief in their abilities, autonomy in decision-making, and impact within their work environment (Al Otaibi et al., 2023; Al-Hussein, 2020).

Moreover, PE is acknowledged as a motivational state that promotes proactive work behaviour and is associated with increased employee creativity and innovation (Spreitzer, 1996). Previous research has established significant associations between PE, job demands, resources (Gillet et al., 2024), authentic leadership (Uluturk et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2021), and employee mental health (Zareiyan et al., 2024). Therefore, the importance of PE in organizational settings needs to be recognized.

In this context, authentic leadership (AL), work meaningfulness (WM), work engagement (WE), and referent power (RP) have emerged as crucial factors influencing PE. AL, characterized by sincerity, transparency, and ethical conduct, has been connected to improved PE (Uluturk et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2021). WM, which relates to the significance and value employees attribute to their work, has also been identified as a significant driver of PE. Similarly, WE, defined as vigour, dedication, and absorption at work (Bakker & Leiter, 2010), has demonstrated a strong relationship with PE. Understanding these dynamics is critical as it can offer valuable practical implications for organizations aiming to enhance their employees' PE, motivation, and productivity, particularly within RP.

Furthermore, the moderating role of RP in shaping PE within the specific context of Indonesia's State-Owned Enterprises is an essential area of study. By examining the interaction of these factors, this study seeks to provide practical insights to organizations looking to nurture PE, motivation, and productivity among their employees. This research is poised to substantially contribute to the global conversation on organizational behaviour and leadership and offers valuable implications for organizations worldwide.

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

### ***Authentic leadership and psychological empowerment***

Authentic Leadership (AL) has been a focal point in organizational psychology studies, emphasizing self-awareness, transparency, fairness, and a solid moral foundation. The literature suggests that AL is closely associated with Psychological Empowerment (PE). Studies by Farrukh et al. (2019) and Sahraei Beiranvand et al. (2021) demonstrate the impact of leadership style on PE, while research by Dirik and Intepeler (2024) has specifically examined the influence of AL on nurse PE. This association is attributed to the work environment cultivated by authentic leaders, which encourages employee autonomy, participation in decision-making, shared objectives and vision, and exemplary behaviour. These factors contribute to trust, respect, and a cohesive atmosphere among employees, ultimately leading to heightened levels of PE.

Furthermore, prior research underscores the role of PE as a mediator in the relationship between leadership and behavioural outcomes (Khan, 2020; Zhang et al., 2022) as well as organizational success (Khattak et al., 2022). The findings from the literature provide a strong foundation for the current study's examination of the influence of authentic leadership on enhancing PE in organizational contexts. This is further supported by the idea that PE acts as a mediator between leadership and behavioural outcomes, signifying AL as a significant precursor to PE (Wang et al., 2021). Based on the literature reviewed, hypothesis 1 of this study posits that AL significantly impacts PE.

### ***Work meaningfulness mediate the authentic leadership and psychological empowerment***

The literature demonstrates the potential for Authentic Leadership (AL) to enhance Work Meaningfulness (WM) (Chaudhary, 2021; Silva et al., 2023). This enhancement of WM can mediate the relationship between situational factors and work effort (Peng et al., 2024). In addition, the literature emphasises the significance of meaningful work outcomes in both work-related and personal aspects (Chaolertseree & Taephant, 2020). This highlights the importance of having meaning at work, as Blustein et al. (2023) emphasised, with profound implications for individuals, organisations, and society.

Recognising the importance of meaning at work underscores the urgency of PE in the workplace. It fosters an environment where employees feel a sense of meaning, motivation, and empowerment. This study aims to contribute to understanding AL and PE and offer practical insights for organisational behaviour and leadership research. Focusing on WM's mediating role, the study seeks to build on prior research and provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between AL and PE. Furthermore, WM should be posited as a mediator in the relationship between AL and PE due to its critical role in translating AL's influence into employees' sense of empowerment. Emphasising WM as a mediator will enrich the current understanding of how leadership practices contribute to employees' psychological well-being and motivation in the workplace. Thus, this study proposes hypothesis 2: WM mediates the relationship between AL and PE.

### ***Work engagement mediate authentic leadership and psychological empowerment***

According to research in organizational psychology, authentic leadership (AL) plays a crucial role in promoting work engagement (WE) (Farid et al., 2022; Manuati Dewi et al., 2023; Silva et al., 2023), which, in turn, affects psychological empowerment (PE). Authentic leaders who exhibit transparency, moral reasoning, and ethical decision-making can create an environment that encourages employee enthusiasm and dedication. Moreover, work engagement (WE) may act as a mediator between authentic leadership (AL) and psychological empowerment (PE). Some studies indicate that WE lead to PE (Kumar & B., 2022; Rahi, 2023), while others suggest a reverse causal relationship (Blaique et al., 2023; Hameli et al., 2023; Wen et al., 2023). However, some researchers view PE as an outcome of previous engagement experiences (Kumar & B., 2022).

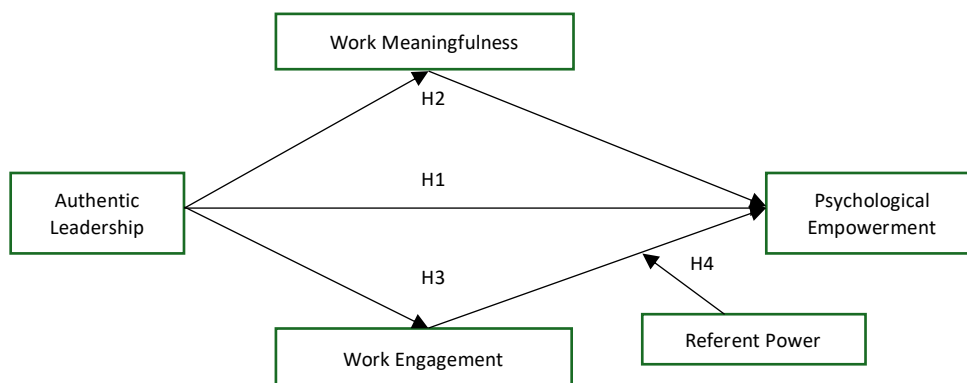
In conclusion, work engagement (WE) mediates between AL and PE. By promoting work engagement, authentic leaders enhance individual empowerment and contribute to higher levels of performance and well-being among employees (Çelik et al., 2023). Therefore, it is hypothesized that work engagement (WE) mediates the relationship between AL and PE, highlighting the critical role of AL in fostering employee PE.

### ***Referent power moderate the relationship between work engagement and psychological empowerment***

The relationship between work engagement (WE) and psychological empowerment (PE) in the organizational psychology literature has received attention. The traditional view is that psychological empowerment influences work engagement, but recent research suggests a bidirectional relationship. Warr's vitamin model emphasizes job characteristics such as demands, autonomy, and social support, which impact indicators of employee well-being (Borkowska & Czerw, 2022). Research also shows that employees who have high engagement tend to feel more psychologically empowered, especially in terms of autonomy, competence, and impact (Kumar & B., 2022).

Leader referent power (RP) has been identified as an essential factor in shaping employees' experiences and perceptions in the workplace, as leaders with high RP can effectively encourage psychological empowerment among subordinates (Robbins & Judge, 2013). They are considering the influence of RP leaders as moderators, which provides valuable insights for leadership development and organizational strategy. (Zigarmi et al., 2015) convey that RP can influence feelings (affects) and shape positive emotions of employees at work so that individuals become more involved in efforts to complete work tasks with a high level of energy and are more involved in activities that help the team and organization to achieve goals (Hou et al., 2021). The hypothesis is that work engagement positively affects psychological empowerment, and leader RP moderates this relationship, with the positive association strengthening as the level of leader RP increases.

Figure 1. Theoretical Model



3.0 METHODOLOGY

The research focuses on three variables: psychological empowerment (dependent variable) and authentic leadership (independent variable), with work engagement and work meaningfulness as mediator variables and referent power as the moderator variable. This study used a quantitative methodology with survey methods to gather numerical descriptions of a population's trends, attitudes, or opinions (Creswell, 2024). This research employed a non-random sampling method, precisely the convenience sampling technique. The data was gathered by administering surveys using a Likert scale online through a Google form.

The study involved 141 employees from Indonesian State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs). The study conducted at Gadjah Mada University was approved by the Faculty of Psychology Ethics Committee under reference number 7520/UN1/FPSi.1.3/SD/PT.01.04/2022 on September 28th, 2022. Participants were required to provide informed consent via a Google form and were informed of their rights to withdraw or decline to answer specific questions. Survey instruments such as the Innovative Work Behaviour Scale, Authentic Leadership questionnaire, Utrecht Work Engagement Scale, Work Meaningfulness Scale, and Personal Power Scale were used to collect comprehensive data. Respondents used a Likert scale with four response options, with options ranging from 1 to 4 (1 = strongly disagree, 4 = strongly agree). Data collection was conducted using Google Forms, and the subsequent analysis was performed using partial least squares, a statistical method known for handling complex models and small sample sizes well (Hair et al., 2019), to gain comprehensive insights into the survey results.

4.0 RESULTS

Measurement Model

The validity and reliability testing for the reflective measurement model construct was conducted after the removal of items AL02, AL09, AL16, PE8, PE9, and WM3, which exhibited an outer loading of less than 0.7 and were subsequently deleted (Hair et al., 2019). The AVE value must exceed 0.5 (Hair et al., 2019). The reliability values for the three variables are detailed in Table 1, demonstrating excellence and soundness, with the AVE surpassing 0.5. Furthermore, there are no concerns regarding discriminant validity, as evidenced by the AVE in the construct showing higher roots than the correlation of the construct with other latent variables, indicating that each latent model concept differs from the other variables. Lastly, the cross-loading test must reveal higher indicator values for each construct than the indicators of other constructs (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

Table 1. Construct Reliability and validity

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	√AVE	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Authentic Leadership	0,969	0,973	0,857	0,734
Psychological Empowerment	0,934	0,940	0,792	0,627
Referent Power	0,971	0,994	0,947	0,896
Work Engagement	0,958	0,958	0,865	0,749
Work Meaningfulness	0,950	0,952	0,845	0,714

Reliability value (Acceptable = 0,6 - <0,7; Good = 0,7 – 0,8; Excellent = >0,8) (Hair et al., 2019)

Structure Model Evaluation

Coefficient of determination that was used to evaluate the inner model and found that the value of R square in this study are 0,504, 0,117, and 0,282 for PE, WM, and WE, respectively. The result for Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) shows there is no issue on collinearity.

Table 1 displays the results show that Hypothesis 1 was supported through simple linear regression analysis, indicating a significant influence of AL on PE ( $\beta = 0.301$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). Similarly, Hypothesis 2 was supported through mediation regression analysis, revealing a mediating effect of WM on the relationship between AL and PE ( $\beta = 0.216$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). However, Hypothesis 3 was not supported through mediation regression analysis, indicating no significant mediating effect of WE on the relationship between AL and PE ( $\beta = 0.079$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ). Lastly, Hypothesis 4 was supported through moderating regression analysis, demonstrating a moderating effect of WE on PE ( $\beta = 0.173$ ;  $p$



<0.01). As a model, this research framework is fit with an SRMR value of 0.06 (less than 0.08).

Table 2. Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis	Path	Original sample	t- statistics	p-values	Result
H1	Authentic Leadership -> Psychological Empowerment	0,301	2,359	0,018	Accepted
H2	Authentic Leadership -> Work Meaningfulness -> Psychological Empowerment	0,216	3,418	0,001	Accepted
H3	Authentic Leadership -> Work Engagement -> Psychological Empowerment	0,079	1,295	0,196	Not Accepted
H4	Referent Power x Work Engagement -> Psychological Empowerment	0,173	2,168	0,030	Accepted

Source: SMARTPLS (2024)

Effect Size, also known as f-square, indicates the strength of the relationship between variables in the model. An f-square value of 0.02 is low, 0.15 is medium, and 0.35 is high. Values less than 0.02 can be ignored or interpreted as having no effect (Sarstedt et al., 2017). This study found that the AL-WE and WM-PE pathways had a high influence (0.393 and 0.311, respectively). On the other hand, the AL-PE pathway did not show a significant effect (0.000). Therefore, the mediating role of WM and WE is needed. It was found that the AL-WM pathway was in the low category (0.132) while the AL-WE pathway was in the high category. Furthermore, the WE-PE pathway did not influence the model (0.014). However, with RP as a moderator, the RP-WE-PE path ultimately influences the model by 0.097, which is in the near moderate category. The model generally meets the model fit criteria with a Standardized Root Mean Square (SRMR) value of 0.06. (Ringle et al., 2024) states that SRMR < 0.08 indicates the model fit.

## 5.0 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The findings of this study shed light on the interplay of authentic leadership (AL), work meaningfulness (WM), work engagement (WE), referent power (RP), and psychological empowerment (PE) in the context of State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) in Indonesia. The positive influence of AL on PE, consistent with previous research such as Dirik and Intepeler (2024), underscores the significance of authentic leadership in empowering employees within these organizational settings. Furthermore, the mediating role of WM in the relationship between AL and PE emphasizes the importance of employees finding meaning and significance in their work, aligning with the findings of Chaolert's work (2020).

Despite not finding a significant mediating effect of WE on the relationship between AL and PE, identifying RP as a moderator in the relationship between WE and PE highlights the influence of referent power in shaping the impact of work engagement on psychological empowerment. This finding, supported by the works of Zigarmi et al. (2015) and Hou et al. (2021), emphasizes the nuanced influence of RP in the context of employee empowerment within SOEs in Indonesia.

These insights provide valuable implications for organizational leaders and practitioners seeking to enhance employee performance and motivation in similar organizational contexts, particularly within the unique environment of state-owned enterprises in Indonesia. The findings contribute to a better understanding of PE and offer potential avenues for further research to explore additional contextual factors and individual differences in employee empowerment. By investigating these additional factors, future research can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of PE and its determinants in organizational environments, thereby facilitating the development of tailored and effective organizational interventions.

In conclusion, this study's findings contribute to the understanding of psychological empowerment within the organizational environment, particularly in the distinctive context of state-owned enterprises in Indonesia. The insights presented in this study hold significance for organizational leaders and practitioners aiming to improve employee performance, motivation, and productivity within SOEs and similar organizational contexts. Furthermore, identifying potential areas for further exploration provides a clear direction for future research endeavours, presenting opportunities to enrich the understanding of employee empowerment within organizational settings.

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

This study highlights the importance of PE in Indonesia's SOE context. It emphasizes the crucial role of AL in promoting employees' empowerment and well-being, stressing the significance of creating a work environment that emphasizes the meaningfulness of tasks and contributions. While WE are critical for employees' well-being and performance, its mediating role in the relationship between AL and PE may depend on the level of referent power within the organization. The findings offer valuable insights for organizational leaders and practitioners seeking to enhance employees' PE, motivation, and productivity within SOE and similar settings. Future research could explore additional contextual factors and individual differences to advance our understanding of PE and its determinants in diverse organizational settings, enabling the development of tailored and effective interventions.

However, it is essential to consider certain limitations of this study. The research was specific to Indonesia's SOE, so the findings may only partially apply to other organizational contexts. Additionally, the study's cross-sectional nature limits

the ability to establish causal relationships between variables. Moreover, relying on self-reported measures may introduce bias and inaccuracies in the data. Future research utilizing longitudinal designs and objective measurements could provide deeper insights into the dynamics of PE and its relationship with AL and WE.

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# ERGONOMICS RISK ASSESSMENT OF WORK-RELATED MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS (WMSDs) AMONG AVIATION MAINTENANCE PERSONNEL

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## Abstract

**Background:** Work-related Musculoskeletal Disorders (WMSDs) are a typical health problem and a significant cause of disability among workers from various fields across the industrialized world. Although aircraft mechanics and maintenance technicians experience high rates of workplace injuries, there is scarce evaluation of injury risk exposures from the various jobs/tasks in this industry. **Aims:** This study was conducted to identify the prevalence of WMSD and risk of WMSDs arising from working conditions among aviation maintenance personnel. **Materials and Methods:** A total of 40 aviation maintenance personnel (Engineering department) from the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) were randomly selected via the simple random sampling method for this research. Relevant data were collected using ergonomics assessment tools comprising Cornell Musculoskeletal Discomfort Questionnaire (CMDQ) and ergonomic factors risk assessment via the Quick Exposure Check (QEC) method. **Statistical analysis:** Data analysis was performed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.0, and the preliminary action levels for the QEC score were analyzed. **Results:** Based on the 12-month prevalence of WMSDs, the shoulders region and knees recorded the highest percentage of body discomfort and pain (90%) followed by the back region (77.5%) and neck (75%). The results from the QEC showed that the engine bay was determined as the most high-risk work area, with 72% of the preliminary action level that needs further investigation and immediate change. Four tasks need to be changed soon (orange), and one task needs to be further investigated (yellow). **Conclusion:** Workers in the aviation maintenance industry, particularly those working in the engine bay, were exposed to a high risk of back, shoulder, and wrist region injury, which affected their well-being and productivity. Hence, aviation maintenance workers were recommended to perform routine physical exercises as an alternative ergonomic intervention.

**Keywords:** Work-related Musculoskeletal Disorders; Ergonomic Risk; Aviation Maintenance Personnel; Well-being; Occupational Health, prevalence

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

MSDs related to work are called occupational MSDs and are typically caused by physical factors consisting of repetitive tasks, forceful exertions, awkward positions, vibration due to use of vibrational tools and prolonged staying in the same positions (Tang, 2022). Work-related factors of MSDs include repetitive tasks which demand quick cycles of repeating a task, as well as forceful exertions which require high muscular effort to produce high force (Radwin, et al., 2001). Human factors/ergonomics contribute in unison to the economic health and sustainability of organizations by enhancing workers' well-being, capability, job satisfaction, and maximizing performance, as well as reducing the direct and indirect costs of productivity losses, quality deficiencies, and employee turnover (ILO & IEA, 2020).

Musculoskeletal injuries and disorders are the leading cause of morbidity and temporary disability among military personnel. As such, the increased ergonomic risks and handling hazards faced by aircraft technicians of the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) have raised considerable concern over the potential impact of workplace injuries on workers' well-being. Aircraft maintenance has also been identified as a critical work task within the various high-risk areas in aviation; and is still categorized as a casual/contributory factor in several serious incidents in the commercial air transport industry (Insley & Turkoglu, 2020). Nevertheless, systematic evaluation of injury risk exposures across the various jobs/tasks performed in this industry has not been compiled and analyzed, although aircraft mechanics and avionics equipment technicians experience high rates of workplace injuries (Asadi, et al., 2019). The inadequate focus on risk evaluation is coupled with the lack of risk assessment and ergonomics safe operating procedures, as noted in earlier studies (Nanthankumaran, et al 2019).

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The World Health Organization (WHO), recognizing the impact of work-related musculoskeletal diseases, has characterized WMSDs as multifactorial indicating that a number of risk factors contribute to and exacerbate these maladies (Sauter et al., 1993). Aparajita and Astini (2018), concluded from their study that aircraft maintenance engineers mostly do work involving high-risk work positions. Moreover, maintenance and repair services are neglected in the literature, even though they are included in the occupational category that reports the highest number of WMSDs. Aircraft maintenance has been found to be the duty area resulting in the largest number of lost workdays (Deanna, 2006). Aircraft maintenance technician (AMT) is the most critical profession in the aircraft maintenance system. WMSD can adversely influence the work performance of Aircraft maintenance technician and may cause them to make errors that put the flight safety in danger. In contrast to the importance, there are a limited number of studies on risk factors for MSD of Aircraft maintenance technician (Yazgan et al., 2021). Dave et al., (2020) found that large numbers of defense personnel involved in maintenance and repair suffer from WMSDs. Aches and pain arising from work are taken as acceptable norms or as a usual part of life by these personnel. The researchers also concluded that there was a lack of awareness about prevention, treatment, and ergonomic care among defense personnel. Work-related musculoskeletal disorders are collective and descriptive symptoms caused or aggravated by work. These disorders are characterised by discomfort, impairment, disability or persistent pain in the joints, muscles, tendons, and other soft tissues (Palmer et al. 2017). Maintenance work involves tasks that are performed in frequent and exceptional conditions by industrial machinery mechanics; machinery maintenance workers; and individuals who generally install, repair and assemble machinery (Feustel 2015). Maintenance workers’ most common working posture contributes to the development of musculoskeletal symptoms (Abaraogu et al. 2016). Commonly, the working posture is considered awkward, particularly when performing work while sitting and bending. This type of working posture affects the back, upper limbs and lower limbs.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The sample population in this study includes aviation maintenance personnel from various RMAF units located in RMAF, Selangor. Based on the Krejcie and Morgan, 1970 sample size calculation, this research required a minimum sample size of 40 participants of aviation maintenance personnel (Engineering department) were randomly selected to participate in this research via simple random sampling (n = 40). The specific work maintenance location includes six main workstations, namely the structure inspection area (engine inspection, avionics, electric, airframe, and instruments), engine bay, tire bay, hydraulic bay, Non-Destructive Test (NDT) bay, and modification bay. Note that only willing personnel were allowed to participate in the research.

The exposure to risk factors for WMSDs and the prevalence of MSDs were evaluated using Quick Exposure Check (QEC) and Cornell Musculoskeletal Discomfort Questionnaire (CMDQ). Table 1 presents the interpretation of the QEC score based on the body region, while Table 2 shows the preliminary action levels for the QEC score. Equation (1) was used to calculate the exposure level (E) (Ispăsoiu et al., 2021)

$$E(\%) = \frac{X}{X_{max}} \times 100\% \quad (1)$$

where:

X = Total score obtained for the exposure risk in the back, shoulder/arm, wrist, and neck region from the calculation matrices based on the answers in the questionnaire

Xmax = Maximum total score for exposure that may occur in the back, shoulders/arms, wrists, and neck region

Table 1: Interpretation of the QEC score based on the body region from low to very high

Score	Exposure level			
	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
<b>Back (static)</b>	8-15	16-22	23-29	29-40
<b>Back moving</b>	10-20	21-30	31-40	41-56
<b>Shoulder/arm</b>	10-20	21-30	31-40	41-56
<b>Wrist/hand</b>	10-20	21-30	31-40	41-56
<b>Neck</b>	4-6	8-10	12-14	16-18

Table 2: Preliminary action levels for the QEC score

QEC score (E) (Total percentage, %)	Action
≤ 40	Acceptable
41–50	Need to investigate further
51–70	Need to investigate further and change soon
> 70	Need to investigate further and change immediately

\*The exposure level is obtained by dividing the total score from the maximum score (where there is Xmax for the manual handling activity XmaxMH = 176, for activities other than this, Xmax = 162).

4.0 RESULTS

Table 3 shows the respondent's demographic profile. Generally, all respondents in this study were males and mainly from the Malay ethnic. In this work location only, male workers are involved in the maintenance task. They were generally composed of two aged groups of 26–35 (80%) and 36–45 (20%). Accordingly, 17 personnel worked at the structure inspection area, while the remaining were stationed at the engine bay (10), tire bay (4), hydraulic bay (3), NDT bay (4), and modification bay (2).

Table 3: Respondent's demographic profile

Characteristics	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	
Gender	Male	40	100
	Female	0	0
	Total	40	100.0
Ethnicity	Malay	37	92.5
	Indian	1	2.5
	Chinese	0	0
	Others	2	5
	Total	40	100.0
Age group	20–25	0	0
	26–35	32	80
	36–45	8	20
	46–55	0	0
	> 55	0	0
	Total	40	100.0
Working duration	1–7	1	2.5
	8	34	32.3
	> 9	5	12.5
	Total	40	100.0
Highest education level	PMR	0	0
	SPM	24	60
	STPM	0	0
	Diploma	0	0
	Degree	16	40
	Others	0	0
Total	40	100.0	
Work location	Structure inspection area	17	42.5
	Engine bay	10	25
	Tire bay	4	10
	Hydraulic bay	3	7.5
	Non-Destructive Test (NDT) bay	4	10
	Modification bay	2	5
	Total	40	100.0

Note: PMR = *Penilaian Menengah Rendah* (Lower Secondary Assessment); SPM = *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* (Malaysian Certificate of Education); STPM = *Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia* (Malaysian Higher School Certificate)

Table 4: QEC exposure level and percentage of the preliminary action level

No.	Work area	SCORE					Preliminary action level
		Back (static)	Back moving	Shoulder/arm	Wrist/hand	Neck	
1.	Structure inspection area	29		34	25	14	63% need to investigate further and change soon
2.	Engine bay	31		37	32	17	72% need to investigate further and change immediately
3.	Tire bay		31	28	22	9	51% need to investigate further and change soon
4.	Hydraulic bay	23		38	30	13	64% need to investigate further and change soon
5.	Non-Destructive Test (NDT) Bay	27		34	28	14	63% need to investigate further and change soon
6.	Modification bay	20		23	26	14	51% need to investigate further

## 5.0 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Maintenance and repair services are commonly neglected in literature studies, although they are included in the occupational category and contribute to the highest number of WMSD cases. Dave *et al.* 2019 revealed that large numbers of defense personnel involved in maintenance and repair suffer from WMSDs. However, these personnel consider aches and pain arising from the workplace as a norm or part and parcel of the work routine. Based on the 12-month prevalence of WMSDs, the shoulders region and knees recorded the highest percentage of body discomfort and pain (90%) followed by the back region (77.5%) and neck (75%). Asadi, et al., 2019 found that the lower back was the most reported region of the body experiencing aches, pain, and discomfort (41% of participants), while cabin maintenance workers recorded the highest prevalence of WMSDs in the knees (68%), most likely due to constraints in the aircraft cabin. In another study, Nogueira, et al., 2012 reported that neck, upper back and ankle/foot were also reported as painful sites. Our study reported the highest prevalence on shoulders, knees, lower back and neck based on the 12-month prevalence of WMSDs. This is because the different types of activity will affect different parts of the body region. However the QEC assessment in Table 4 shows that body parts, mainly the back, shoulder, and wrist, were associated with a very high-risk score of WMSDs among workers in engine bays. The shoulder was also reported to exhibit a high risk of WMSD in all work areas except in the tire bay. Interestingly, the neck was the only body part with a low exposure score risk in all work tasks. In comparison, the back region reported a significantly high score in the engine and tire bay areas, while a high risk of wrist WMSD was detected in the engine and hydraulic bays. Furthermore, the QEC results showed that one task needs to be changed immediately (red), four tasks need to be changed soon (orange), and one task needs to be further investigated (yellow). The engine bay was determined as the most high-risk work area, with 72% of the preliminary action level that needs further investigation and immediate change. In the engine bay location workers are performing the buildup and stripping process of the aircraft engine with involved with heavy lifting, pushing and pulling activities. In addition, the engine bay has the ability to build up and strip the propeller. Based on the researcher's observations, workers were exposed to heavy and repetitive physical work, such as lifting, pushing, and pulling, where the body position and the load on the spine and back muscles increase the risk of WMSD. This finding implies that the nature of jobs and working conditions in the aviation maintenance areas were conducive to developing WMSDs. Therefore, ergonomic interventions and corrective measures are necessary to improve working conditions and minimize the exposure level of workers to WMSDs.

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

The ergonomic risk assessments in this study revealed that aviation maintenance personnel were exposed to a high risk of WMSDs that affect their shoulders, lower back and wrist/hand regions, particularly those stationed at the engine bay. In conclusion, WMSD massively impacts workers' well-being in the aviation maintenance industry. Thus, an appropriate and effective ergonomic intervention, such as routine physical exercises, should be designed to protect workers from the severe impact of WMSDs.

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# INTELLIGENCE LEADS EDUCATIONAL TRANSFORMATION: ROLE RESHAPING AND POTENTIAL STIMULATION OF COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHERS IN THE ERA OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

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## Abstract

This paper explores the role reshaping and potential stimulation of college English teachers in the context of the artificial intelligence (AI) era. With the widespread application of AI technology in the field of education, especially intelligent assistance systems, personalized learning paths and instant feedback mechanisms in English teaching, the role of teachers is facing a major transformation, from traditional knowledge transmitters to technology integration innovators, personalized teaching designers, data analysts and guides of students' emotional and ethical education. The study adopts a qualitative literature review method to analyze the specific application of AI technology, the challenges and opportunities of teacher role transformation, potential stimulation strategies and the balance of ethical and humanistic care. The results show that teachers need to improve their information technology capabilities, participate in interdisciplinary cooperation, cultivate innovative thinking, and receive effective psychological and technical support. The study pointed out that building a cooperative mechanism, improving the ethical framework, and strengthening teacher training are the keys to meeting the challenges. The conclusion emphasizes that the transformation of smart education needs to pay attention to the diversity of teachers' roles and ensure that technology development maintains the humanistic nature of education. Future research should further explore empirical cases and deepen the effectiveness of strategy implementation.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, English teaching, teacher role, potential stimulation, educational transformation.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In today's era of rapid technological iteration, the deep integration of digital technology, network communications and AI technology is gradually shaping a new look in the field of education. Among them, the intelligent transformation of English teaching in colleges is particularly significant<sup>Error! Reference source not found.</sup>. Intelligent auxiliary teaching systems, customized learning paths and instant learning effectiveness feedback mechanisms not only embed innovative genes into traditional teaching models, but also put forward urgent needs for the repositioning of teachers' roles. This paper aims to review the actual application cases of AI technology in English teaching, deeply analyze how technological progress has profoundly affected the roles and functions of teachers<sup>0</sup>, and then explore how to effectively activate the inherent potential of teachers and make them the leaders and promoters of the new era of intelligent education. A comprehensive analysis of the extant literature reveals trends in the amalgamation of technology with education, highlighting the research gap pertaining to the evolution of educators' roles within the context of intelligent education. This elucidates the imperative and timeliness of the investigation at hand, establishing a robust theoretical groundwork for the study. On this basis, the study clearly focuses on several core questions: How to understand the specific role of AI technology in English teaching? How does it reshape the role of teachers and affect teaching practice? To answer these questions, this paper proposes a series of strategies to improve teachers' adaptability in intelligent teaching environments and maximize the use of AI technology to promote student learning outcomes<sup>0</sup>. At the same time, it emphasizes the potential value of research in enriching educational theory, optimizing teaching practice<sup>0</sup>, and promoting educational equity. The importance of the research lies in that it can not only provide empirical evidence for the path of teacher professional development in an intelligent education environment, but also provide valuable practical guidance for policymakers, education administrators, and front-line teachers, and promote deeper reforms in the education system.

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The field of education is undergoing a profound transformation in the era of AI, and college English teaching is no exception. The reshaping of teachers' roles and the stimulation of their potential have become key issues in educational innovation. By combing through relevant literature, this paper explores how AI technology affects the role development of college



English teachers, and how to promote teaching innovation and professional growth of teachers through the application of technology.

#### ***Current status of application of AI technology in English teaching***

In recent years, AI technology has been increasingly used in education, especially in the field of English teaching. For example, the application of intelligent speech recognition technology (Sha, 2009) and intelligent essay correction software (Green & O'Sullivan, 2019; Zou, 2020) not only provides students with instant feedback and personalized learning experience, but also reduces the burden of teachers' correction. The emergence of large-scale language models such as Chat GPT (Jiao Jianli & Chen Ting, 2023) has taken personalized teaching, instant feedback and content generation to a new level, providing students with more diverse and vivid learning resources.

#### ***Reshaping and challenges of teachers' roles***

With the integration of AI technology, the role of English teachers is changing from traditional transmitters of knowledge to guiders of the learning journey, designers of personalized teaching, analysts of learning data, and guardians of students' emotional and moral education (Zou Bin et al., 2023). Teachers need to master how to effectively use AI technology to optimize the teaching process, analyze learning data, and develop personalized teaching strategies.

#### ***Potential stimulation and teaching innovation***

In order to stimulate the potential of teachers, many scholars have proposed a series of strategies. These include improving teachers' information technology capabilities and enabling them to flexibly use intelligent teaching tools through professional training (Li Linxue, 2023). Strengthening interdisciplinary cooperation and promoting innovation in teaching models and content (Peng Jianfeng, 2023). What's more, colleges should establish a support system to provide technical support, teaching method training and psychological counseling services to reduce the pressure on teachers caused by the introduction of technology (Wang Jun, 2024).

#### ***Opportunities and challenges coexist***

AI has brought multiple opportunities such as personalized learning and efficiency improvement to English teaching in colleges, but it is also accompanied by challenges. For example, students may rely too much on AI tools, resulting in a decrease in learning autonomy, and teachers may face ethical and moral issues and innovative challenges in teaching content (Li Linxue, 2023). Therefore, how to maintain students' humanistic care and critical thinking ability while using AI technology to improve teaching efficiency has become a problem that educators need to think deeply about.

In short, AI technology is leading the transformation of education and providing broad space for the role reshaping and potential stimulation of English teachers in colleges. In the future, colleges should build a multi-party cooperation mechanism to provide teachers with the technical support and professional development platform to ensure that teachers can effectively respond to technological changes, use AI technology to promote teaching innovation, and cultivate compound foreign language talents that meet the needs of the new era.

### **■ 3.0 METHODOLOGY**

This study adopts the qualitative literature review method to systematically review and analyze the literature on the application of AI in education, especially in English teaching in recent years. This method aims to extract key points through in-depth exploration and critical evaluation of existing literature, understand and explore the process of reshaping the role of college English teachers in the era of AI and the path to stimulate their potential.

### **■ 4.0 RESULTS**

Through an in-depth analysis via literature review, this study not only reveals the profound impact of AI technology on college English teaching but also refines discoveries within several key areas, enhancing insights into the evolution and potential unleashing of teacher roles during educational transformation.

#### ***The diversity of role reshaping***

Driven by AI technology, the role of college English teachers has changed from a traditional information transmitter to a complex of multiple identities. They are not only innovators of technology integration, using AI tools to innovate teaching methods and improve classroom interactivity, they have also become promoters of personalized learning, using AI algorithms to customize learning paths for each student to meet their unique needs. The role of teachers has been further expanded to become a keen observer of teaching data, optimizing teaching strategies by analyzing learning data. More importantly, they also play the role of guardians of students' emotional and ethical education, ensuring that while technology assists teaching, it cultivates students' emotional intelligence and moral judgment and maintains the humanistic dimension of education.

### Exploring the path to stimulate potential

Literature shows that the potential of college English teachers needs the support of multi-dimensional strategies. The first is to improve teachers' information technology literacy so that they can skillfully use AI technology to optimize teaching content and methods. Secondly, interdisciplinary cooperation has become the key to expanding teachers' capabilities. Through collaboration with experts in other disciplines, teachers can integrate resources and innovate teaching models. Fostering critical thinking and nurturing an innovative spirit, educators are encouraged to continuously experiment with new technologies and innovate within their teaching practices. In addition, building an effective teacher support system and providing continuous professional development opportunities and mental health support are important guarantees for stimulating teachers' potential and meeting the challenges of educational reform.

### Dialectical Analysis of Challenges and Opportunities

The integration of AI technology has brought unprecedented personalization and efficiency improvement to English teaching, but it has also exposed challenges such as technology maturity, ethics, and teacher adaptability. Insufficient technology maturity may lead to unstable teaching results, and ethical issues such as data privacy and artificial intelligence bias need to be strictly regulated. Insufficient teacher technology adaptability may hinder the implementation of teaching innovation. Therefore, building a multi-party cooperation mechanism to ensure effective collaboration between technology suppliers, educational institutions and the government, and providing teachers with necessary technical support, professional training and psychological counseling services are the key to overcoming these challenges and seizing opportunities for educational transformation.

## ■ 5.0 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

### Diversity and in-depth analysis of role reshaping

The deep integration of AI technology in English teaching has not only promoted the diversified transformation of teachers' roles, but also further revealed the complexity and hierarchy within the teacher's role. As innovators of technology-assisted teaching, teachers must not only master how to use AI tools, but also have the ability to design and evaluate intelligent teaching programs. As promoters of personalized learning, teachers need to have a deep understanding of students' differentiated needs and collaborate with AI systems to create a learning environment that is both efficient and empathetic. As insight into teaching data, teachers need to learn to interpret the learning patterns and problems behind the data so as to implement precise policies.

### Systematic strategies for stimulating potential

Literature analysis further reveals that stimulating the potential of college English teachers is a systematic project, which requires not only the efforts of individual teachers, such as improving information technology literacy and participating in interdisciplinary cooperation to broaden their horizons, but also the support of educational institutions and policies, such as establishing a comprehensive teacher development plan, providing a training platform for innovative thinking, and establishing a sound mental health support system. In addition, building an open communication and cooperation network to promote knowledge sharing and experience exchange among teachers is also the key to stimulating the potential of teachers and promoting educational innovation.

### Detailed strategies for coping with challenges and opportunities

In the face of challenges such as technology maturity, ethics, and teacher adaptability, the study proposed a series of specific countermeasures. First, through cooperation between the government and higher education institutions, increase investment in the research and development of AI educational applications to improve the stability and applicability of the technology. Secondly, build ethical frameworks and guidelines, clarify the application boundaries of AI in education, protect student privacy, and prevent bias and unfairness. Thirdly, develop hierarchical and easy-to-use training courses for teachers' technical adaptability, combine them with actual teaching cases, and improve the practicality and effectiveness of training.

## ■ 6.0 CONCLUSION

In this study, the literature review method provides a solid theoretical basis for understanding the role changes and potential stimulation of college English teachers in the era of AI. Future research should continue to deepen the empirical case analysis, explore and verify the applicability and effectiveness of specific implementation strategies in different educational contexts from the micro to the macro level, and pay attention to the long-term impact of strategy implementation, as well as how to further optimize the educational ecology through policy adjustments and technological innovations to promote the dual improvement of educational equity and quality.

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# A STATISTICAL APPROACH TO PREDICTION OF AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE FRAUD CLAIMS

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## Abstract

Insurance companies and policyholders alike are increasingly concerned about auto insurance fraud. Insurance fraud is a costly and growing problem since false claims lead to higher rates for honest policyholders and increased costs for insurance companies. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine how machine learning can be used to predict fraudulent claims associated with auto insurance. The current investigation sought to determine the relationship between features and insurance fraud claims (the study's objective); extract and produce a variety of features that make up the data required for forecasting; predict insurance fraud claims by using the features in the dataset; and assess the effectiveness of machine learning methods. Relevant and recent literature was looked over. Using an ex-post facto research design, the study first collected secondary data and insurance information from the many data sets available on the open-source website kaggle.com. Utilizing past data, the data analysis for this study uses machine learning techniques to forecast insurance fraud claims. The CRISP-DM technique, which was chosen due to its extensive backtracking, adaptability, and broad application in data mining and analysis, provides the theoretical framework for this investigation. The investigations were assisted by the use of three (3) computer statistical techniques: logistic regression, random forest, and least absolute shrinkage and selective operator (LASSO). Descriptive statistics, content analysis, and machine learning techniques are also employed in this study's data analysis to predict insurance fraud claims based on past data. In order to advance fairness and transparency in the decision-making process, this project intends to develop a machine learning model that can accurately predict auto insurance fraud claims and offer insights into the key components linked to fraudulent behaviors.

Keywords: Automobile Insurance, Fraudulent Claims, Machine learning, Prediction, Statistical Approach

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Every year, insurance fraud costs billions of dollars, which negatively impacts the overall health of the economy as well as the earnings and growth of the insurance industry (Hanafy & Ming, 2021). Vehicle insurance fraud has become a significant concern for insurance companies as well as policyholders. Because of false claims, insurance companies have to pay more, while sincere clients have to pay higher premiums. Conventional methods of identifying fraud are insufficient due to the complexity and significant variation of fraud activities. Through the utilization of patterns and connections discovered within the data, machine learning algorithms present a practical approach to detecting fraudulent activity. However, there are a number of challenges that must be overcome in order to create an accurate and effective machine learning-based fraud detection model. These challenges include poor data quality, unequal class distribution, and interpretability concerns with the model.

This study offers the possibility of improving fraud detection using machine learning algorithms based on the information obtained from Kaggle.com (Roy, 2021). Thus, the main goal of this study is to increase the ability to identify false vehicle insurance claims. Plateau et al. (2017) contend that for insurance to assist everyone in need, it must be reasonably priced and dependable. Insurance fraud, however, upends the insurance market by increasing costs for both insurers and the insured. As technology develops, insurance companies look for novel approaches to enhance fraud detection.

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Agbo & Agbaji (2019) described vehicle insurance as a contract wherein the insurer assumes full responsibility for the losses incurred by the owner or driver of a vehicle as a result of bodily injury or property damage to third parties following an accident. They continued by talking about the many kinds of auto insurance, how their coverage varies, and the underlying legal ideas. These days, a lot of insurance companies use cutting edge technology like artificial intelligence and digital signatures to help identify insurance fraud or insurance fraud claims earlier (Saldamli et al., 2020). A crucial part of every insurance operation is identifying insurance fraud (Chepkoech & Rotich, 2017).

Insurance fraud is mostly caused by exaggerated, false, and fraudulent claims as well as blatant theft (Soyer, 2018). The organization and its clients are spared serious harm when these crimes are discovered early. Papadakis and colleagues, 2020. An insurance business needs to take all reasonable precautions to prevent fraud because the insurance sector is very competitive. (2020, Cappellettiello). Certain countries, including the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, include provisions in their health and life insurance laws that address fraud detection. Insurance fraud detection is not expressly covered by the more general insurance regulations of other nations.

The use of artificial intelligence to evaluate the risk associated with insurance claims is a matter of equal importance. Insurance firms can lower risk and costs by utilizing machine learning algorithms to analyze past data and forecast the possibility of a false claim. Limiting human engagement, increasing notifications for potentially detrimental claims, and minimizing human interaction are the ways in which the suggested framework seeks to prevent financial losses in the vehicle insurance sector. A significant amount of data must be processed and analyzed in order to accurately predict auto insurance fraud claims.

With the help of machine learning algorithms, fraudulent claims can be quickly and effectively detected by analyzing large amounts of data and looking for trends, anomalies, and other pertinent information. In their 2017 study, Roy and George focused on using machine learning to detect fraudulent auto transactions. A confusion matrix calculation will also be used to compare performance. Recall, precision, and accuracy computation are facilitated as a result. According to Rustam and Ariantari (2018), machine learning techniques such as Support Vector Machines can be a helpful tool for categorizing policyholders. The research results will offer concrete proof that boosting earnings was a common objective across all insurance providers.

### ■ 3.0 METHODOLOGY/ MATHEMATICAL PRELIMINARIES

The following mathematical derivations were used in the study to accomplished the objectives of the study

#### Logistic Regression

Logistic regression model takes multiple predictor variables  $[X_j]_{j=1}^p$  to predict the binary response  $[Y_i]_{i=1}^p$  with  $Y_i$  having values 1 for positive outcome 0 for negative outcome. The model can be written as

$$\pi_i = \frac{e^{\beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \dots + \beta_p x_p}}{1 + e^{\beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \dots + \beta_p x_p}}$$

The stepwise variable selection method is used to build a prediction model after the correlated predictor variables are eliminated. The forward selection process and the stepwise selection process are comparable. The process decides if any of the variables that are currently in the model should be removed once a new variable is added, which is where the differences lie.

#### Random Forest

Two methods are used to determine variable importance: Mean Decrease in Accuracy (MDA) and Mean Decrease in Impurity (MDI). The Mean Decrease Gini, or MDI for short, is an impurity function that employs the Gini index. It involves several algorithms. The Gini Index  $i(t)$  is given as

$$i(t) = 1 - \sum_{k=0}^{c-1} [p(k/t)]^2$$

#### Least Absolute Shrinkage and Selective Operator (LASSO)

The automatic variable selection and model estimation capabilities of the LASSO approach are made possible by the penalization, or constraint. Let  $\hat{\alpha}$  be the intercept term, and  $\hat{\beta}$  be the least squares estimates. Given many predictor variables,  $[x_i]_{k=1}^p$ , the LASSO estimate  $(\hat{\alpha}, \hat{\beta})$ , is defined by

$$(\hat{\alpha}, \hat{\beta}) = \frac{\arg \min}{\alpha, \beta} \left\{ \frac{1}{N} \left[ \sum_{i=1}^N I_{y_i=1} * \log \pi_i + I_{y_i=0} * \log(1 - \pi_i) \right] - \lambda \sum_j |\beta_j| \right\},$$

#### Performance measure Indices

The mean absolute error (MAE), root mean square error (RMSE), and accuracy for categorical variables between the original and imputed values were examined to assess the accuracy of the imputation. The mean absolute error (MAE) and the root mean square error (RMSE) are the two statistical metrics most frequently used to assess models. According to Hodson (2022).MAE and RMSE are explained as follows.

Model evaluation frequently makes use of a number of error indices. The Mean Absolute Deviation (MAD), Mean Absolute Precision Error (MAPE), Root Mean Square Error (RMSE), and Mean Absolute Error (MAE) of these are examples.

**Standard error of mean squared**

To quantify the discrepancies between values predicted by a model and the actual values, the Mean-Square Error (MSE) is a useful accuracy measure. Values actually observed. MSE is given as:  $MSE = N^{-1} \sum_{t=1}^T (Y_t - \hat{Y}_t)^2$

**Mean absolute precision error (MAPE)**

This is frequently used to evaluate cross-sectional forecast, it has indispensable statistical properties in that it makes use of all observations and has the smallest variability from sample to sample. It is also useful for purposes of reporting because it is expressed in generic percentage terms that will be understandable to a wide range of users and very simple to calculate and easy to understand, which attests to its popularity. It is given as:

$$MAPE = N^{-1} \sum_{t=1}^T \left| \frac{Y_t - \hat{Y}_t}{Y_t} \right| \times 100$$

**4.0 RESULTS**

A critical stage in the machine-learning process, prepping the data beforehand improves its quality and makes it easier to extract relevant knowledge. Data pre-processing in machine learning is the act of organizing and cleaning raw data to make it suitable for creating and training models. We first corrected the unbalanced dataset and then generated classifier scores for many models using the machine learning features of the 80:20 test-train-split Python module. These scores were then compared to our proposed fraudulent detection method:

Accuracy Comparison

Machine learning model	Train Accuracy	Test Accuracy
Logistic Regression	0.85321	0.86142
Random Forest	0.96992	0.98721
Least Absolute Shrinkage and Selective Operator (LASSO)	0.94321	0.95322

**Train/Test-Sets Comparison**

The accuracy of this model in logistic regression is unaffected by changes to the hyperparameters. Consequently, we may say that the logistic regression model does not match well with this dataset. On the other hand, other algorithms, such as LASSO, random forest, and logistic regression, have produced results on the dataset that are fairly good, with 89%, 82%, and 94%, respectively. It is plausible to argue that these algorithms have the ability to provide precise outcomes from massive datasets. From 89% to 91%, the accuracy of logistic regression rose. LASSO increased from 94% to 98%, while random forest accuracy changed from 82% to 87%. The random forest did not significantly improve after fine-tuning, but the logistic regression, least absolute shrinkage, and selected operator (LASSO) were all performing quite well, despite the likelihood that they were overfitting on the model's default value for the other two models. Peak performance was achieved by the model at 94.24% after it was adjusted to produce a more realistic outcome.

Classification Report of Models

Metrics	Logistic Regression	Least Absolute Shrinkage and Selective Operator (LASSO)	Random Forest
Tuned Accuracy	83.21%	89.12%	94.24 %
Precision	0.89	0.93	0.96
Recall	0.92	0.97	0.96

**5.0 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

The Kaggle dataset we utilized to create our insurance forecasting model had data from 1994 to 1996. It is advisable to test random combinations, a particular set of parameters, or the model on a dataset of the same kind in order to assess the effectiveness of the suggested solution in relation to additional datasets that could be used as proxies. Additionally, it makes sense to simplify the attributes. Future research projects should concentrate on using a sophisticated or recently acquired dataset to assess the efficacy of deep learning and machine learning techniques.

## ■ 6.0 CONCLUSION

This study clearly demonstrated that 91% of claims were fair and just 9% were fraudulent by designating whether a claim was fraudulent (1) or not (0). In contrast to the poor performance from the logistic regression, Random Forest, Least Absolute Shrinkage and Selective Operator (LASSO), and logistic regression all performed incredibly well on the dataset, achieving scores of 85.32%, 96.99%, and 94.32% on train data, respectively. Nevertheless, other techniques, with respective values of 92%, 96%, and 97%, have produced some respectable results on the dataset. These algorithms include Random Forest, Least Absolute Shrinkage and Selective Operator (LASSO), and Logistic Regression. One could argue that these algorithms have the potential to provide precise outcomes from vast volumes of data.

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# COSPLAY: EXPLORING FANDOM-RELATED OCCUPATION AS A CAREER IN MALAYSIA

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## Abstract

Cosplay, which is the art of dressing up as one's favourite character, has been a fast-growing hobby and performing arts in Malaysia after the pandemic. Cosplaying as a career in Malaysia has been taking shape and increasing awareness even outside of the community due to the changing world of work. However, there have been some underexplored studies relating to the effects of cosplay as a career. This paper seeks to understand the history, essence, and risks of cosplay and what is currently happening in the cosplay world. A qualitative study was conducted using interviews and analysed using thematic analysis. The sample size consisted of 15 Malaysian cosplayers. Findings have shown that 3 themes were identified behind their motivations in pursuing cosplay – 1) *love for cosplay*, 2) *influencer lifestyle*, and 3) *social connection*. Another recurring theme was also identified behind cosplayers' intention in defining success in their career – *goals and achievements*. The underlying reason for their behaviour aligns with Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, sense of belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualisation. Ultimately, it ties with their definition of success as well as entrepreneurial goals in which cosplayers achieve self-actualisation once they have fulfilled their lifelong goals and achievements by striving in cosplay as a medium to support their tangible and intangible aspect of growth.

*Keywords: Cosplay, Future Career, Wellbeing*

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This research aims to investigate and explore the world of cosplay as a full-time career in Malaysia. It also aims to understand how full-time cosplayers perceive their jobs. Cosplay, derived from the word "costume play" has been a tremendous influence among individuals since the 1990s. It is one type of fandom-related occupation referred to as "Ikigai" as a profession that revolves around individual passion and interests, which enable one's life purpose. Cosplay involves a range of behaviours, from painting intricate details in makeup to designing and wearing elaborate costumes based on individual favourite anime, manga, or game characters (Poitras 2001; Richie 2003).

The essence of cosplay lies in the amount of work the participants have put in, which requires immense dedication to transforming their "real" identities into their selected fictional characters (Aoyama and Cahill 2003; Richie 2003). Although the act of cosplay generally revolves around self-expression, mixed reactions are perceived to such activity, leaning to much negative comments and critiques due to its sexual undertones - erotic connotations and cross-dressings. Social critics have even viewed cosplay as an abbreviation for "cost" and "play", signaling the significant expense of engaging in this type of activity (Rahman et al., 2012). Despite the different levels of appreciation towards cosplay, Daliot-Bul (2009) indicated that cosplayers, especially in Japan, are perceived as a meaningful subculture and essence of Japanese lives. This is evident with the ability of cosplay to be perceived as a highly lucrative job in the entertainment market. For example, Enako, who earned the title "Japan's number one cosplayer", had an earning record of more than \$500,000 annually from such endeavours (McGee, 2022) suggesting it as an alternative income generation avenue and, subsequently, potential career routes, especially among the younger population.

Undeniably, one of the main reasons for the rising popularity of cosplay in empirical work is the changing world of work (Rahman et al., 2012; McCutcheon et al., 2022). Since the predominant times, the illustration of 'work' has evolved from manual labour to office work to employment in the creative field, which calls for more investigation on understanding cosplay as a professional career (ILO 2023; van Laar et al., 2021). Moreover, Covid-19 has changed workforce perception towards traditional office jobs and people's perspectives on work and life. It is well known that the pandemic accelerated existing trends in remote work, e-commerce, and automation for enhanced employee productivity and innovation (Lund et al., 2021). Changing trends in the current working world opens a window of opportunity for the creative industry to expand, resulting in this industry blooming under the leverage of technology and media to promote their products and personnel. In Malaysia, cosplay has slowly received an uptake, especially from the young generation, due to an avenue to express themselves. Similar to e-sport, the attractive values of cosplay have led to increased young followers and acknowledgement of the Ministry of Tourism via events such as Comic Fiesta and Season4Otaku to boost Malaysia's tourism and local economy.



Despite the popularity of cosplay among the younger generation, research studies on cosplay have always focused on the concept of “self” - self-expression, self-identity, gender expression with cosplay (Rahman et al., 2012; Dinatha & Dewi, 2021; Leng, 2014) and motivation in understanding it. The dearth of knowledge remains in studies which explore the perception and framework of cosplay as a reliable career. Therefore, this research seeks to bring novel knowledge concerning cosplay as a potential career by diving into the actual experience of cosplayers. It aims to understand the motivations behind pursuing cosplay as a career.

## ■ 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Evidence indicated that the motivations behind cosplay have been linked to the sense of self, ranging from expression, esteem, confidence, belonging, and identity (Leng, 2014; Rosenberg & Letamendi, 2018; Crawford et al., 2019). Research on cosplay is interdisciplinary, with discussion focusing on motivational aspects, such as creative expression (Leshner & DeLaGarza, 2019; Rosenberg & Letamendi, 2013), building social relationships (Ramirez, 2017), and escaping from daily stressors (Rahman et al., 2012; Chen 2007) among others. Cosplay is linked with better psychological well-being (Yorath, 2022) acquired through self-expression, creativity and escapism (Chan, 2018). Being imaginative and creative is at the heart and centre of most cosplayers via the embodiment of character upon entering a fantasy environment, thus leaving behind the stress, anxieties, burdens, boredom, and disappointments of their daily lives (Rahman et al., 2015). In general, cosplaying provides a temporary experience of fleeting pleasure, self-gratification, and a sense of fulfilment, allowing adolescents to feel validation and even develop emotional literacy (Muller, 2021). According to Draffin (2019), validation and alignment with the social community help people work through psychological issues such as depression, social anxiety, loneliness, and even trauma. That is why some studies found a link between cosplaying and improved mental health because of creativity channelling through the act of crafting one’s costume (Yorath, 2022) and creating a safe space for people to discuss and process emotional reactions related to parasocial and narrative relationships – for example, discussing and processing the grief of a fictional character’s death or tragic backstory (Muller, 2021).

### *Sense of Belonging*

One of the most discussed elements in cosplay is how it brings out a sense of belonging through establishing friendships, costume crafting, interaction (i.e. online and offline), and group performance, thus creating an avenue for individuals to develop emotional attachments or bonds (Schroy et al., 2016). Sharing the same passion and interests with like-minded people gives individuals a sense of belonging to a community because they support and understand one another (Draffin, 2019; Rahman et al., 2015).

### *Self-Esteem & Confidence*

Cosplay is not just a community for displaying one’s alternate self; it also means delicately building trust, social communication, and self-confidence (Rahman et al., 2015). Cosplay can enable social connections by receiving social support from others who share the same interests, thus increasing self-esteem. Pierson-Smith (2013) demonstrated that cosplayers often carry different behaviours and feelings based on their costume, which leads individual to be an empowered version of themselves that is positively influenced by their chosen characters. The cosplay process is also associated with the self-rediscovery and reaffirmation effect, also known as the Proteus Effect (Yee et al., 2009), in which individuals feel more confident or attractive when they are in character.

In general, what makes cosplay attractive is the ability of individuals to access the freedom of expression and transformation they partake in. Besides, because common psychological motivations for cosplaying are aligned with Maslow’s hierarchy of higher needs in terms of belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualisation (self-expression), it is not surprising that some literature highlights it as a coping strategy for the betterment of depression, anxiety, and loneliness in young people.

Nevertheless, despite the commonness of cosplay in countries such as Japan, US and Korea, practical research is still lacking in certain countries like Malaysia regarding how it is perceived. Besides, most available literature often views cosplay from a hobbyist perspective, with little to no research examining it from an organisational perspective. Given the trends of employees seeking completeness and coherence at work transcending salary (Mortimer & Klein, 2023), cosplayers are perfect examples of the new generational mindset in the workforce of pursuing what they love while simultaneously battling the hardships of building a sustainable revenue stream. As such, the research questions for this paper are the following:

1. What makes a cosplayer persevere in this line of industry despite the unstable income?
2. How do cosplayers define success in their career?

## ■ 3.0 METHODOLOGY

This paper addresses the two research questions by using a qualitative approach to exploring the experience of cosplayers in Malaysia. Data is gathered using semi-structured interviews of 15 cosplayers, which were recruited using snowball sampling and later analysed using thematic analysis.

### Ethics Considerations

This study received ethics approval from the Ethics Committee Faculty of Arts and Social Science (FASS) University Nottingham Malaysia (Ethics approval no: FASS2023\_0010/DOAP/CJY20196417). No participants were harmed during the data collection process, and individual consent was gathered before data collection. All participants were informed of their anonymity, confidentiality, and right to withdraw prior to the interview session.

## 4.0 RESULTS

Three themes were discovered for the first question: “What makes a cosplayer persevere in this line of industry despite the unstable income?”. These are 1) *love for cosplay*, 2) *influencer lifestyle*, and 3) *social connection*. For the second question: “How do cosplayers define success in their career?” we found one common theme – 1) *goals and achievements*.

Expanding on the first research question, the first theme of *love for cosplay* highlighted that most participants mentioned how sheer curiosity turned into a passionate love for cosplay upon discovering such an endeavour through friends or family. Many participants loved dressing up as any character and personality they admire. Besides, much more experienced cosplayers highlighted receiving compliments and praise from others as what makes them establish a more profound attachment with cosplay to reciprocate and receive good feelings from their fans or general audience who admire their cosplay version. The *influencer lifestyle* led them to establish a stronger connection to cosplay, which helped them acquire both monetary and psychological compensation. Engaging in cosplay also led to a richer *social connection*, which enabled participants to establish more networks transcending their personality type (i.e. introverted). Establishing richer social connections benefits the participants by opening up multiple revenues for cosplayers to venture in other associated fields (such as gaming and marketing, among others) to seek new opportunities.

For the second research question, this study found consistent opinions about how cosplay defines success in the cosplaying industries revolving around *goal and accomplishment*. This includes attracting followers, receiving offers to advertise for company brands or promoting products to indicate whether they are doing well in the arena. In a way, cosplayers are similar to key opinion leaders (KOLs), in which businesses are tapping into the cosplayers’ fanbase, brand endorsements and video advertisements as sources of reputation. Besides, some participants expressed participation in esteemed competitions such as the World Cosplay Summit as an indicator of success. Due to the large and exclusive scale of such events, it has been perceived as a hallmark of successful cosplayers, providing an avenue for those who are in the field to prove their accomplishment.

## 5.0 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

One recurring result in this study is how cosplay enables a thriving self, which aligns with Maslow’s (1943) hierarchy of needs, sense of belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualisation. External surroundings have appeared as a strong source of motivation for most cosplayers to venture into this line of activity. Dressing up as another persona creates a sense of autonomy and joy for cosplayers and enables passion and interest with like-minded people, creating a sense of belonging. Additionally, due to the Proteus effect, some cosplayers expressed they gained the confidence to converse with strangers despite their timid personalities due to the nature of cosplaying activities. This highlights the transforming and empowering nature of cosplay to enable psychological growth. Eventually, some were able to achieve self-actualisation once they have fulfilled their lifelong goals and achievements by striving in cosplay as a medium to support their tangible and intangible aspect of growth.

Regardless of what has been found in this study, questions remain on how professionals perceive this line of activity as a sustainable career. According to several researchers, entrepreneurs may initially aim to support themselves, but their goals and motivations might shift as growth opportunities arise (Elfvig et al., 2009). Alternatively, someone might start a business to enjoy the activity, only to place more value on the financial benefits later (Carsrud and Brännback, 2011). The same applies to professional cosplayers. Many cosplayers first started cosplaying due to the fun and enjoyment. Eventually, they desire to become professionals when they attract more followers on social media and receive love from fans. This perspective surmises that intrinsic and extrinsic motivations play an essential role in their cosplay career pursuit. Intrinsic factors include a sense of achievement and fulfilment, while extrinsic factors include financial benefits. These are linked to personal definitions of success (Sherman et al., 2016) as well as entrepreneurial goals (Carsrud and Brännback, 2011). Regardless, cosplaying as a career in Malaysia leaves much room for research, which calls for a more nuanced understanding of how it is perceived and may benefit the future workforce.

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

To conclude, cosplaying has grown exponentially over the years and is still steadily growing. Cosplay is a beautiful and innovative way for people to express their creativity and freedom. Everyone gets into the hobby for different intentions and motivations. After the pandemic, conventions have increased more than ever that fingers alone cannot count. Businesses are eyeing this golden opportunity in this new market and are finding ways to collaborate with the stakeholders of the market. Cosplayers are becoming more competitive with one another. What encapsulates the cosplayers to continue pursuing this career leaves more room to be discussed in the next study.

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# THE 5TH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION AND ITS INFLUENCE ON PROTOTYPING FOR RESEARCH COMMERCIALIZATION UTILIZING LOCALLY-MADE 3D PRINTING MACHINE

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## Abstract

A new period of technical growth marked by the merging of the biological, digital, and physical realms has been brought about by the 5th Industrial Revolution. This study explores the ramifications of the paradigm change from subtractive to additive manufacturing, emphasizing the advantages, difficulties, and opportunities of using locally produced 3D printers in research and commercialization initiatives, particularly at Nigerian polytechnics. We talk about how new tools enable researchers, students, and business owners to commercialize their ideas more quickly and effectively and help promote creativity. We also look at the benefits and problems this paradigm change brings, and we suggest ways to use homemade 3D printers to advance research commercialization in various settings.

**Keywords:** 5th Industrial Revolution, Nigerian Polytechnics, Research Commercialization, Homemade 3D Printers, Additive Manufacturing, Students, Researchers.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

As technology continues to advance and develop, more and more new technologies are beginning to be used in everyday life, as was also The advent of the 5th Industrial Revolution marks a significant shift in manufacturing paradigms, characterized by the integration of advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, robotics, and the Internet of Things (IoT) (N. Rosli., et al., 2023) and I. A. Adeleke., et al, 2023) One of the pivotal technologies driving this revolution is 3D printing, also known as additive manufacturing, which has evolved from its initial applications in rapid prototyping to revolutionize various industries (D. Mourtzis.,et al, 2021). As this technology matures, its influence extends beyond prototyping to encompass research commercialization, offering unique opportunities for innovation and entrepreneurship (T.D. Ngo., et al., 2020)

3D printing, or desktop fabrication, is a technique that creates physical objects from digital 3D models using materials like PLA, ABS, and composites. This technology is transforming manufacturing and entrepreneurship in Africa, overcoming resource constraints and advancing beyond traditional industrial practices. It benefits social entrepreneurship, enabling localized solutions to societal issues (T. Schonwetter, and B. Van Wiele 2020). 3D printing, standardized by ISO, includes seven technologies, enabling decentralized production without extensive infrastructure or specialized expertise. Rapid Prototyping (R.P.) technologies, introduced in the 1980s, have evolved significantly, with notable milestones like the introduction of SLA-1 by 3D Corporation in 1987 and the FDM innovation patent to Stratasys in 1992 (N. Rosli., et al., 2023)

3D printing is a revolutionary technology that enables rapid and economical fabrication of objects from CAD designs, impacting industries like automotive, architecture, education, consumer goods, and medical. It has democratized manufacturing, with locally-made 3D printing technology emerging as a pivotal aspect. This technology offers adaptability, customization, and local application support, fostering hands-on learning in design and engineering. It also prepares the future workforce for advanced manufacturing careers, promoting STEM education and driving innovation.

## 2.0 INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

Traditionally, prototyping has been a time-consuming and expensive process, often requiring specialized expertise and resources. However, with the advent of 3D printing technology, prototyping has undergone a paradigm shift. 3D printing allows for the rapid and cost-effective production of physical prototypes directly from digital designs, eliminating many of the constraints associated with traditional prototyping methods. Locally-made 3D printing machines have further democratized access to this technology, enabling students, entrepreneurs, researchers, and small businesses to prototype their ideas more efficiently and affordably.

Prototyping plays a crucial role in research commercialization through several key benefits. Firstly, it validates concepts by transforming abstract ideas into tangible representations, facilitating early identification of flaws and reducing research costs. Secondly, it enables iterative development by gathering feedback and refining ideas swiftly toward a final product, thus accelerating innovation. Thirdly, prototyping mitigates risks and costs by addressing challenges before full-scale production, allowing multiple ideas to be tested efficiently. Additionally, prototypes engage stakeholders, validate market demand, and tailor products to meet customer needs, increasing commercial viability.

Moreover, prototyping aids intellectual property protection by documenting unique features and functionalities. Furthermore, it fosters an innovation culture by encouraging experimentation and collaboration, driving future initiatives. High-quality prototypes attract investors and partners, demonstrating technology potential and enhancing credibility for securing funding and partnerships (N. Rosli., et al., 2018)

The manufacturing industry has evolved through various paradigm shifts, including Craft Production, American Production, Mass Production, Lean Production, Mass Customization, and Global Manufacturing ( D. Mourtzis 2021). In the last decade, the industry has faced unpredictable demand volatility, increased quality requirements, personalized commodities, and intelligent supply chains. This evolution builds on previous industrial revolutions, starting with mechanization in the late 18th century, followed by the advent of electrical energy in the late 19th century and the extensive use of electrical power in the late 20th century (D. Mourtzis, and M. Doukas, 2014)

The First Industrial Revolution began in the 1780s and focused on mechanical power from water, steam, and fossil fuels. The Second Industrial Revolution introduced electrical energy in the 1870s, followed by the Third Industrial Revolution in the 1970s, which introduced automation through electronics and I.T. The Fourth Industrial Revolution, or Industry 4.0, was coined in 2011, focusing on digitalization and human involvement in business and intelligent systems. This revolution incorporates sensing, connectivity, data modeling, and decision-making advancements, requiring significant transformations across social, economic, and political domains ( F. Yang, and S. Gu, 2021) and D. Mourtzis., et al. 2018). Integrating Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) in the workplace presents challenges and opportunities. As Industry 4.0 evolves, it is expected to lead to Industry 5.0, where automation and efficiency merge with human intelligence. Industry 5.0 aims to combine automation precision with skilled managers' cognitive capabilities. Advanced technologies like AI, robotics, IoT, blockchain, 3D printing, nanotechnology, and biotechnology are transforming industries and societies. 3D printing is crucial in this evolution, enabling personalized and decentralized production methods (X. Xu., et al., 2021)

### ■ 3.0 METHODOLOGY OF IMPLEMENTATION

The portable 3D printing machine in Figure 1 was fabricated at Federal Polytechnic Ayede, Oyo state employing 3D application software and sketches, the design and fabrication of a Locally of portable Printer for additive manufacturing of electrical enclosures among other devices and spare part used in other machines, therefore driving rapid prototyping an essential tool for research commercialization. The machine is a manually operated device featuring an adjustable squeegee, PVC frame, and pulley mechanism. With dimensions of 602.5mm in length, 450mm in width, and 510mm in height, it offers versatility to accommodate various screen sizes, advocating for its adoption by local printers and educational institutions to enhance their printing capabilities and create occupational opportunities. Fused Deposition Modeling (FDM), with plastic materials CPLA is being utilized. A low-cost, open-source model and proprietary CAD software are used. By harnessing open-source hardware and software designs, local manufacturers can produce 3D printers tailored to the needs of researchers and entrepreneurs in their respective communities.

### ■ 4.0 RESULTS

Numerous case studies and success stories illustrate the transformative impact of local 3D printers on research commercialization across various domains. Students and researchers have leveraged 3D printing to develop innovative solutions with real-world applications, from biomedical engineering to sustainable architecture to electrical enclosure production



Figure 1: Portable 3D Printer

### Quality Control and Reliability Challenges

Locally-made 3D printing machines may lack the precision and consistency of their industrial counterparts. This can result in variations in the quality and accuracy of printed prototypes, which is critical for research and commercialization purposes (A. Manero., et al 2017). Inconsistent printing can lead to defects or inaccuracies in prototypes, which may compromise the reliability of the research findings or the commercial product's marketability. Lack of technical support can also hinder the adoption of new features or upgrades, limiting the capabilities of the 3D printing machine and its potential applications.

### ■ 5.0 CONCLUSION

The 5th Industrial Revolution fundamentally transforms prototyping and research commercialization, with locally-made 3D printing machines at its core. These machines democratize innovation, accelerate R&D cycles, and empower students, entrepreneurs, and researchers, driving global economic growth and societal advancement. Yet, realizing their complete potential demands strategic investments, collaboration, and overcoming challenges. Despite their benefits, locally-made 3D printing machines challenge quality control, reliability, and technical support. However, these obstacles can be surmounted through research investment, academia-industry collaboration, and training initiatives.

Furthermore, their widespread adoption promises economic development, job creation, and technology dissemination in local communities, fostering an innovative, inclusive, and sustainable future. Future studies should focus on improving the 3D printing process, enhancing efficiency, and compatibility with various materials. Investigating the impact of different process parameters on mechanical properties can expand the applications of 3D printed parts, making the processes more user-friendly, efficient, and cost-effective.

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# SHAPING THE FUTURE: A FACULTY-DRIVEN STRATEGY FOR INTEGRATING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE INTO HIGHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM AND TEACHING METHODS

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## Abstract

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into higher education to improve the curriculum and teaching methodologies is an important advancement in the era of the digitized world. It is one of the means to enhance students' and teachers' learning. The study explored the experiences of faculty members regarding the integration of AI into curriculum development and teaching pedagogies. By employing qualitative research design, in-depth interviews were conducted with eight faculty members of the public sector university. The classroom observation was also made to ensure the effective utilization of AI by the faculty members and students learning. The findings of the study indicated that teachers perceived AI as an effective tool to enhance their teaching methodologies through personalizing instructions, generating creative ideas for students' projects & assignments and critical thinking. It is concluded that AI technologies have the potential to make higher education better in supporting instruction and administrative efficiency, however, the ethical challenges need to be taken academically. This study will be significant in providing the role that teachers will play as a result of the implication of AI in education, laying the foundation for more research work and developing strategies to ensure the opportunities in AI support improvements in student learning outcomes. It is recommended to integrate AI into higher education for the progression and professional development of the students and teachers.

**Keywords:** AI Tools, Higher Education, Teaching

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

There has been a growing interest generated in the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into higher education lately. "Shaping the Future: A Faculty-Driven Strategy for Integrating Artificial Intelligence into Higher Education Curriculum and Teaching Approaches" offers a comprehensive approach to embedding artificial intelligence (AI) in higher education. The approach, centered on the faculty, attempts to prepare students for this AI world through updating curricula and adopting new teaching practices. This paper highlighted the fast-growing consequences of AI on every other industry and the request for significant reskilling across sectors, and therefore insisted on the change in educational institutions. It particularly insists on the role of faculty as significant agents of change and suggests involving them in the designing and rolling out any curricular enhancements geared toward AI. In the meantime, Farahmand et al. (2021) identified that, within the confinement of specific disciplines, AI has already been successfully implemented in the learned disciplines of engineering and computer science, with a special mention in the discipline of Cybersecurity.

An integrated infusion of AI in higher education, therefore, can be developed through a multipronged approach, which not only focuses on AI-specific courses and modules but focuses on the injection of AI concepts and applications into other disciplines and directing interdisciplinary approaches to societally impinged consequences. It underlined the need for application-oriented and practical learning, including but not limited to project-based assignments and internships, in a way that allows students to grasp AI technologies and their respective applications. It will also help encourage the use of AI-driven learning platforms and simulation techniques in building interactive learning experiences in the virtual world. It also calls for the introduction of AI ethics and critical thinking considerations in AI education programs to prepare students to deal with the ethical challenges presented by AI. A further aspect will be to take a forward approach to integrating AI in higher education and empowering faculty to prepare students for the AI-driven future. Through promoting collaboration, innovation, and ethical awareness, the strategy equips its graduates with the prerequisite attributes and knowledge to succeed in an ever more AI-reliant world. This paper, therefore, takes a close look at the various ways and factors to be considered before AI is integrated into the education system.

## ■ 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review aims at bringing together research works on the subject and discussing the possible benefits that bring forth new challenges and future directions for AI in higher education. The surveyed studies pertained to the following broad areas of AI application: instructional support, administrative efficiency, personalized learning, and ethical considerations. AI in education is expected to provide personalized learning experiences and revolutionize pedagogical strategies, yet again with ethical and pedagogical principles in balance (Silva & Janes, 2020). AI integration is considered to offer a revolutionary approach to enhancing personalized learning experiences and teacher efficiencies; the flip side might, however, bring privacy and security concerns (Tambuskar, 2022). There are rapid advances with big data and AI in education, but caution is needed in applying conclusions and fostering collaboration between academia and industry.

In line with Chen & Li (2020), AI in education is enhanced greatly through an improvement in efficiency in administration, instruction, learning, student retention, and curriculum personalization. It was observed that AI has been acquired and applied to education on a large scale, especially by education institutions, in various forms. AI at the outset had been either computer or computer-related technologies, which soon progressed to web-based and online intelligent systems of imparting education and, finally, moved to embedded computer systems and associated other technologies, the use of humanoid robots and chatbots wholly on the web in the performance of instructors' duties and functions independently or with instructors. Using these platforms, instructors could execute multiple administrative tasks, for example, effective and timely review and grading of students' assignments, while attaining a high-quality level of their teaching activities. Another study done by Snyder (2019) mentioned that Knowledge production in the business research area is growing at a rapid pace but is still broken apart and interdisciplinary. It has made it not only very difficult to stay current with the latest trends and the leading state-of-the-art research but also in the ability to evaluate the accumulated broad evidence in a particular area of business research. This is why the literature review as a research method is becoming even more relevant. Traditional literature reviews are often not very thorough and rigorous; they are usually done ad hoc without following any particular methodology. Hence, in relation to these types of reviews, doubts can arise regarding their quality and reliability.

Some studies (Chatterjee & Bhattacharjee, 2020; Ali & Abdel-Haq, 2021; Chang, et al, 2022; Pisica, et al., 2023) have surfaced that AI technologies can afford enormous benefits for higher education in terms of improved personalization of learning experiences. For example, intelligent tutoring systems and adaptive learning platforms, among other AI-empowered tools, allow the tailoring of educational content for different students' needs to bring increased learning outcomes. For instance, AI language models, like ChatGPT, will assist faculty in making learning material more interactive and appealing, thus improving the entire quality of learning. AI will also facilitate developing innovative models for education that are more adaptive and effective than usual methods.

## ■ 3.0 METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

The research design that will guide the framework for this study remains a qualitative approach to an inquiry that will look critically at the opportunities, challenges, and possible strategies of curriculum infusion with AI from a teacher-centric approach. This is so because the design is fit for gaining insight and understanding teachers' experiences and views.

### Sampling Frame

The sample is of 8 teachers. Purposive sampling is used to select participants who are exceptionally knowledgeable or experienced with integrating AI into their teaching practices. The respondent was selected from two public sector universities in Rawalpindi, sufficient to present a high level of diversity as far as academic levels and disciplines are concerned.

### Data Collection Method

#### i) Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the respondents to explore specific themes while at the same time being accorded the opportunities to express their views in detail. Each interview takes approximately 45-60 minutes. The items included are related to interview questions on perceived opportunities and challenges in integrating current AI practices and possible strategies for effectively incorporating AI in the curriculum.

#### ii) Classroom Observations

Observations are made through non-participation to understand how the practical application and impact of AI tools in the classroom setting work. Each observation session ranges from 15-30 minutes long. Observations focus on using AI tools in education, student engagement, and how easily the teacher integrates and manages AI technology with their lesson presentation.



### Data Analysis

Interviews are transcribed verbatim to ensure that everything said by the participants is captured as closely as possible. Thematic coding of the data elicited through interviews and observations was performed using any qualitative analysis software, for example, NVivo, to bring out constant themes and patterns. Thematic analysis was used in extracting meaning from data about central themes on opportunities, challenges, and ways in which AI is integrated. Data from interviews and observations was triangulated to increase credibility and reliability through cross-verification.

### Ethical Considerations

All participants are issued with written informed consent that includes details of the purpose of the study, procedures, and their rights. Through coding the identities of the participants as well as their responses, confidentiality is maintained.

## ■ 4.0 RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Thematic analysis is conducted regarding peculiar aspects of AI implementation as discussed below:

### Theme 1: Enhanced Teaching Methods and Adaptive Learning

The findings elaborated that an AI-assisted integrated teaching-learning framework is more efficient, flexible, and effective than the traditional teaching and learning methods. The developed framework supports skill-based curricula and uses AI techniques to monitor and assess the student. The findings was supported by Zekaj (2023) highlighted AI can prove to be a great benefit to instructional methods by providing adaptive learning methods in such a way that the system can cater to personal education based on the needs of the student and learning styles and also by creating and facilitating more interaction through the interface. One of the respondents highlighted as:

*"Our curriculum is meticulously designed to align with the intended learning outcomes of each course. We revisit the courses according to the need of the market and the adaptation of the new emerging technologies."*

Another respondent stated that;

*"It is important for us to match our teaching methodologies with the current demand of the industry and pace of learning in the digital world".*

Similarly of the other faculty member quoted;

*"I select dynamic learning practices such as problem-based learning and case studies to adoptive student engagement and critical thinking skills."*

The findings show that faculty members are using AI-tools to enhance students' engagement and active learning. One of the participants stated that:

*"I always encourage student participation through group discussions and experiential learning activities by using technology to enhance their understanding and retention of course material."*

AI tools are highlighted as a significant source of instructional support. The findings highlighted that AI enables teachers to have personalized learning experiences by adapting the curriculum and content to meet individual student needs, improving learning efficiency and retention. The findings were supported by Zekaj (2023) and Crompton and Song (2021), highlighted that AI-tools expressively improve teacher competencies and adaptive learning leads towards improved instructive outcomes.

One of the respondents stated;

*"AI technologies like Learning Analytics (LA), automated grading, and virtual reality (VR) assist educators in reducing administrative tasks, enabling them to concentrate more on instructing and mentoring students."*

AI enhances efficiency and resource utilization by automating tasks with chatbots and other intelligent systems. It is also found out that the use of AI-driven platforms by the faculty members for the conduct of online discussions pointed out that these tools could be utilized to not only drive the interaction between the faculty and the students but also yield a blended and better learning experience obtained from delivering courses to larger classroom sizes (Lantz et al., 2022). AI-based systems can assist in the professional development of faculty by providing adaptive services and decision support systems, enhancing the overall quality of teaching and administration

### Theme 2: Curriculum Development and Pedagogical Strategies

Curriculum development and pedagogical strategies are essential components of education, encompassing the design and implementation of educational programs and the methods used to facilitate learning. This encompasses deciding what content will be taught (scope) and the order in which it will be presented (sequence). It is crucial to ensure that the curriculum aligns with the educational standards set by relevant authorities or organizations. Additionally, it involves

identifying the needs, interests, and backgrounds of learners to tailor the curriculum accordingly. Furthermore, it also provides a visual representation of the curriculum to ensure coherence, progression, and alignment with goals and standards.

One of the respondents also reported as:

*“Besides, those rapidly evolving AI-driven educational technologies provide the opportunity for real-time analysis, which empowers educators to make well-informed decisions about curriculum design and student support”.*

In regard to pedagogical skills, the findings highlighted that AI generated teaching instruction helps in adapting teaching methodologies and learning resources to facilitate the students having diverse learning outcomes, capabilities and interests. For active learning it assist in engaging students in activities that require them to actively participate, collaborate, and apply what they've learned. It also provides support and guidance to help students build on their existing knowledge and skills, gradually removing assistance as they become more proficient.

Another respondent mentioned that;

*“Making use of technology in our curriculum has become an essential aspect. It enables interactive learning experiences and presents possibilities for personalized learning”.* Similarly another respondent stated that: *“we employ learning management systems and educational software to enhance conventional teaching methods, accommodating various learning styles”.*

The above findings illustrated that AI is promoting real-world experiences and application to enhance learning in higher education. Li et al. (2023) supported the findings by emphasizing how (AI) has been used to develop exclusive and real-world courses that foster students' imaginative and hands-on skills. The results are supported by observations made in the classroom by faculty members using artificial intelligence tools, impending to expand instruction and learning. The practices of AI in teaching techniques were mirrored in the attitudes, behaviors, and digital competency of educators towards these topics.

### Theme 3: Challenges and Ethical Considerations

However, though integration provides the windows through which AI in higher education can reap such benefits, at the same time, it faces many challenges. First of all, the main concern concerning the integration of AI in higher education falls on the issue of data privacy and security. Most of the respondents acknowledged the value of AI, evoking the problems of data collection and analysis on a massive scale; therefore, the issue of storage and the usage of such data. The same findings were also supported by Drach et al. (2023) by stressing that all ethical considerations are treated as very critical to be considered for transparency, accountability, and inclusivity. The view of one participant was as follows:

*“AI implementation in higher education faces several challenges, both technical and ethical and cultural and resource-related, which requires careful consideration to realize the full potential of AI to be used responsibly. The data security issue, ethical implications, and intensifying scare of job loss due to automation heighten the sum of serious considerations that one has to make concerning employing AI.”*

Another critical challenge is that biased artificial intelligence algorithms are allowed to run free. Because of unchecked and poorly handled biased algorithms, inequalities in education may further be enhanced, reducing the otherwise held benefits of AI. It also noted that the cost to implement AI technologies can require a significant investment of time and money, which some institutions simply do not have, particularly in regions where digital services are not widely available.

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

There is a solid need to operationalize an ethical framework specific to the context of higher education, leading to the deployment of AI that is based on concepts of fairness, openness, responsibility, and privacy. Furthermore, interdisciplinary cross-collaboration among educators, technologists, ethicists, and policymakers should be cultivated to take a holistic view of the implications of AI in higher education and, hence, evolve interdisciplinary solutions and best practices. The bottom line in investing in the infrastructure and resources that create an excellent AI infrastructure is for institutions to be able to train and support professors and staff in effectively using AI tools and technologies in teaching, research, and administration.

## 6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

AI technologies have the potential to make higher education better in supporting instruction and administrative efficiency. If employed sensitively and effectively, AI has the potential to advance educational outcomes for humanity, relieve workloads of faculty, personalize learning for individual students, and enhance faculty professional development. Critical, however, will be overcoming the technical, ethical, and resource challenges key to the sensitive and effective integration of AI into higher education. However, before these advantages can be fully realized, it is necessary to overcome issues such as data privacy, ethical considerations, and implementation costs. Future research must be on how to develop

comprehensive approaches toward ethical and practical use of AI in higher education, where the technology should be a tool for improving the quality of educational outputs and lifelong learning.

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## A BLENDED METHOD: PHYSICAL AND NONPHYSICAL INTERVIEW

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### Abstract

Every research requires to have a sound methodology. Only then it reflects the credibility and the trustworthiness of the findings. As such, pertinent methods are crucial in collecting the data. Moreover, techniques that were assumed to be a second fiddle such as nonphysical interview had taken the center stage for the past four years. This drastic change occurred due to the coronavirus pandemic that halted the researchers from conducting their fieldwork. Although, the movement control order (MCO) was lifted, researchers still continue to exercise the nonphysical method. Therefore, the present methodology study investigates the significance of blended interview for the *Menu Rahmah* project (on-going). This qualitative paper will explore three essential research questions in the scope of interview: i) how nonphysical sample substitutes face-to-face sample? ii) why telephone setting is an option to physical setting? and iii) which audio-recording method is adopted for physical and nonphysical interview? 20 informants were interviewed face-to-face and over the smartphone based on voluntary participation. The participants were notified in advance that their discussion will be audio-recorded for academic usage. Appointments were scheduled according to the interviewees' convenience. Further, they were given an option to choose whether to have the meeting physically or on the phone. Each interview took approximately 30 minutes. Thus, this research is substantial in the context of blended interview method. It provided an alternative platform to the researchers and participants for the question-and-answer session despite not physically present.

**Keywords:** blended method, physical interview, nonphysical interview, methodology research

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### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The present research is associated with the *Menu Rahmah* programme that was announced by the Ministry of Domestic, Trade and Cost of Living in the first quarter of last year 2023. Indeed, this worthwhile intention received applause from the Malaysian citizens. It was a timely initiative that brought abundance of comfort as we had moved into our endemic stage of the Covid-19 disease. Therefore, all sectors were permitted to operationalize fully just like the good old days. However, the trajectory of the nation's economy failed to take off as projected. Hence, the people were in a dire strait due to the internal affairs such as inflation that spawned a higher living cost. Moreover, this catastrophic scenario banded together with the significant global economy slump, unforeseen currency devaluation and unheralded war fares.

However, the horror of the coronavirus still lingers in each and every one of us. We witnessed countless deaths that ensued right in front of our very own eyes. Thus, our daily routine has been obstructed due to this anxiety. Nevertheless, the society have come to terms to co-exist with this particular virus. As such, the self-preventive practice is the only way out in protecting ourselves due to the unpredictable mutation of the coronavirus. On that account, individuals need to take the necessary action such as keeping their hygiene in check and masking in public. In addition, despite undertaking these safety precautions, many are still being infected by this microscopic illness.

In that event, various research had to be ceased temporarily as the participants were not willing to partake in these activities or experiments. It may not only put their lives on risk but also the researchers. Thus, the researchers specifically the social scientists need to acknowledge this occurrence and find a way around to engage with their subjects. Thence, a vigorous method will be apt in comprehending the information collected directly and indirectly from these participants.

On those grounds, this methodology paper examines the blended technique that incorporates the physical and nonphysical interview. It addresses three fundamental research questions: i) how nonphysical sample substitutes face-to-face sample? ii) why telephone setting is an option to physical setting? and iii) which audio-recording method is adopted for physical and nonphysical interview? The significance from this topic will enable the researchers to weigh in the telephone interview as a blended method in their data collection procedure especially after the pandemic. By its very nature, it provides an opportunity for the participants themselves to opt the best approach that is deemed to be satisfactory for them in a voluntary fieldwork.

## ■ 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The composition of the past scholarly articles is divided into two segments: physical interview and nonphysical interview.

### *Physical Interview*

Face-to-face interview is claimed to be a 'gold standard' (Schober, 2017; Johnsan et al., 2021; Thunberg & Arnell, 2022) bar in collecting data for qualitative research. Therefore, researchers must establish a good rapport (Irvine, 2011; Block & Erskine, 2012) with the informants in order to extract the rich information for the thematic analysis. Intrinsically, it tests the researcher's credibility to have an efficient communication skill with the participants. Thus, the interviewees must be convinced that they will not be driven into a threatening or embarrassing position. In addition, this course of action requires a proper strategy in scheduling (Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004) the meetings such as the date, time and venue. Apart from that, the expenditure of the cost, the consumption of time involved and the journey of travelling to the location must be sorted out thoroughly before moving into the fieldwork. By and of itself, the route to the fact-finding will be eventful. Besides that, the face-to-face interaction allows to probe (Creswell, 2007) further on the doubts and the incomplete narration or information. Thus, such clarification can reduce the bias for the interviewer before proceeding to the next inquiry. Moreover, the physical meeting is paramount in reading the informants' facial expressions and gestures. It is crucial in construing their non-verbal communication as it brings forth immense definition to their verbal communication. Meanwhile, the paralinguistic also plays a vital role in illustrating the accounts of their experiences. It simultaneously weaves between the spoken and unspoken words in interpreting the messages in regard to the subject matter.

### *Nonphysical Interview*

Remote interviews had been around for a couple of decades. It consists of several applications and devices in the interview practice. As such, the innovative technological tools unknowingly assisted in the process of gathering the information for the research studies. Numerous researchers around the globe are in-debt to the techies. It is due to their novel creation that led to the contemporary communication software. Hence, from the landline telephone that evolved to the present sophisticated smartphone had an imperative impact in everyone's lives. Besides, these devices are easily accessible and accommodates to the public across all economy strata in the society. Likewise, the platform for the video calls can also be downloaded into these smartphones. In this degree, no one can deny of not having access to the audio or visual communication (Thunberg & Arnell, 2022). On that account, the researchers are able to conduct interviews without the physical presence with the participants (Johnsan et al., 2021). In other words, the physical interview process is converted to virtual mode (Trier-Bieniek, 2012). Moreover, it will decrease the travelling expenses, achieve the desirable time efficiency and provide the security for both the interviewer and interviewees (Carr & Worth, 2001; Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004; Irvine, 2011; Block & Erskine, 2012). Nevertheless, the participants do not need to fear of welcoming the visible guest (interviewer) and the invisible guest (coronavirus) into their residence! Therefore, the venue spot is overruled as it grants enormous space and flexibility (Saarijärvi & Bratt, 2021) in carrying out the digital dialogue sessions.

## ■ 3.0 METHODOLOGY

The qualitative methodology is split into three segments: document analysis, observations and interviews.

### *Document Analysis*

Documentation plays a pivotal role in ensuring the success of data collection. It complements the research by providing the extra edge in a triangulation approach (Bowen, 2009). As such, these written accounts (printed and electronic) were attained from the newspapers' articles in the year 2023. The leading English newspapers such as *The Star*, *New Straits Times* and *The Malay Mail* were the reference point of this *Menu Rahmah* issue. Moreover, the *Astro Awani* news channel (online) further furnished the information on this topic. Likewise, the authenticity and credibility of the sources were assured and coupled with the meaning and representative in the analysis of the materials (Morgan, 2022).

### *Observations*

Participant observation gave carte blanche to delve in this *Menu Rahmah* scheme. The food item is marked at RM5 and is offered by the registered outlets. As such, the direct presence (Patton, 2002) of the researchers in purchasing the meal empowered in comprehending this subject matter. Moreover, the emic perspective managed to unfold issues pertaining to the research questions. However, the researchers' hands-on participation may evoke bias. Hence, the facts could be distorted due to the insiders' perspective in interpreting the situation in concern. Nevertheless, a thorough scientific method (Ciesielska, Boström & Öhlander, 2018) must be carried out further in order to verify these observation data.

### *Interviews*

Face-to-face interviews and telephone conversations were held between the researcher and the 20 informants who resided in Klang Valley. Furthermore, they were notified of the option whether to have physical or nonphysical meeting. It is due to the inconsistent Covid-19 situation in our country. On that note, four participants agreed to have face-to-face interaction. Meanwhile, 16 participants requested interviews over the smartphone. In addition, the participator was alerted in prior that the discussion will be audio-recorded. The 10 open-ended questions granted the interviewees in

expressing their thoughts, feelings and experiences. These transcriptions will be analyzed for thematic patterns (Patton, 2002). Moreover, the informants will be kept anonymous and the information compiled will be utilized for research purposes (Yin, 2009).

#### ■ 4.0 RESULTS

The results are presented based on three segments: sampling, setting and audio-recording.

##### *Sampling*

20 purposeful samples of non-probability criteria fitted this research frame. In addition, the distinct characteristics were screened to yield rich information from these informants. It consisted of two fundamental aspects: food choice and locality in view of the *Menu Rahmah* topic. In other words, these participants are of vegetarian diet and residing at Klang Valley. Therefore, the hunt for the samples kicked off with the gatekeeper's recommendation in gaining access to the subjects. Only then, the researcher arranged for the interview meetings: physical or nonphysical. Besides that, 16 informants wished to have the discussion on the phone instead of meeting face-to-face due to unforeseen circumstances. Videlicet, the nonphysical sampling's data were equally credible and trustworthy to the physical contact participants despite collecting via smartphone.

##### *Setting*

Research setting involved two dimensions: physical and nonphysical interview. It was formatted in that manner to accommodate with the present needs of the subjects. As such, four participants agreed to have face-to-face interview at a venue that is mutually agreed by both the researcher and the interviewee. Meanwhile, 80 percent informants conveyed their interest to engage via telephone. They were distressed with the uncertain Covid-19 scenario that hindered them to attend physical discussion. Moreover, work commitment and family obligation was another stumbling block of their procrastination that led to the nonphysical mode. In addition, due to the nature of voluntary cooperation the researcher had to provide an alternative option to complete the study within the timeline that was stipulated by the research grant sponsor.

##### *Audio-Recording*

Recoding the interview dialogues are imperative as it facilitates in the transcribing process of the oral communication. Hence, it avoids the pauses that occurs in the manual method of note taking. However, consent must be obtained in advance before the interview sessions takes place. Besides that, no visual photographs were captured before, during and after the talks of the physical or virtual form. It is to conceal their identity and keeping their confidentiality in private. Moreover, it secures the trust or rapport between the interviewer and interviewee. The meetings lasted almost 30 minutes. As such, these physical and nonphysical conversations were digitally audio-taped by adopting the smartphone device (model Vivo 1901). Hence, the interview files were later transferred safely to the researchers' laptops to examine the emergence of the themes.

#### ■ 5.0 DISCUSSION

The methodological study on *Menu Rahmah* distinguishes three primary aspects in conducting the interview technique. Therefore, the aforementioned of purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2007) is conceived relevant in extracting the efficient source from the participants. As such, the vegetarian informants shared their insights pertaining to the subject matter. This enlightened the challenges that the consumers' faced in buying the well-balanced diet food prized at RM5. Moreover, the gatekeeper was the backbone for the researchers in identifying the compatible samples (McFadyen & Rankin, 2016). By its very nature, the online discussion is as good as the physical interview practice (Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004). However, the face-to-face meeting is considered as a 'gold standard' (Schober, 2017; Johnsan et al., 2021; Thunberg & Arnell, 2022) but in reality we need to examine the nature of the study before concluding such remarks. It is because specific research will bear positive outcomes from the virtual interviews depending on the issue that is investigated.

Next off, the setting was determined by the participants themselves as options were laid out whether physical or nonphysical meeting. The arrangement for the interview sessions needs to be mapped out in terms of date, time and place. It was easier said than done as it was an arduous task in complying to the informants' expectations. As such, only 20 percent of the interviewee reached an agreement with the interviewer. Hence, the appointments were scheduled accordingly. However, one of the participants deferred the session citing to personal matter. On contrary, the virtual communication (Trier-Bieniek, 2012) preference via smartphone were sought-after. Intrinsically, it was a better alternative (Schober, 2017). There was no cost, traffic and fear involved as the informants avoided in travelling and contracting any possible contagious virus to the interview venue (Thunberg & Arnell, 2022). In essence, the digital mode (Saarijärvi & Bratt, 2021) was apt especially for the working and vulnerable participants.

Finally, the informants' voices were recorded digitally. The usage of the smartphone eased the fieldwork journey of the researchers (Carr & Worth, 2001). Besides that, physical interviews were taped by utilizing the smartphone that has the recorder feature. In addition, during the telephone conversation this application was also employed in recording the calls. As such, it expedited the data collection process (Clark, 2010) to re-examine whether the information had reached to the saturation point. Likewise, the preconceived opinion needs to be cross-checked by the researchers to reduce the bias effect

against the transcriptions (Irvine, 2011). Hence, before the discussion the participants gave verbal informed consent for the recording action and will remain incognito. Furthermore, their willingness to contribute for this research is appreciated as it would support to improve the nation's policy.

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

This paper underlined the substantial perspective in an interview method. It unveiled the physical and nonphysical interview approach that was conducted by the researchers for the *Menu Rahmah* project. As a matter of fact, this study is not a comparative inquiry that showcases the benefit and obstacle, advantage and disadvantage or pro and con in a face-to-face and virtual interview procedure. Instead, it is to accentuate both these techniques especially in the current state of affairs. In other words, it is pertinent to optimize the physical and online communication mode in order to achieve the outcomes within the assigned duration of time.

Thus, in terms of sample, setting and audio-recording of the interview process it witnessed a smooth data collection with least complications. However, the adoption of the blended interview methods broadened the horizon of one's knowledge. It enabled the researchers to fine-tune their technique in pronto during the interview sessions. This approach is essential for an investigator in altering himself or herself to solicit information for the topic.

The limitation addressed here is that there were only four out of 20 participants mutually agreed to have face-to-face interviews. As such, it would be better off if there were 10 participants. It is because the blended method is not in an equilibrium position and may be swayed in the process of interpreting the results. In spite of that, it is recommended to have equal participants in both the methods for an enriching experience.

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# IMPACT OF *ULU AL-ALBAB* 5S ON COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE OF SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES

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## Abstract

This study investigates the influence of 5S quality management practices on sustaining competitive advantage for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Malaysia. Given the significant contribution of SMEs to the country's economic development, it is essential to comprehend the efficacy of 5S quality management practices with ulu al-albab. The study aims to investigate the impact of implementing 5S principles with ulu al-albab on operational efficiency, productivity, and overall competitiveness among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Malaysia. This study utilised qualitative research methodology by conducting personal interviews with the management of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The findings indicate that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Malaysia can gain substantial advantages by implementing 5S quality management practices with ulu al-albab. These benefits include increased operational efficiency, reduced waste, improved workplace organisation, and higher overall quality performance. These enhancements aid in maintaining a competitive edge by allowing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to efficiently meet market demands, provide superior products and services, and remain cost competitive. This study presents empirical data that supports the notion that implementing 5S quality management techniques has a beneficial effect on maintaining a competitive advantage for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Malaysia. The findings of this research give significant knowledge for policymakers, company owners, and practitioners who are interested in improving the competitiveness and sustainability of SMEs.

*Keywords:* Ulu al-albab, competitive advantage, small and medium enterprises, 5S quality management

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In order to maintain a competitive edge, small and medium companies (SMEs) must employ creative methods due to the growing competitiveness in the market (Ma, 2000; Cater & Pucko, 2005; Abdul Manaf et al., 2022; Hanif, Batool & Yaseen, 2023; Zhang et al., 2023; Aldabbas & Oberholzer, 2024). The 5S approach, which originated in Japan, has become well-known for its ability to enhance organisational efficiency and production among other management practices (Ma, 2000; Jaca et al., 2014; Hanif et al., 2023). This study aims to broaden the traditional implementation of 5S by incorporating it with the principles of ulu al-albab, a notion derived from Islamic philosophy that highlights profound comprehension and sagacity (Zhang et al., 2023; Aldabbas & Oberholzer, 2024). This integration seeks to examine how incorporating spiritual and ethical aspects can improve conventional business methods and add to the long-term competitive advantage of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Malaysia.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have a crucial impact on Malaysia's economy making substantial contributions to both employment and GDP (Mulyaningsih et al., 2023; Nor et al., 2024; Azam & Abdullah, 2024). Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) encounter several obstacles that hinder their growth and capacity to continue operating successfully (Hanif et al., 2023; Aldabbas & Oberholzer, 2024). These hurdles include inefficiencies in their operations, problems with managing quality, and the requirement for cultural alignment in their business practices (Ma, 2000; Jaca et al., 2014; Hanif et al., 2023). Prior study has predominantly concentrated on the technical aspects of quality management systems such as 5S, while paying less regard to the ways in which these practices might be modified to align with local cultural and ethical norms (Hanif et al., 2023; Azam & Abdullah, 2024; Nor et al., 2024).

This study seeks to address the existing knowledge gap by investigating the potential impact of the ulu al-albab framework on the efficacy of 5S practices in enhancing operational efficiency and competitive positioning of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Malaysia. The work is structured into multiple components, including a literature review, methods, results, discussion, and conclusions. Each element is intended to progressively contribute to a thorough comprehension of the influence of ulu al-albab 5S on the competitive advantage of SMEs.

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The incorporation of quality management systems such as 5S into the operational plans of small and medium firms (SMEs) has been a central focus of academic research because of its ability to greatly improve competitiveness and efficiency (Ma, 2000; Cater & Pucko, 2005; Gupta & Jain, 2015; Jaca et al., 2014; Randhawa & Ahuja, 2017; Jurburg et al., 2017; Gonzalez-



Aleu et al., 2018; Bartnicka, 2018; Hanif et al., 2023). This literature review examines the current research on 5S practices and their effects on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (Gupta & Jain, 2015; Weaven et al., 2021; Hanif et al., 2023; Azam & Abdullah, 2024; Nor et al., 2024). It also investigates the innovative incorporation of ulu al-albab, a concept rooted in Islamic philosophy that emphasises profound comprehension, wisdom, and the ethical aspect of knowledge, within the framework of quality management (Mhd. Sarif, 2019, 2020; Hanif et al., 2023; Azam & Abdullah, 2024; Nor et al., 2024).

The 5S system, initially created in Japan, is well-known for its methodical approach to organising the workplace and has been extensively implemented in numerous industries worldwide. The implementation of 5S practices can result in enhanced productivity, safety, and waste reduction (Ma, 2000; Jaca et al., 2014; Randhawa & Ahuja, 2017; Jurburg et al., 2017; Gonzalez-Aleu et al., 2018; Bartnicka, 2018; Hanif et al., 2023). Nevertheless, implementing the 5S methodology in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), especially in developing markets such as Malaysia, poses distinct problems and opportunities that have received limited attention in existing research (Hanif et al., 2023; Azam & Abdullah, 2024; Nor et al., 2024).

There are favourable impacts of implementing the 5S methodology in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Malaysia (Hanif et al., 2023; Azam & Abdullah, 2024; Nor et al., 2024). These studies observed the enhancements in operational efficiency and staff morale as a result of the adoption (Jaca et al., 2014; Randhawa & Ahuja, 2017; Jurburg et al., 2017; Gonzalez-Aleu et al., 2018; Bartnicka, 2018; Hanif et al., 2023). However, there is still a lack of knowledge regarding how these techniques might be modified to better suit different cultures in order to improve their effectiveness and long-term viability (Mhd. Sarif, 2019, 2020; Hanif et al., 2023; Azam & Abdullah, 2024; Nor et al., 2024). The disparity becomes most evident when examining the cultural and ethical foundation of ulu al-albab, which has historically not been linked to quality management systems.

The concept of ulu al-albab is a holistic approach to knowledge that blends intellectual rigour with ethical considerations. By incorporating this philosophical framework, the implementation of 5S can be enhanced to better match with the values and cultural practices of cultures with a Muslim majority (Mhd. Sarif, 2015; Mhd. Sarif, Zainudin & Yahya, 2020; Mhd. Sarif, Zainudin & Ismail, 2021). Nevertheless, there is a scarcity of material regarding the direct incorporation of ulu al-albab principles with 5S practices in the context of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), highlighting a noteworthy research prospect (Mhd. Sarif, 2015; Mhd. Sarif, 2019; Mhd. Sarif et al., 2020; Mhd. Sarif et al., 2021; Azam & Abdullah, 2024).

Upon analysing the results of past studies, it becomes clear that although 5S techniques are typically successful, their long-term viability and profound influence can be improved by integrating them with culturally and ethically compatible frameworks such as ulu al-albab (Jurburg et al., 2017; Gonzalez-Aleu et al., 2018; Bartnicka, 2018; Mhd. Sarif et al., 2021; Hanif et al., 2023). This integration not only offers solutions to operational difficulties but also adds to a business strategy that is more morally aware.

This literature analysis highlights the necessity of the current study by demonstrating the deficiencies in previous research, namely in the incorporation of ethical and cultural aspects into established quality management systems. This study aims to investigate how ulu al-albab can revolutionise the adoption and efficacy of 5S in Malaysian SMEs. The goal is to make a valuable contribution to both academic discussions and practical applications in this subject.

### ■ 3.0 METHODOLOGY

In this study, the researchers conducted a thorough qualitative study through face-to-face personal interviews with the owners of five (5) small and medium-sized firms (SMEs). The aim of the study was to evaluate how the implementation of 5S quality management techniques affects the ability of these businesses to maintain a competitive edge. The utilisation of this methodology, which emphasises the active involvement of researchers, facilitated a thorough comprehension of complex phenomena that are not readily measurable, such as the precise effects of 5S practices on small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) operations (Merriam, 2002; Merriam & Grenier, 2019; Merriam & Baumgartner, 2020). The selection of qualitative research methodologies was based on their capacity to capture the intricate and comprehensive experiences, attitudes, and motives of the participants, hence offering essential contextual information to the collected data (Merriam & Clark, 1993; Merriam, 2002). The researchers employed convenience sampling to pick participants, utilising pre-existing connections to facilitate the recruiting process, so guaranteeing prompt access to consenting and easily accessible respondents (Merriam & Grenier, 2019; Allan, 2020). Before conducting the interviews, which had a duration of around thirty minutes each, explicit agreement was sought from all participants, in accordance with ethical research standards. After each interview, the researchers performed theme analysis on the notes. theme analysis is a procedure that involves identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns within the data. This procedure entailed actively analysing the data, documenting early ideas, and systematically organising the material to highlight aspects relevant to the research inquiries. The categories were subsequently grouped into themes, each representing a crucial component of the findings. This allowed for a detailed understanding of how 5S practices affect the competitive advantage of SMEs.

### ■ 4.0 RESULTS

The feedback received from the first question demonstrated a wide variety of techniques across the participating firms. Enterprise 1 emphasised that integrating ulu al-albab into their 5S procedures greatly improved ethical accountability and environmental responsibility throughout their operations. Enterprise 2 experienced improved operational efficiency and a

boost in sustainability, transparency, and accountability after incorporating the 5S framework into their Muhasabah system. Enterprise 3 stated that its Soleh system, which includes Solat, Order, Learn, Energy, and Healing, successfully integrated spiritual and ethical principles with 5S practices, resulting in improved operational efficiency. Enterprise 4 achieved improved operational efficiency and a heightened ethical awareness by integrating the 5S framework with their MAKMUM system. Enterprise 5 highlighted the positive impact of their JASA system on their workplace culture and operational efficiency. The JASA system prioritises community, health, righteousness, and excellence.

The responses to the second interview question revealed that the incorporation of ulu al-albab with 5S practices significantly improved the competitive advantages of these firms. Enterprise 1 utilised this integration to appeal to partners and clients who place a high value on sustainability and ethics, hence bolstering its market standing. The enhanced transparency and sustainability of Enterprise 2 facilitated the establishment of trust and the cultivation of enduring relationships. The Soleh system of Enterprise 3 not only enhanced company processes but also strengthened interaction with its client base, distinguishing it in the market. Enterprise 4 strategically adjusted their operations to meet the ethical business practices required by the market, resulting in increased employee satisfaction and loyalty. Enterprise 5 cultivated a culture that prioritised community engagement and ethical practices, which appealed to individuals and organisations seeking corporate responsibility.

The results indicate that incorporating ulu al-albab with 5S techniques not only improves operational procedures but also enhances a company's position in a competitive market, leading to internal enhancements and external growth prospects.

## ■ 5.0 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

A revolutionary combination of Islamic ethical frameworks and operational efficiencies can be achieved in Malaysian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) by combining the concepts of ulu al-albab with the traditional practices of 5S (Gonzalez-Aleu et al., 2018; Bartnicka, 2018; Mhd. Sarif et al., 2021; Hanif et al., 2023; Azam & Abdullah, 2024). A notable departure from the conventional applications of 5S is shown by the fact that this integration acts as a catalyst for in-depth conversations on organisational behaviour, business ethics, and competitive strategy (Ahmad & Seet, 2009; Ahmad, Abd Rani & Mohd Kassim, 2010; Gupta & Jain, 2015; Weaven et al., 2021; Hanif et al., 2023; Azam & Abdullah, 2024; Nor et al., 2024). Traditionally, 5S has been praised for its ability to improve both efficiency and quality in industrial settings (Ali et al., 2022; Mhd. Sarif et al., 2021; Hanif et al., 2023; Nor et al., 2024). This burgeoning discipline has the potential to revolutionise the notions that are already in place regarding productivity and governance, pushing the frontiers of how corporations incorporate ethical considerations into their fundamental operations.

The majority of the literature that is currently available has a tendency to emphasise the advantages of 5S in its traditional form, with the primary emphasis being placed on its capacity to improve quality and streamline processes (Bartnicka, 2018; Mhd. Sarif et al., 2021; Zhang et al., Hanif et al., 2023; Azam & Abdullah, 2024). The broader implications of combining such techniques with ethical frameworks such as ulu al-albab, which resonate with ongoing trends towards corporate social responsibility and ethical leadership, are sometimes overlooked in talks of this nature (Mhd. Sarif et al., 2021; Ali et al., 2022; Azam & Abdullah, 2024). This void in the existing body of research indicates that there is a major opportunity to broaden the scope of 5S applications to incorporate ethical considerations. These considerations not only align with the ideals of corporate responsibility, but they also advance those concepts.

Significantly, the combination of ulu al-albab and 5S practices has the potential to pave the way for a sustainable business model that is in line with ethical standards and aligns profit-making with those principles (Bartnicka, 2018; Mhd. Sarif et al., 2021; Hanif et al., 2023). Companies who are looking to fulfil the demands of the modern market, which are increasingly favouring ethical considerations in addition to traditional commercial ideals, should use this model as a practical blueprint to ensure that they are adequately prepared (Jurburg et al., 2017; Gonzalez-Aleu et al., 2018; Bartnicka, 2018; Mhd. Sarif et al., 2021; Hanif et al., 2023). The findings of this research contribute to the advancement of the academic and practical debate concerning the incorporation of ethical practices into business operations. These findings highlight the potential of these practices to considerably improve both internal processes and strategic market positioning. It is not only that this new development encourages a more ethical approach to conducting business, but it also guarantees that businesses will continue to be competitive and relevant in a global market that is always expanding.

## ■ 6.0 CONCLUSION

The research investigated the integration of ulu al-albab principles and conventional 5S practices within small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Malaysia. It revealed a revolutionary synthesis that harmonises operational efficiencies with Islamic ethical frameworks. The research findings indicate that through qualitative interviews with five small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), this novel methodology stimulates more profound conversations regarding business ethics, competitive strategy, and organisational behaviour. This challenges the conventional notion of 5S as solely concentrating on improving quality and efficiency. The results illustrate a substantial departure from traditional 5S methodologies through the integration of ethical considerations, thus contributing to the ongoing dialogue surrounding ethical leadership and corporate social responsibility. Moreover, it offers a strong structure for organisations to improve their ethical reputation and operational efficiency, giving them a competitive edge in markets that value honesty and ethical conduct. Based on these ramifications, it appears that incorporating ethical frameworks into business operations presents a viable and enduring strategy that may result in the development of business models that balance profitability and ethical

considerations, thereby satisfying the requirements of modern markets that prioritise such factors. Further investigation is required to authenticate these results in diverse cultural and industrial settings; doing so will enable an evaluation of the applicability and constraints of these integrated practices. In general, the incorporation of these components into Malaysian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) serves to improve internal operations and market positioning, while also guaranteeing the sustainability of businesses' competitiveness in an ever-changing global marketplace. This substantial contribution to scholarly and practical dialogue offers a valuable framework for ethical business practices that result in profitable and sustainable operations.

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# UNLOCKING HUMAN POTENTIAL: THE IMPACT OF LEARNING ORGANIZATION DIMENSIONS ON DIGITAL LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES

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## Abstract

In today's digital age, having digital leadership competencies (DLC) is crucial for driving digital transformation. One practical approach to developing digital leadership competencies is through learning organizations, where continuous improvement and creative thinking are encouraged. Many studies have shown that learning organizations can positively impact employee engagement, organizational performance, and knowledge performance. This study aims to explore the role of learning organizations in fostering digital leadership competencies. A quantitative study was conducted using SEM PLS Analysis to assess how all dimensions of a learning organization affect digital leadership competencies. The study took place in Indonesian state-owned companies, which are required to implement learning organizations as per government regulations. The research method involved a convenient survey, and 425 responses were received from 25 companies. The findings indicate that strategic leadership focused on learning and systems to capture learning significantly enhance digital leadership directly. Continuous learning, collaboration, team learning, inquiry, and dialogue have a positive effect on digital leadership competencies, which are mediated by strategic leadership in the environment of learning. Continuous learning, inquiry, and dialogue are influencing the development of digital leadership competencies through a system that captures and facilitates learning. Strategic learning leadership is the most influential for learning organizations to adapt to develop digital leaders. In conclusion, organizations must become learning organizations to develop their new leaders, and organization leaders need to think and act strategically about how to support their teams in learning.

**Keywords:** Digital Leadership Competencies, DLOQ, Learning Organization, Strategic Leadership

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Today's organisations face challenges, including rapid technological advancements, which require transformation, and to succeed, leadership has evolved to involve more than just guiding team members towards goals (Kotter, 2006). Digital organisations need leaders who can promote digitisation and digital transformation by raising awareness and developing practices (Abbu et al., 2022; Benitez et al., 2022). However, digital leaders must maintain their traditional competencies and acquire new ones to navigate the digital landscape effectively (Benitez et al., 2022; Goretti, 2019; Kane et al., 2019), continuously updating their knowledge and understanding of digital technology and adapting to its rapid changes (Cizmeci, 2020). As a result, developing digital leadership skills at all levels is a significant challenge for top organisational leaders.

Leadership competencies can be internally developed through formal learning, activities, and self-development (Yukl & Gardner, 2020) (Sawy et al., 2016). Digital competencies and learning organisations are related (Fazekas, 2017; Marsick, 2013) because learning organisations encourage employees to learn new skills and knowledge through resources and chances. Individuals within a learning organisation seek knowledge about future competencies and are empowered to act (Reese, 2012). Therefore, the learning organisation emphasises developing leadership competencies at all levels of the organisational hierarchy (Serrat, 2017). Thus, we hypothesise that learning organisations affect digital leadership.

Research needs to be done to show how learning organisations affect leadership skills. The available study was the influence of learning organisations on leadership style (Rashid & Mansor, 2018), employee competencies (Rilistina, 2021), and global leadership (Pitaloka, 2019). Therefore, a more comprehensive and complete empirical investigation is needed to examine how learning organisations affect digital leadership skills.

In our analysis, we employ the Dimension of Learning Organisation Questionnaire (DLOQ) developed by Marsick and Watkins (2003) as DLOQ is widely recognised as the most comprehensive framework (Ghaffari et al., 2011), and it has been validated in over 14 languages and countries (Watkins & O'Neil, 2013) which confirmed in the Vietnamese setting by (Nguyen-Duc et al., 2023). We use critical digital leadership competencies, incorporating insights from (Kane et al., 2019) as well as competencies identified by (Eberl & Drews, 2021; Imran et al., 2020; Fotso, 2021; Zulu & Khosrowshahi, 2021)

Developing digital leadership competencies is crucial for achieving successful organisational transformation. This paper explores how learning organisations facilitate the development of these competencies at all levels, supported by empirical research conducted in state-owned enterprises (SOEs) in Indonesia.

## ■ 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Most studies about leadership and learning organisation are the effect of leadership on learning organisation. However, more studies are needed about the effect of learning organisation on leadership, especially digital leadership, which has yet to be found in the literature review. Studies on the effect of learning organisation on leadership are also limited in what we can find its effect on organisational performance and knowledge performance (Nguyen-Duc et al., 2023), organisational innovation (Chughtai et al., 2023), adaptive performance (Kim, 2021), intrapreneurship (Ashal et al., 2023) and corporate social responsibility (Osagie et al., 2022). The limited studies on the effect of LOs on digital leadership use a literature review (Fazekas, 2017; Marsick, 2013).

The hypothesis is that all dimensions of DLOQ affect DLQ. Continuous learning, one of the four factors affecting knowledge transfer and competency development (Palacios-Marqués et al., 2013), is essential for adaptability, which is a crucial digital leadership competency (Eberl & Drews, 2021; Kane et al., 2019). Inquiry and dialogue, which involve asking questions, engaging in discussions, reflecting a curious mindset, and an openness to learning from others, can facilitate exploratory behaviour (Horstmeyer, 2020), increasing competencies through knowledge (Letina, 2020). Collaboration has been shown to improve performance (Ang'ana & Chiroma, 2021), leading to improved competencies and better quality strategic decisions by top management teams, thereby enhancing leadership skills (Carmeli & Sheaffer, 2008). Empowered people are more committed and motivated to improve themselves, advance their careers, and learn new skills (Schiuma et al., 2021). The digital age is breaking down barriers and increasing the ability to communicate with each other through technology, which will increase knowledge. Mentoring helps people learn how to be leaders and share their knowledge (Rupčić, 2021a), and coaching and mentoring are both known to assist people in becoming better leaders and making better decisions (Reyes et al., 2016; Rupčić, 2021a).

DLOQ has seven dimensions in two layers: people level and structural level (Rothman et al., 2019; Watkins et al., 2021). The people level has three dimensions: Continuous Learning (CL), Inquiries and Dialogue (ID) and Collaboration and Team Learning (CTL); the structural level has four dimensions: System to Capture and share Learning (SCL), Empower People (EP), Connects the Organisation (CO) and Strategic Leadership on Learning (SLL). In this study, the 21-version questionnaire Watkins and Marsick (2003) developed was translated into Indonesian using psychometric procedures.

Digital leaders are defined as able to transform business models, operations, customers, employees, and digital platforms (Bonnet & Westerman, 2021). Therefore, digital leaders need many skills, knowledge, attributes, personal qualities, self-concepts, and motives to inspire their people, exhibit competence, and innovate the organisation to increase organisational outcomes across industries. The MIT Sloan Management Review and Deloitte research of 4000 people in 28 industries and 120 countries (Kane et al., 2019) discovered four critical digital leadership competencies dimensions: transformative vision, forward-thinking, digital literacy, and adaptability.

## ■ 3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative approach, enabling generalization, minimizing bias, and utilizing statistical analysis of numerical data. Due to regulations mandating learning organizations in Indonesian state-owned enterprises (SOEs), a survey targeting all employee levels (excluding executives) was conducted. A non-probability sampling method facilitated rapid data collection. An online questionnaire was distributed through points of contact in 32 SOEs with an estimated population of over 20,000. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, with written consent obtained after full disclosure. Ethical considerations were prioritized, ensuring informed consent, confidentiality, and adherence to ethical guidelines, and the consent is in writing. Respondents rate the practice of learning at work on a scale from 1 to 5 using a questionnaire with 21 DLOQ questions. Respondents also rate the behaviour of their direct superiors on a scale from 1 to 5 based on how they see their leaders behave.

Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (SEM-PLS) was employed for data analysis using SmartPLS software. The technique suits complex models with latent variables and smaller samples, aligning with our research goals (Hair Jr et al., 2021). Data cleaning involved removing duplicate responses and those with identical scores across all variables. Factor analysis assessed the correlation between observed variables and latent factors, with a factor loading threshold of  $> 0.708$  for acceptability. The reliability and validity of constructs were evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Discriminant validity was ensured through the Fornell-Larcker Criterion, HTMT ( $< 0.90$  for comparable constructs,  $< 0.85$  for distinct constructs) (Hair et al., 2019). Path analysis via bootstrapping confirmed the hypothesized relationships ( $t$ -value  $> 1.96$ ,  $p$ -value  $< 0.05$ ).

## ■ 4.0 RESULTS

The collected valid data is 425 respondents, which comes from 25 companies, and respondents who have managerial position is 46,59% (staff is 53,41%), level of position referring to board executives are BoE-1 8,94%, BOE-2 (24,71%), BOE-3 (22,59%), BOE-4 (20,47), BOE-5 (11,29%), BOE-6 (5,18%), BOE-7 (6,82%), and based on education are Doctoral 1,41%, Post Grad (22,35%), Bachelor (55,06%), Diploma (5,41%) and High School (15,76%). Data was evaluated by running PLS using SMARTPLS 3.2.9 and found that outer loadings for all indicators are 0.764, VIF is  $< 3.5$ , and all constructs are valid and reliable. However, the discriminant validity shows some HTMT  $> 0.9$ ; therefore, some indicators are deleted. The PLS runs the reduced indicators, showing validity and reliability and having good discriminant validity. To have good results, before running the model using Bootstrap, the second-order data is evaluated, the outliers and 20 data were deleted, and

the results are shown in Figure 1.b. and Tables 1 and 2. The analysis reveals that strategic leadership in learning and the systems to capture learning together explain 61.1% of the variance in digital leadership competencies ( $R^2 = 0.611$ ).

Based on the statistical analysis, we find that strategic leadership on learning and systems to capture learning have a direct influence on digital leadership. However, the impact of systems to capture learning is smaller than that of strategic leadership on learning. In addition, strategic leadership on learning is becoming a mediator for all people-level dimensions, and SCL is partly mediating as SCL is not mediating CTL to DLC.

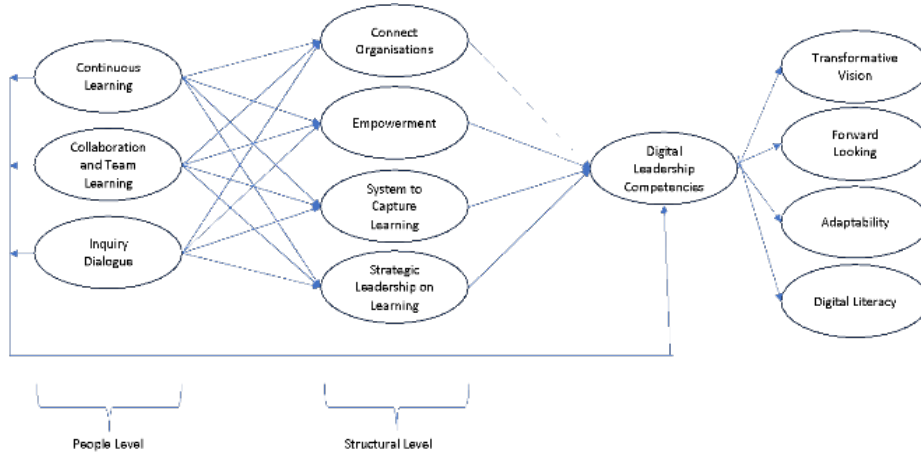


Figure 1. Hypothesis

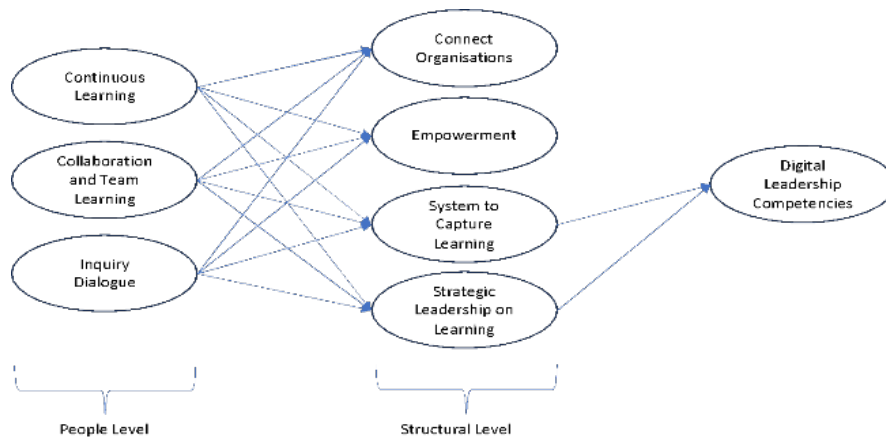


Figure 2. The result of Analysis

Table 1. Direct and Total Effect Analysis Result

Variables	Direct Effect			Total Effect		
	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
CL -> DLC	0.095	1.773	0.077	0,277	4,538	0,000
CTL -> DLC	0.053	1.076	0.282	0,206	3.427	0,001
ID -> DLC	0.084	1.342	0.180	0,315	4,698	0,000
CO -> DLC	-0.006	0.102	0.919	-0.006	0.102	0,919
EP -> DLC	0.043	0.779	0.436	0,043	0,779	0,436
SCL -> DLC	0.223	3.942	0.000	0,223	3.942	0,000
SLL -> DLC	0.392	5.941	0.000	0,392	5.941	0,000

Table 2. Specific Indirect Effect Analysis Result

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
CL -> SCL -> DLC	0,062	0,060	0,024	2,567	0,010
CTL -> SCL -> DLC	0,054	0,053	0,020	2.714	0,007
ID -> SCL -> DLC	0,069	0,067	0,024	2,853	0,005
CL -> SLL -> DLC	0,115	0,112	0,032	3,598	0,000
CTL -> SLL -> DLC	0,086	0,008	0,027	3,137	0,002
ID -> SLL -> DLC	0,149	0,148	0,035	4,298	0,000

## ■ 5.0 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study shows that all people's level dimensions positively affect all organisational dimensions, and SLL and SCL are the only DLOQ dimensions impacting DLC directly. SLL is the most impactful dimension and also mediates all people's dimensions in affecting digital leadership competencies; this is because SLL leaders will seek out learning opportunities and mentor, coach, and empower learners in this organisational culture (Klinge, 2015; Rupčić, 2021b). However, with SCL only mediating CL and ID, leaders will facilitate others to access knowledge which develops in the SCL dimension to boost their competencies as it is accessible to all employees (Pitaloka et al., 2017; Yang et al., 2004). CTL dimension favourably enhances digital leadership competencies through strategic leadership and learning SLL (Eppler-Hattab, 2022). From the result, this study shows that strategic leadership on learning and systems to capture learning as part of knowledge management is critical for organisations in developing leaders.

Empower People (EP) is a culture that encourages people to lead, delegate authority, and assess risks (Marsick & Watkins, 2003). However, this study found that EP does not directly affect DLC, despite previous research suggesting that empowered leadership impacts employee competency development, self-enhancement, and professional advancement. Marsick & Watkins (2003) and Watkins et al. (2021) define the Connect Organisation (CO) dimension as a cultural environment that encourages global thinking, collaboration with external communities to achieve goals, and input from diverse organisations when facing challenges. Global leaders fostering organisational diversity will improve adaptability and inventiveness, which are essential digital leadership abilities. This research also shows that empowerment and connected organisation do not affect DLC. More research is needed because empowerment affects leadership competencies, and connected organisations have been associated with the open mind of digital leadership competencies. Also, more studies need to be performed to determine if these peculiar results could be due to cultural differences or to how power works when there is power distance.

Continuous learning (CL) does not directly affect digital leadership competencies (DLC). However, it indirectly affects DLC through strategic learning leadership. This contradicts CL's goal of facilitating on-the-job learning and providing opportunities for continuing education and professional development (Palacios-Marqués et al., 2013; Roberts, 2021). However, it suggests that leaders are crucial for workforce digital competency development.

The study demonstrates that learning organizations enhance employees' digital leadership competencies, with the organizational level of the DLOQ factor having a greater impact than the individual level. Strategic leadership in learning is the most significant influencer to digital leadership competence directly or indirectly, highlighting the need to develop leaders at all levels to prioritize learning. Secondly, It is a system to capture learning which becomes the mediator for inquiries and dialogues dimension and continues learning to influence digital leadership competencies, which shows that a learning organization has to have knowledge management. In addition, all individual levels show having influence to all organizational levels. This study shows that top leaders in organisations should develop their organization to be a learning organization. This study significantly contributes to the theory and practice of learning organizations, reaffirming Marsick & Watkins' (2003) model's relevance in the digital era.

However, the study's findings should be interpreted cautiously due to the self-rating methodology which introduces potential bias, and the possibility of causal relationships between dimensions and variables warrants careful consideration and this study found that connect organization and empowering does not have affect the competencies which raising some question as empowering has been studied to have effect to leadership competencies. Therefore, future research should utilize comprehensive measures, and longitudinal studies for a deeper understanding of organizational and individual level correlations to digital leadership competencies.

## ■ 6.0 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study highlights the significant impact of all people's level dimensions on organisational dimensions and the direct impact of SLL and SCL on DLC. It emphasises the critical role of strategic leadership in learning and the necessity of developing leaders at all levels to prioritise learning. Furthermore, the study demonstrates that learning organisations are vital in enhancing employees' digital leadership competencies. However, it is essential to interpret the findings cautiously due to the self-rating methodology and the need for further comprehensive measures and longitudinal studies to understand the correlations between organisational and individual-level factors and digital leadership competencies. Overall, this study makes a noteworthy contribution to the theory and practice of learning organisations in the digital era.

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# THE INFLUENCING FACTORS AND PROMOTING STRATEGIES OF COLLEGE STUDENTS' PHYSICAL EXERCISE PERSISTENCE BEHAVIOR IN CHINA

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## Abstract

College students are the future of the country, and their health level is highly related to the country. Physical exercise (PE) are widely recognized as important lifestyle factors for maintaining health. However, the current situation is not optimistic, many college students have not developed the habit of regularly participating in physical exercise. College students' physical exercise persistence behavior (PEPB) has not yet been formed. This study aims to summarize the factors affecting the formation of college students' PEPB, to effectively supplement the theoretical framework of exercise behavior, to analyze the changing rules and mechanisms of college students' PEPB, to construct a model of factors influencing college students' physical exercise persistence behavior to explore strategies and suggestions to promote college students' continuous physical exercise behavior. The research uses methods such as literature, mathematical statistics, and logical induction, starting from the PEPB of college students in China, exploring the influencing factors of college students' PEPB, and analyzing the decision-making process of college students' PEPB, establish a model to verify the interaction mechanism between influencing factors, refine the classification of the PEPB, and formulate promotion strategies. College students' PEPB is affected by self-evaluation of lifestyle, health cognition and exercise cognition, personal investment, social support, exercise atmosphere, venue equipment, exercise benefit perception, exercise risk perception, exercise motivation, exercise self-efficacy, etc. This study will establish 5 major factors of the college students' PEPB model: health self-evaluation, PE conditions, PE effect perception, PE internal drive and PEPB.

**Keywords:** College Students; Exercise Persistence; Influencing Factors; Behavior Promotion

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

According to the latest data of the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, the total number of college students in China has exceeded 41 million by the end of 2022 ("Number of Students in Higher Education Institutions" 2022). College students are an important part of China's youth group, who are the hope and the future of the nation. Physical activity (PA) and physical exercise (PE) are widely recognized as important factors in maintaining health (ACSM, 2021). The World Health Organization (WHO) report points out that insufficient physical activity is the main reason for the decline in physical health of adolescents ("World Health Statistics 2023," 2023).

However, the current situation of college students participating in PA and PE is not optimistic. Researchers reported that about 40% to 50% of college students are physically inactive. More important, health and PA professionals in higher education have not been able to effectively increase students' PA behaviors (Keating, Guan, Piñero, & Bridges, 2005).

Many college students have not developed the habit of participating in regular physical exercise. Participation in sports is often a spur-of-the-moment activity, mostly passive participation rather than active participation. College students' physical exercise persistence behavior (PEPB) and sports-promoting health awareness have not yet been formed. PEPB is a topic worthy of study.

Scholars in physical education, sports psychology, behavioral science and other fields have conducted in-depth studies on college students' exercise persistence behavior. The existing theories and research models of exercise persistence behavior incorporate mature theories such as behavioral psychology, social psychology, social cognitive theory, and group behavior to explain and predict individual exercise persistence behavior from multiple perspectives. But there is a lack of attention to the behavioral decision-making process. Therefore, the research on the influencing factors and promoting strategies of college students' exercise persistence behavior is worthy of further exploration (Xu & Jiang, 2023).

## ■ 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Existing research on physical exercise persistence behavior (PEPB) has achieved fruitful results, forming a series of theories represented by health belief model, planned behavior theory, social cognitive theory, cross-theory model, etc. Due to the lack of effective multidimensional measurement tools for exercise persistence, data collection methods and analysis techniques that break through the existing data stock, data collection and processing are limited, and there is a lack of research on objective instrument recorded data. The description and quantification of physical exercise behavior itself are insufficient.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) originated from the Multi-Attribute Attitude Theory, then Fishbein and Ajzen added the variable of 'Perceived Behavioral Control' to the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) proposed in 1977 (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1977) to improve the original model, and then completely elaborated the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) in the late 1980s (Ajzen, 1991).

Social Exchange Theory (SET) is a concept based on the idea that social behavior is the result of an exchange process. According to this theory, people weigh the potential benefits and risks of their social relationships. When the risks outweigh the rewards, they will terminate or abandon the relationship. The purpose of this exchange is to maximize benefits and minimize costs (Cropanzano, Anthony, Daniels, & Hall, 2017).

The existing data sources of physical exercise persistence behavior research are mostly collected by respondents who completed questionnaires by subjectively recalling the time, place, fitness items and individual subjective exertion during fitness activities. Subjective recall has a certain deviation, the data accuracy is not high and the category is single, but also can not objectively and truly represent the hidden relationship between the data, resulting in the data value is not fully mined. Furthermore, existing research lacks objective data support, and there are subjective factors such as personal bias when measuring fitness persistence behavior and developing influencing factor scales, resulting in certain deviations in reliability and validity.

At present, there are a large number of empirical studies on exercise persistence behavior, but the studies on the change rule of exercise persistence behavior and the prediction of exercise persistence behavior change are not deep enough and their operability is not strong. The research focus of exercise persistence should be on exploring specific promotion and intervention methods to improve exercise persistence behavior, but the research results of exercise persistence behavior cannot be implemented in practice, especially the practical significance of intervention or promotion programs is not great.

Existing studies are limited by sample acquisition methods, resulting in a generally small sample size. Many scholars have conducted meaningful exploration on the influencing factors of exercise persistence behavior and formed an influencing factor model, but have not conducted in-depth research on more practical behavioral intervention methods and promotion practices.

## ■ 3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study focuses on keywords "physical exercise", "physical exercise", "Physical activity", "Physical exercise", "sport", "Physical self- concept", "Self-efficacy" and so on . By combing and summarizing domestic and foreign papers, books, academic conferences and other research results related to physical exercise, body self-concept and self-efficacy, this paper sorted out the four perspectives of concept, measurement method, previous research and theoretical basis, and provided valuable reference for subsequent relevant research.

## ■ 4.0 RESULTS

This study followed the overall design of the basic idea of "current situation analysis - theoretical research and sorting - identification and logical sorting of decision-making factors for exercise persistence - construction of exercise persistence behavior model - model mechanism verification - promotion strategy".

Considering the health behavior model and interactive decision theory, it can be concluded that the physical exercise persistence behavior of individual exercisers is affected by their psychological factors, individual factors and social environment factors. In the process of the influence of individual factors social environment factors on exercise persistence behavior, the process of individual psychological activities will have a certain mediating and regulating effect, and social environment factors will also have a greater impact on individual factors. Based on these inferences, exercise persistence behavior, exercise psychology, individual differences, and social environment can be put into a simple comprehensive framework as shown in the figure blew.

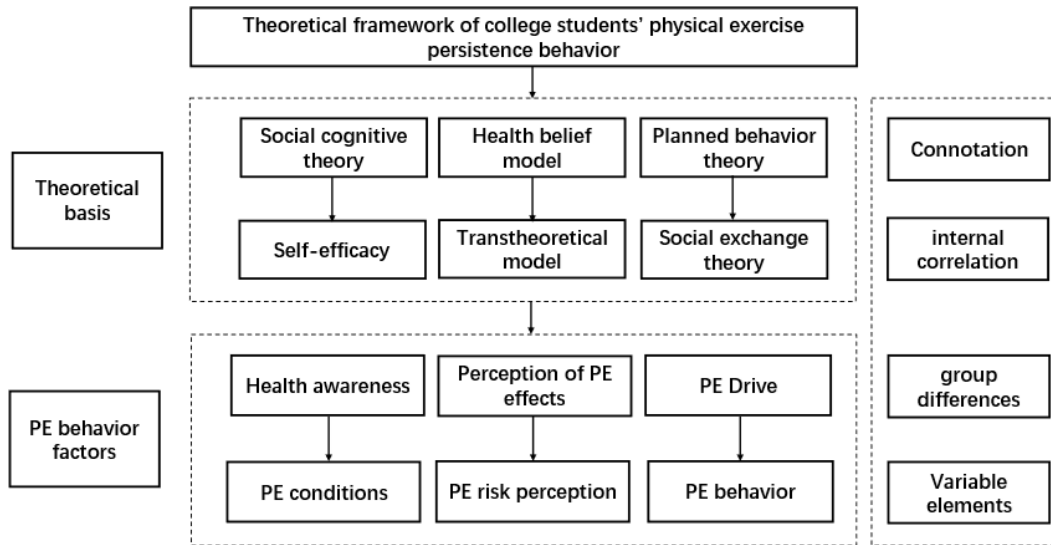


Figure 1 Theoretical framework of college students' physical exercise persistence behavior

5.0 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

According to the social exchange theory, we regard the behavioral decision-making of exercise persistence as a rational exchange process. When an individual makes a decision to exercise persistence, he must go through a rational decision-making process of weighing the pros and cons. This process is rational, which requires the individual to make an exercise decision. Perceptual evaluation and judgment of behavioral effects. Here, the perception of exercise effect is an antecedent variable of exercise persistence. According to internal drive theory, planned behavior theory and self-efficacy theory, it can be inferred that the perception of exercise effect affects exercise motivation and exercise self-efficacy, thereby jointly affecting exercise persistence behavior. To emphasize the individual decision-making process for exercise behavior, the theoretical framework that comprehensively presents this mechanism of action is shown in this figure.

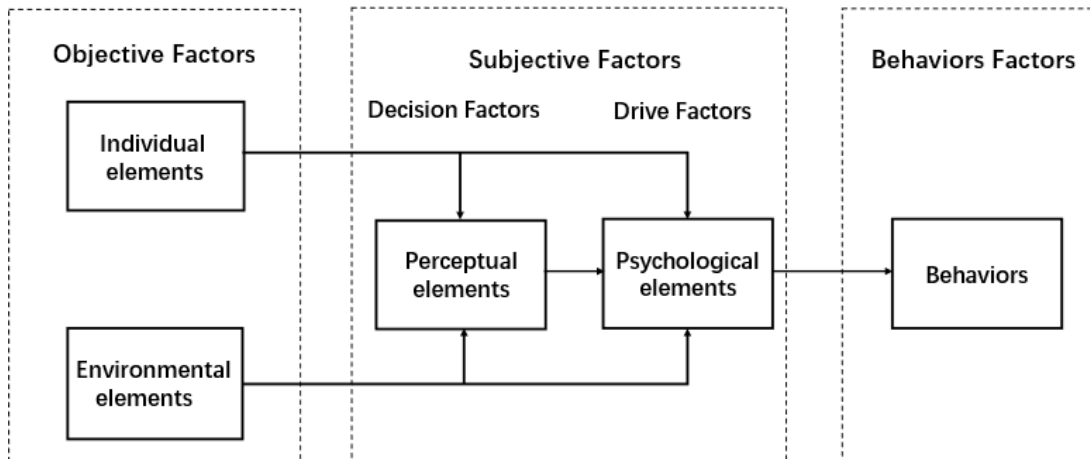


Figure 2 Objective factors affect behavioral performance through subjective factors

6.0 CONCLUSION

The physical exercise persistence behavior of college students is affected by self-evaluation of lifestyle, self-evaluation of health cognition, self-evaluation of exercise cognition, personal investment, social support, exercise atmosphere, venue equipment, exercise benefit perception, exercise risk perception, exercise motivation, exercise self-efficacy, etc. at least 13 factors including exercise persistence time and exercise persistence quality. This study establish five major factors of the college students' exercise persistence behavior model: health self-evaluation, exercise conditions, exercise effect perception, exercise internal drive and exercise persistence behavior.

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## TRADITIONAL OR MODERN? THE FESTIVE GREETING CARD

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### Abstract

Exchanging festive greeting cards is a norm in our multiethnic society. Therefore, the culture of giving and receiving the cards, to and from our family members, relatives, colleagues and friends are a typical sight. This practice ushers the atmosphere of our distinct religious and cultural celebrations in the country. Moreover, with the internet accessibility it provided us the opportunity to send greetings via WhatsApp. These changes shaped our interaction according to the technological advancement that influenced us to adopt the present trend. As such, this research explores the dilemma of the printed cards that have 'lost its glitters' to the digital greetings in Malaysia. Hence, two research questions will be highlighted for this study: i) why the paper greeting cards have declined over the years? and ii) how the e-greeting cards favoured by the users? Qualitative approach will be utilized to investigate this case. Furthermore, autoethnography method will be opted as it provides the self-reflective perspective in discussing the insights of this issue. It will scrutinize the author's experiences in participation of sending and receiving the festive greetings either printed or virtual cards. Thus, this study is significant in describing the meaningful elements of the traditional and modern mode to the readers. In addition, it will broaden the horizon towards the gravity of the celebratory cards in our nation.

**Keywords:** traditional or modern, printed or virtual greeting card, qualitative, autoethnography

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### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The greeting card is a universal culture in most part of the countries. Moreover, each nation has its own heritage and legacy of its existence (Seng, 2017; Seng, 2019). As such, Malaysia's unique multiethnic society persuades us to observe the various religious festivals and cultural celebrations. In addition, greetings from the royal families to the politicians (Ch'ng, 2018) is an anticipated sight. Indeed, these occasions embodies us to be truly united and bonds us together despite comprising distinct faiths and beliefs.

Hence, one of the essential elements in uplifting everyone's mood is to send the greeting cards to our loved ones. In return, there is a possibility that we may also receive it as our action will cause a reaction from the others. Therefore, this practice may sound cliché but in reality it elevates the festivity spirits during the auspicious seasons. By its very nature, the 21<sup>st</sup> century witnessed the paradigm shift of the intense surge in the technological development. Thus, it transpired numerous software and applications to facilitate the human lives. Intrinsically, the conventional greeting cards turned over a new leaf to these contemporary jovial wishes due to the smartphone invention. In consequence, this transformation is most sought-after by the Generation Z (those who are born in the year of late 1990s to early 2010). On those grounds, they are inclined to the internet services and versatile towards the digital devices. However, the earlier generation cannot be overruled as they too jumped into the cyber bandwagon.

In essence, the present study explores the plight of the printed greetings that had dwindled over the years in comparison to the virtual cards. Furthermore, these online greetings secured stupendous support from not only the Malaysians but also around the globe. On that account, two fundamental research questions are put forth: i) why the paper greeting cards have declined over the years? and ii) how the e-greeting cards favoured by the users? Thence, the significance of this research will illustrate the substantial features pertaining to the traditional and modern greetings that will grasp the users' preference in selecting the specific form of card.

### 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of literature demonstrates two subtopics: printed card and virtual card.

#### Printed Card

Hardcopy of the festive greeting cards is a *rite de passage* in our pluralistic society. As such, our multiethnic composition is the integral essence to these numerous celebrations (Zhang & Wang, 2023). In addition, Malaysia recognizes and accords the bountiful holidays to all the major religious events in its 14 states. Moreover, it is not surprising to come across of all age groups sending their festive wishes to their family members, relatives, friends and colleagues. Besides that, the printed card is accessible almost everywhere during the seasonal period (Potić, 2022). Hence, it is not exclusive to purchase at the

bookstores but also could be obtained at our very own *pasar malam* (night market). These strategic landmarks will never slip our mind in sending the cards to the respective person. Therefore, it will compel us to secure this 'itinerary' item as a part of the initiation process for the function. Apart from that, the communication via printed card symbolizes (Jaffe, 1999) the written greetings from the sender. At most times, it will be reciprocated by the receiver to demonstrate their heartfelt gesture of appreciation. Likewise, it is an authentic (West, 2010; West, 2018) and a genuine act to exchange the greetings in an utmost candor as it associates with one's emotion and social bond (Gooch & Kelly, 2016). It is not too much to say, that these best wishes are consolidated as a part of our nation's etiquette (Likhacheva & Kapkan, 2018). In spite of that, the images of our diverse local cultures are reflected on the printed version. It complements our rich tradition that encompasses our distinct custom (Seng, 2017; Seng, 2019). Thus, the hardcopy greeting card is essential in expressing our wishes to the significant others especially for the celebratory occasions.

#### Virtual Card

Electronic greeting cards became a sensation in the millennial due to two factors: telecommunication and internet. The telecommunication mode of handphone played a crucial role in disseminating these greetings by short message service (SMS) and multimedia messaging service (MMS). Later, it evolved to a prevalent cutting-edge device identified as the smartphone that is integrated with the internet service. This state-of-the-art gadget had specific features in the WhatsApp application such as the graphic interchange format (GIF) and 'stickers' (Likhacheva & Kapkan, 2018) to further convey the warm regards. Besides that, the social media channels (Zhang & Wang, 2023) accelerated in rendering the festive wishes via Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, TikTok and X Platform. In addition, the email is another form of sending virtual cards to our loved ones (West, 2010; West, 2018). Meanwhile, these digital forms turned out to be the 'new kid on the block' and its capacity was upgraded with the wireless fidelity (Wi-Fi) system. However, the data network from the smartphone empowered the accessibility of the internet connection despite of no means to the Wi-Fi facility. As such, this remarkable breakthrough had ramped our communication networking course. In essence, the internet utility prevailed the cyberspace as the plethora of information is attained here. On that account, it is not something out of the blue in resorting to the internet assistance for one's need in completing the task. Hence, the e-greetings (Gooch & Kelly, 2016) became a phenomenon as many users were able to access for any design (Abdullah & Nor, 2022), at any point of time or location and for complimentary in order to be sent to the receivers.

### 3.0 METHODOLOGY

Qualitative approach is surmised to be an appropriate method in investigating the festive cards. Moreover, the autoethnography technique is best suited in depicting the narration of the traditional and modern greeting cards. However, what is autoethnography in the first place? The term 'auto' represents the autobiography that illustrates the journey of oneself. Meanwhile, the 'ethnography' jargon elucidates the analytical form in examining the way of human lives in the context of cultural environment. Therefore, by merging these two words 'auto' and 'ethnography' it signifies of one's memoirs towards the relationship milieu ecosystem. Hence, the self-reflexion (Arnold, 2011) manifests the trials and tribulations of the 'dramas' or events in the individual's exclusive perspicacity. No doubt it will share the lived experiences, insights and thoughts that is encountered by a single person (Wall, 2006). This sole author's perspective (White, 2003) sheds light on the matters that we are not aware off or perhaps neglected it as a trivial issue. As such, each individual's written account will be unique as it will demonstrate one's contemplation of their vicissitudes (Ngunjiri et al., 2010).

Intrinsically, the one and only informant for this research in question is the author where it avails the creativity and flexibility in the data collection process. Moreover, the author also qualifies and meets the requirement of a purposive sampling participant and engages in the information rich description (Creswell, 2007). This impactful voice from the past will exert the array of the researcher's reminiscences of the subject matter. Thus, the printed and virtual cards will denote on the investigator's opinion and point of view in regard to the downturn trend of the paper greetings and the influx of e-greetings. These nostalgic memories epitomize the episodes of receiving and sending the cards from and to the significant others over the decades.

Nevertheless, the million-dollar question is conspicuous due to the trustworthiness and credibility of the source as it derived from the author alone itself. In essence, this quality control (Cooper & Lilyea, 2022) issue can be resolved with the assistance of triangulation style. This mode ensures that these doubts will be put to an end by utilizing multiple methods to corroborate with the researcher's facts for instance the observation, document analysis and interviews. The participant observation reinforces the decline of printed cards compared to the virtual festive cards among the Malaysians. Followed by the newspaper articles and academic write-ups pertaining to the objectivity of this issue. Finally, the informal interview with the significant others convenes the specific incidents that reinvigorates the researcher's memories.

### 4.0 RESULTS

The outcome of the result will emphasize on two subtopics: paper greeting and e-greeting.

#### Paper Greeting

The researcher's festive celebration was around the corner and all the family members will sit together to prepare a list of names. Wait a minute, listing down the names and not the cookies! Why? It is an event where these names enlisted will be sent out the greeting cards two weeks ahead before the celebration. As such, the extended family members, friends

and colleagues would not be left out in the greetings' record. Moreover, at times the relatives may be offended if the cards were not sent and arrived on or later than the festive dates! Therefore, the paper greetings will be purchased in bulks based on the allocated budget and the appealing image from the bookshops or grocery shops which were the prevalent locations for the yearly ritual. Once the hardcopy greetings arrive, one of the family members who possesses the elegant cursive handwriting will initiate by inscribing the name of the recipient and the sender into the card. Then, slipping it away in the supplied white cover. Likewise, the receiver's name and the residential address will be written. This process will be reiterated until to the final name in the list. In addition, several drops of water or glue will be effective in sticking the stamp on the top right corner of the envelope. Furthermore, these celebratory cards will be dropped off at any postboxes available at the main roads or mailing at the post office itself.

Apart from that, the researcher will be eager with the arrival of the postman. The minute the motorcycle's rumbling sound is audible from the residential car porch, the adrenaline will rush due to the excitement and suspense in discovering the number of festive cards received for the day! The cards will be retreated together with the rest of the postages from the mailbox. Then the tradition of unveiling the sealed and unsealed envelopes will be ensued. Nevertheless, relatives from far and near sent their best wishes via these printed greetings that sparks the festive mood. Meanwhile, the working and schooling family members are also anticipated to receive the hardcopy greetings by hand that would further add up to the total count. Hence, the collection of it will stay on until the eve of the occasion.

In essence, the compiled cards would be arranged according to the sizes on the festive eve. Thus, the composition is envisaged by identifying the space that would be occupied in the living room. Then the raffia (fiber from raffia tree) strings will be tied across the wall where the greeting cards will be hanged over it. Moreover, these festive cards will be displayed for about a month before taking it down. During this period of time, visiting guests would be astonished with the enormous number of cards being paraded. Several relatives will compliment the eye-catching images or designs of the celebratory cards. A side from that, these paper greetings will never be recycled for the coming year in the family!

### *E-Greeting*

The researcher's WhatsApp notification ringtone was endless the minute the clock strike midnight. It signifies the outset of the celebration. Along with that, the written greeting messages and the graphic images were sent by the well-wishers. Moreover, numerous forwarded messages were sent out as the composed words were eloquent in expressing the sender's so-called thoughts. Besides that, the images were captivating with the audio-visual effect! Who would not want to send or receive these exquisite messages? It may sound childish or immature but the researcher in return had to compete with these digital greetings. The 'hunt' for the free graphic interchange format (GIF) in the WhatsApp application was meticulous. It may even take half an hour to have the right virtual greeting for the right person. Hence, this can be a painstaking task. After all it is only once a year!

Intrinsically, the researcher had scaled down the shopping spree activity as it is a tedious stint especially in the search of printed festive cards. Moreover, due to the work obligation the stopover to the respective outlets can only be carried out during the weekends. The detailed features on the greeting cards need to illustrate the choice of words and the embellishment of the designs. It is difficult to come across a match between these two elements according to the researcher's preference. In addition, each card will be handed out to the diverse individuals who possesses different personalities. As such, this process can become laborious in the quest of purchasing the appropriate paper greeting according to these specifications. Thus, thanks to the discovery of the internet and the futuristic mobile devices that enabled the visits to the outlets to be reduced in a tremendous manner.

Nonetheless, the smartphone managed to save the researcher's time in travelling and purchasing the hardcopy festive greetings. Indeed, it was a favourable circumstance where the e-greetings can be circulated in several channels such as email, social media, WhatsApp and etcetera. There is no need to dash to the nearest convenient stores to purchase these cards in the name of last-minute shopping. Further, locating for the postboxes or even visiting the post offices can be avoided. It is just a matter at a click of a finger where the massive digital greetings appear in front of our eyes to be selected. Fundamentally, the e-greetings are commonly sent off virtually on the festive day.

## ■ 5.0 DISCUSSION

The predominant religious or cultural celebration only transpires once a year. As such, each and every one of us would want to celebrate this prosperous occasion with full of bliss. Hence, the greeting cards are a symbol that reminds us of the festivity (Potić, 2022; Jaffe, 1999). Therefore, the cheer from this paper greetings would uplift one's mood (Gallagher et al., 2023) despite all the challenges faced in that year. These handpicked hardcopy greetings reflect the personal touch of the sender to the recipient (West, 2010; West, 2018). One could never imagine the trouble and the intensity of the sender took to select a card (Nguyen, 2015). On those grounds, the desired size and shape would be considered in terms of the length and width of the cardboard. Besides that, the texture of the material such as its thickness and finesse would be scrutinized together with the envelope. Moreover, the intricate design is imperative as it accentuates the first impression to the receiver. Further, the significant wordings or quotations that is composed will also be taken into account. If needed, extra accessories can be added for instance the fragrance and musical song but it would be a costly affair. At last, the ritual of sending off the card in-person or postal delivery. In other respects, the received festive greeting cards will be showcased as a decorative piece in the home (Zhang & Wang, 2023). It adds the glitter to the living room as we gather with our family members preparing for the festival. Thence, these printed cards can be perceived as a must have items apart from the traditional snacks and biscuits.

Nevertheless, the passing of each decade witnessed the incredible amelioration of the technological expertise. As such, it expedited various tasks and supported our day-to-day interest. Therefore, the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century marked the immense penetration of the information technology in our nation. The aggressive widespread in terms of the internet had prompted the ripple effect in other aspects. On that note, the telecommunication mode was revolutionized from the landline telephone to the mobile phone and presently the smartphone that is integrated with the internet connection. The landline permitted us to convey verbal greeting wishes to the significant others. Meanwhile, the mobile phone had dual features: verbal and nonverbal greetings. Besides speaking over the hand phone, it could also send short message service (SMS) that comprises words and multimedia messaging service (MMS) that includes images. However, conversing on the mobile phone is much pricier than the landline. In addition, each sms and mms that was sent will be charged separately from our call expense. Thus, the e-greetings ended up being an extravagant affair. In spite of that, after the year 2010 the smartphone innovation led to zero cost of WhatsApp messages with the digital graphic festive greetings (Likhacheva & Kapkan, 2018). Moreover, the email and social media platforms are another way in circulating the virtual wishes (Abdullah & Nor, 2022) in an inexpensive manner. Overall, it decreased the hassle of travelling to the outlets to get hold of the printed cards (Gooch & Kelly, 2016). Further, it is also time consuming due to the traffic congestion just for the sake of choosing the hardcopy greetings personally.

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

The exchange of festive greeting cards holds close to our heart as this culture has been in practice for ages. No matter from which ethnic group or religious background that we hail from, these cards will make the rounds as a symbol of our distinguished identity in Malaysia. Therefore, the traditional printed greetings have an exclusive artistry touch because the hardcopy version is chosen specifically for the receiver. It indicates the notable effort that was put in for the personalized cards for the significant others. Nevertheless, the sender went the extra mile from one shop to another solely to ensure that the 'perfect card' is delivered for the recipients. Needless to say, the invested time and the purchasing cost of these cards were also absorbed by the sender genuinely. However, the boundless transmission of the internet facility brought wide breath in the telecommunication dimension. Thus, 'dropping' celebratory e-greetings via email, social media and WhatsApp has become a common sight in our country. Furthermore, this approach is able to cut corners in terms of cost effectiveness and time efficiency. Moreover, it is also eco-friendly! Regardless of which method the festive cards being delivered or sent is not an issue, but the significance of the sincere wishes is what matters.

The limitation of this research is due to the methodology scope. It is because it only involves one participant for this study. In addition, the single sample is the author itself. By its very nature, the information gathered here will solely reflect based on the investigator's background, exposure and familiarity. Hence, it may cause a drawback. Along these lines, it is recommended to have more participants in enriching the sources for a diversified perspective in the data collection series.

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# MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY TECHNIQUES: WORKING WITH CHALLENGING FAMILIES

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## Abstract

Family and marriage therapy is a therapeutic technique used by counsellors in the counselling process with families or married couples. Family and marriage counsellors use a range of therapeutic approaches to address challenges and concerns experienced by clients within the context of their marital relationships. These approaches encompass three distinct strategies, namely Structural Family Therapy, Brief Strategic Family Therapy, and Solution-Focused Brief Therapy. This article examines the aims and objectives of incorporating counselling sessions with family and marriage therapy approaches. It also explores the procedures and assessments conducted by counselling professionals for each technique employed in the therapy. In addition to the discourse presented within this article, the author examines the role of marriage and family therapy within the framework of family management when confronted with precarious circumstances during periods of challenges. The author explores the utilization of family therapy as an intervention modality to address and resolve issues and challenges that arise.

**Keywords:** Marriage and Family Therapy, Counsellor, Challenging Families

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Since membership in a family is determined by a combination of biological, legal, affectionate, geographic, and historical relationships, families are distinct social systems. In contrast to other social systems, the inclusion into family systems occurs primarily through birth, adoption, fostering, or marriage, while departure from such networks is limited to instances of mortality. The complete termination of all familial ties is an unattainable objective. Moreover, within the context of familial dynamics, individuals assume distinct responsibilities that encompass tangible obligations such as the provision of sustenance and housing. However, it is the interpersonal connections inherent in familial units that have paramount significance and cannot be substituted.

Family therapy developed concurrently in the 1950's across several nations, as well as within a range of diverse movements, discipleships, therapeutic, and research traditions. The fundamental understanding that brought the forerunners of the family therapy movement together intellectually was that human issues are fundamentally interpersonal rather than intrapersonal, and that means a strategy for intervention that focuses on interpersonal connections is necessary to solve them. This revelation challenged the dominant perspective maintained by mental health experts during that period. This perspective stated that all behavioral issues are expressions of fundamentally individual illnesses, hence necessitating therapy that focuses on the person. During the 1950s and 1960s, the prevailing approaches in mainstream mental health practice were psychodynamic, client-centered, and biological therapies that primarily focused on individual treatment.

## 2.0 GOALS IN FAMILY THERAPY

The view in the area of family therapy is that therapy aimed at family connections should be anchored in theoretical frameworks that priorities interpersonal aspects over personal qualities and take the family into consideration as a social organization. The various family therapy schools and traditions can be classified according to their central focus of therapeutic concern, specifically their emphasis on problem-maintaining behavior patterns, problematic and constraining belief systems and narratives; and historical, contextual, and constitutional predisposing factors. Regarding the initial issue, several schools of family therapy emphasize the significance of recurrent patterns of family contact in perpetuating problematic behavior. These schools argue for interventions that seek to interrupt these patterns of interaction. The schools that can be classified within this category encompass the MRI brief therapy approach as outlined by Fisch (2004), strategic therapy as proposed by Rosen (2003), structural therapy as discussed by Fishman and Fishman (2003) and Wetchler et. al (2003), cognitive behavioral approaches as presented by Dattilio and Epstein (2003) and Epstein (2003), and functional family therapy as described by Sexton and Alexander (2003). The second subject, several schools of family therapy emphasize the significance of belief systems and narratives that support recurring interaction patterns and perpetuate the issues being presented. These schools promote methods that help new belief systems and narratives form, freeing family members from interaction patterns that perpetuate problems. The traditions encompassed within this

category consist of constructivism (Feixas, 1995), the original Milan school (Adams, 2003), social-constructionist family therapy approaches (Anderson, 2003), solution-focused family therapy (Duncan, Miller & Sparks, 2003), and narrative therapy (Browning & Green, 2003).

As for the third element, certain traditions of family therapy emphasise the influence of historical, cultural, and constitutional variables in causing family members to acquire specific belief systems and participate in specific harmful patterns of interaction. These educational institutions promote the utilisation of strategies that specifically target historical, contextual, and constitutional factors. These strategies involve collaborating with extended family members and the broader social network, as well as providing guidance to individuals in managing these constraints. This category encompasses various therapeutic approaches used in the context of family therapy. These approaches include trans-generational family therapy (Kerr, 2003; Nelson, 2003), psychoanalytic family therapy traditions (Savage-Scharf & Scharf, 2003), attachment theory-based approaches (Byng-Hall, 1995; Johnson, 2003a), experiential family therapy (Volker, 2003), multi-systemic consultation with consideration of the broader system (Imber-Black, 1991; Sheidow et al., 2003), and psycho-educational approaches (McFarlane, 1991; Schwoeri & Sholevar, 2003).

### ■ 3.0 TYPES OF FAMILY THERAPY USED IN THE INTERVENTION PROCESS

This section provides an overview of each of the primary therapeutic approaches frequently used by family and marriage counsellors during intervention sessions with couples or families. These approaches include structural family therapy, brief strategic family therapy, and solution-focused brief therapy. In the context of counselling sessions with families or married couples, these three therapies serve as a collaborative medium for intervention.

#### *Structural Family Therapy*

The family structure is the key to comprehending behaviour, including problematic behaviour. In cases where a mother encounters difficulties in eliciting obedience from her child, the structural therapist adopts a contextual approach rather than delving into psychodynamics (Walsh, 1996). Instead of attributing the issue solely to the mother's low self-esteem, the therapist considers the broader dynamics at play. This includes examining the mother's perceived ineffective parenting, her low self-esteem, as well as the involvement of her two children and a father who oscillates between aloofness and authoritarianism. According to structural family therapy, a family is a living thing that is always growing and changing to fit its surroundings. As a biosocial system, the family needs to change and adapt at the same time. The concept of "*homeostasis*" refers to the inclination to maintain the integrity of a family's framework. The concept of homeostasis, however relevant, does not provide a comprehensive explanation of the dynamics inside a family. Despite occasional counter deviation movements, the family system generally exhibits a tendency to progress towards greater complexity through time. The term "adaptation" refers to the continuous transformation of the family structure in response to various needs arising from its own development, such as the birth and growth of members, the emergence of new interests, and the departure of individuals (Alexander et.al, 1982). Additionally, adaptation is influenced by external factors, including relocation to a different location, changes or loss of employment, divorce, remarriage, and significant fluctuations in the family's financial circumstances. During the course of this process, there is a reconfiguration of boundaries, a regrouping of subsystems, a shifting of hierarchies, and a renegotiation of connections with entities outside of the familiar context. For example, throughout adolescence, as children enter this developmental stage and experience an increased influence from their social group, it becomes necessary to reevaluate and renegotiate matters pertaining to autonomy and control.

According to structural therapy, for therapy to be effective, the therapist must establish a new system with the family group (family plus therapist system). The therapist utilizes tactics of accommodation and connecting. Accommodation refers to the therapeutic process of adapting to the needs of family members. This process involves several components:

- a. Providing intentional support for the family structure, including acknowledging and reinforcing positive aspects, as well as facilitating changes in the family's structures that are effective;
- b. Closely observing and analysing the content and dynamics of family interactions; and
- c. Adjusting to the emotional expressions and patterns of family members by reflecting and mirroring their affective experiences.

Joining encompasses the therapeutic efforts undertaken by the therapist with the explicit intention of establishing a connection with family members. It is important for the therapist to maintain impartiality and provide assistance when necessary, rather than engaging in combative behaviour. The recognition of the therapeutic relationship's significance stems from its potential as a means for facilitating therapeutic transformation (Duncan, 2010). In order to pinpoint the family's possible flexibility and change, as well as its strengths and resilience, structural therapists evaluate and investigate the family's structure, including its subsystems, boundaries, roles, connections, and external relationships. The following are some of the areas covered by assessment: a) the preferred transactional patterns and available alternatives of family members; b) flexibility and the capacity to change, frequently as a result of responses to prior demands for change within the family group; c) family members' sensitivity to members' needs, behaviours, attitudes, and so forth; d) developmental issues, tasks, and requirements; e) the significance of symptomatic behaviour in relation to other family members; and f) the context of family life, with particular reference to sources of stress and social support. There are several potential pitfalls that might arise within the assessment process. These include: a) disregarding the developmental processes of family members and the dynamic changes that occur within family subsystems; b) neglecting some family subsystems and their influence on the overall family dynamics; and c) aligning with and providing support exclusively to one particular family subsystem, therefore potentially overlooking the complexities and interdependencies of the whole family system.

### **Brief Strategic Family Therapy**

Strategic family therapy (SFT) is a brief therapeutic intervention commonly employed to address behavioural challenges in families with children or adolescents (Monk & Gehart, 2003). Within a secure therapeutic environment, a therapist collaboratively devises treatments with the family to simulate familial interactions and dialogues, with the aim of addressing issues unique to the family's structure and fostering transformative behavioural modifications. SFT, or Solution-Focused Therapy, is a dynamic therapeutic approach. The design of this approach is intended to be concise, focused on specific instructions, and goal-driven. Strategic family therapy operates under the fundamental assumption that the family unit holds paramount significance in shaping the lives and fostering the growth of children (White, 2007). The objective of this therapeutic approach is to discern and modify the fundamental patterns of interaction within the familial context. This strategy aims to enhance familial behaviours and interactions that lead to problem behaviour, so facilitating improved family functioning and enabling children to effectively handle the challenges they are encountering. In the context of Brief Strategic Family Therapy (BSFT), it is highly preferable to prioritise the preservation of the family wherever feasible. In order to promote optimal outcomes, it is advisable to prioritise altering family dynamics as opposed to separating the adolescent from the family or encouraging family members to relocate from the household, wherever feasible. In the context of family preservation, it is necessary to establish two objectives:

- a. The mitigation or elimination of problematic behaviours exhibited by adolescents, including drug abuse and other forms of risky conduct, referred to as the "strategic or symptom focus," and;
- b. The alteration of family dynamics that are linked to the adolescent's problematic behaviours, known as the "system focus". An instance of system focus arises when a carer channels their displeasure onto the adolescent who is displaying the troublesome behaviour.

In the context of Brief Strategic Family Therapy (BSFT), the term "diagnosis" pertains to the process of discovering interactional patterns, namely the structure, that either enable or promote problematic behaviour among young individuals (Hoffman, 2002). In essence, the process of diagnosis involves assessing how the dynamics and qualities of family relationships, namely the behaviours exhibited by family members towards one other, contribute to the family's inability to achieve its goal of resolving youth-related issues. In order to get comprehensive diagnoses of the family, therapists conduct a meticulous analysis of family interactions across five distinct dimensions. These dimensions include structure, resonance, developmental stage, recognised patient, and conflict resolution. Assessment pertains to the methodical evaluation of the intricate or molecular components of family connection in order to discern certain characteristics within the interaction patterns exhibited by each family (Franze & Paulus, 2009). On the other hand, clinical formulation pertains to the systematic integration of evaluation data into broader patterns or processes that define the relationships within a family. Family systems treatment utilises clinical formulation to analyse the correlation between a patient's presenting illness and the distinctive patterns of interaction within their family unit (Dattilio & Nichols, 2011). For instance, the disruptive behaviour exhibited by a kid might be attributed to insufficient parental supervision and monitoring, which in turn are impacted by a strained marital relationship and discord on parenting approaches.

### **Solution Focuses Brief Therapy**

Solution-Focused Therapy (SFT) is a therapeutic approach characterized by its brief duration, wherein clients' strengths are emphasized and utilized to facilitate the generation and construction of solutions to their presenting issues. The emphasis is placed on the future, rather than on the past or the present. A solution-focused approach involves the therapist and client spending more time creating solutions than investigating problems. Efforts are made to establish a clear definition of the specific desires and aspirations of the customers with regards to their life objectives. This class will provide a comprehensive introduction to the fundamental framework of Solution Focused Therapy. This unit has many components, including an overview, a description of the core tenets of solutions-focused therapy (SFT), an examination of the elements involved in SFT, an exploration of the process and treatment principles of SFT, an analysis of various intervention strategies, and an examination of the applications of Solution-Focused Therapy.

According to Corey (1985), Solution Focused Therapy is not the same as traditional therapy since the former focuses on addressing problematic emotions, thoughts, behaviours, and/or interactions, offering explanations, confronting issues, and educating clients. As an alternative, SFT works with clients to formulate a desired future vision in which the issue is resolved. It also investigates and highlights relevant client exceptions, strengths, and resources to work together to create a customized plan for bringing the vision to life. Consequently, every individual customer develops their own unique approach towards resolving their challenges, which is influenced by their evolving conceptualizations of objectives, tactics, capabilities, and available assets. In instances where clients seek external resources to develop solutions, it is actually the client that assumes the primary role in delineating the characteristics of those resources and determining their potential utility.

Solution based practise frequently incorporates the following interventions. The use and duration of their application will be contingent upon the professional discretion of the therapist. When scheduling an appointment, the client is requested to observe any modifications that occur between the time of scheduling the appointment and the initial session (Dutta & Finlay, 2007). In the initial session, it is customary for the therapist to inquire about these alterations. By acknowledging and validating the pre-session changes, the counsellor may effectively capitalise on the progress that the client has already initiated. The client has the potential to provide the counsellor with evident indications regarding methods, beliefs, values, and abilities that may be used to the process of constructing solutions. The use of a "flying start" strategy facilitates the expeditious initiation of the change process, hence enhancing the probability of the counselling session being of shorter duration. The client has a sense of empowerment via positive psychological change, since these

changes occur autonomously, without direct involvement or influence from the therapist. Consequently, the client is entirely credited for the achievements made. The counsellor actively involves the client in the process of identifying exceptions to the problem, which refers to instances when the problem is absent or being effectively managed. This entails the exploration of transferrable solutions derived from other domains of the client's life, as well as previous solutions implemented in analogous circumstances

#### ■ 4.0 CONCLUSION

The comparison of therapy types clearly demonstrates the diverse techniques and skills a counselor can utilize to assist clients in the marriage and family counseling process. Counselors can utilize a variety of therapy techniques to address family and marriage-related issues, but the primary difficulty in conducting counseling sessions with client's lies in guiding them to apply their best common sense in handling arising issues and problems. Although the technique used has a variety of intervention processes, the client's involvement in the process is crucial to ensure the success of the intervention.

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# FACTORS INFLUENCING STRESS: A CASE OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF 'B' UNIVERSITY IN JOHOR, MALAYSIA

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## Abstract

Stress among students has been constantly studied by researchers as it is affected by a large number of different factors. The aim of this study was to examine the factors that influence stress among university students in Johor. In collecting the data, the study used a qualitative approach, specifically, the case study design. A total of 109 informants who were undergraduate students of a public university in Johor were selected using the criterion sampling. The results were analyzed manually and were categorized into two main themes; external and internal factors. Among the external factors influencing the students' stress include family, peer, academic-related, environment, health, and socio-economic issues. Meanwhile, problems related to attitude or behavior and cognitive are found to be the internal factors that led stress to happen. Results of the study provide insights to the universities, academics, parents, and future researchers on various factors that cause stress among the university students.

*Keywords:* Stress, external factors, internal factors

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Stress refers to the circumstance in which transactions lead a person to perceive discrepancy between the physical or psychological demands of a situation and the resources of his or her biological, psychological, or social systems (Sarafino & Smith, 2014). It reflects the psychological state in which people perceive that their personal or environmental demands surpass their coping resources (Fink, 2017). A growing body of research has linked stress with a multitude of negative outcomes. For instance, high levels of stress among students can lead them to have depression, anxiety, and affect their interpersonal relationships and emotional conditions (Ebrahim, Sayed, Rabei, & Hegazy, 2024). Apart from worsening the students' academic performance (Melaku, Mossie, & Negash, 2015), stress was also found to negatively impact overall happiness and decreased the students' standard of life (Umriyal, Gautam, & Kameswari, 2024). There are several factors that could lead to students' stress which then could hinder their ability in academic performance and distract their overall learning process. In acknowledging the stress factors, it is still unknown the factors that affect the university students', specifically the undergraduate students of a public university in Johor. Therefore, it creates a need for the present study to be carried out in determining the stress factors among the targeted participants.

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies on individuals' stress and its factors have been well-documented. Research has shown that stress among low achievers is caused by health issues, learning challenges, problems with online classes, and English language barriers (Jiang, Horta, & Yuen, 2024).

Latest finding by study done by Sanfui, Augustine, Pillai, & Redhu (2024) revealed lack of teachers' encouragement and too many exams are some of the stress factors affecting students. In light of the previous findings as well as the implications of stress towards the students' physical health, mental health, and their academic performance, the study aims to examine the factors that influence stress among the undergraduate students of a public university in Johor.

## 3.0 METHODOLOGY

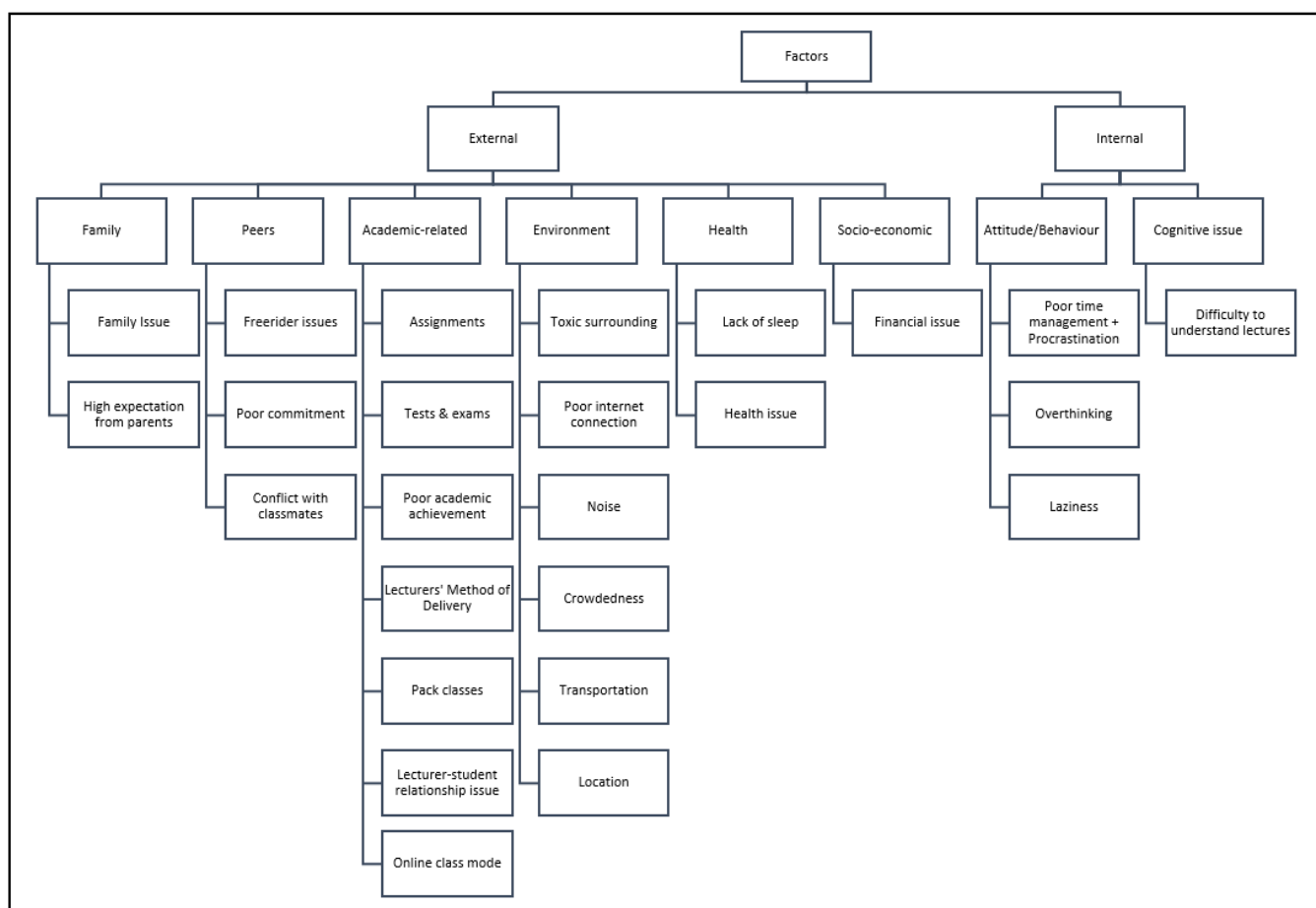
A qualitative approach, specifically, the case study design was used in this study. The undergraduate students of a public university in Johor formed the target population ( $N=109$ ) for this study. The criteria required for inclusion in the study was first-year undergraduate students who possess low achievement in their academics. Using the criterion sampling, the low-performing students were identified based on their cumulative academic scores at the end of their first under-graduation year (compared to the rest of the students from the same academic year). All targeted students who met the inclusion criteria were invited to participate in the research study. No students were coerced into entering the study as their participation was voluntary. Participants were asked to respond to a statement about factors causing them to feel stress,

by providing a minimum of 1 answer in response to that statement. While collecting the data, the researcher was available in the classroom to answer any queries that the participants might have had. The results were then analysed manually and were categorized into different themes.

4.0 RESULTS

Based on the collected data, factors causing low-performing students to feel stress are presented in Table 1. Manually analysed, the stress factors were categorized into two main themes; internal and external factors. It is found that among the external factors influencing the students’ stress include family, peer, academic-related, environment, health, and socio-economic issues. Meanwhile, problems related to attitude or behaviour and cognitive are found to be the internal factors that led stress to happen. Further sub-themes under each category is fully shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Factors causing low-performing students to feel stress



5.0 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The findings discovered the factors causing stress among university students who possess low academic achievement in their first under-graduate study. Results of our study revealed that external and internal factors are perceived as factors that contribute to their stress.

EXTERNAL FACTORS

Family-related Stress

The first external factor that causes stress among university students is family-related stress such as family issues and high expectations from their parents. For this, informant 10 had to say:

*"I'm not interested in my current field of study, but I have to continue my studies because my parents have high hopes for me to succeed in the field I'm enrolled in now. For them, when I continue my studies in this field, my future is bright because job opportunities are wide open in this field."*

In some cultures, family loyalty and obligations are prioritized over individual aspirations, which can place additional stress on students. This is especially true for first-generation university students, who may feel torn between fulfilling family duties and pursuing their own academic and career goals. According to Alharbi, Masud, & Hamid (2022), first-generation students often experience heightened stress due to cultural expectations and the pressure to succeed as a way of uplifting their family's socio-economic status.

In addition, parents often have specific academic and career goals for their children, which can create immense pressure. When students feel that they are not meeting these expectations, it can lead to feelings of inadequacy and stress. A study by Deb, Strodl, & Sun (2021) found that students who perceive higher parental expectations and less autonomy experience greater psychological stress. This pressure is particularly intense in cultures where academic success is closely tied to family honor and future economic stability.

Family-related stress is a significant challenge for university students, influencing their mental health and academic outcomes. The pressure of family expectations, financial difficulties, family conflicts, and cultural obligations can create a stressful environment that impedes a student's ability to succeed. Addressing these issues through counseling, financial support, and fostering open communication within families is crucial to alleviating stress and promoting student well-being.

### Peers and Classmates

Another external factor that contributes to the stress among university students is the interaction with peers and classmates. Peer-related stress can stem from various factors, including freerider issues, poor commitment shown by peers, and conflict with classmates. These interactions can have negative impacts on students' mental health and academic performance. About this, informant 5 said:

*"I get stressed when I have to complete an assignment given by the lecturer alone, when the assignment is a group assignment that should be completed with group members. When I try to contact my group members, they will give all kinds of excuses like they are quite busy with part-time jobs. It is not fair that I am treated this way. I had to sacrifice time and energy to ensure that the group assignment could be completed, while my group members received marks easily without proper commitment."*

Group work is a common component of university education, designed to promote collaboration and teamwork. However, group projects can also be a significant source of stress, particularly when there is an imbalance in the contribution of group members. Students may feel frustrated when their peers do not contribute equally or when conflicts arise over differing opinions and approaches to the project. According to a study by Jones, Smith, & Turner (2023), group work stress is often related to the fear of letting down teammates, managing group dynamics, and coordinating schedules. These stressors can be particularly pronounced in diverse groups where cultural and communication differences may add to the challenges.

The social environment at university can be both a support system and a source of stress. Peer pressure is a significant factor, influencing behaviors and decisions related to academics, social activities, and lifestyle choices. Students may feel pressured to conform to the expectations of their peer group, which can lead to stress, especially if these expectations conflict with their personal values or academic goals. Additionally, the fear of social rejection or exclusion can drive students to engage in behaviors that are counterproductive to their well-being. Peer-related stress is a significant challenge for university students, impacting their mental health, academic performance, and social relationships. While peers can be a source of support, the social dynamics of university life can also create significant stress.

### Academic-Related Issues

University life, while full of opportunities, can be a significant source of stress for students. Academic-related stress is another common external factor that affects many students, manifesting in various ways, including anxiety, depression, and burnout. Understanding the sources and impacts of this stress is crucial for developing effective support systems and interventions. For this, informant 2 had to say:

*"I attend class as usual, I also do revision in preparation for the exam, but I don't understand why my marks are still low compared to my classmates. Sometimes I feel like I'm not smart and I realize that I'm the type who has a hard time understanding what's being taught in class, especially when the class is conducted online. I can't expect my internet connection to always be stable throughout the online class."*

One primary source is the pressure to perform well academically. Students often face high expectations from themselves, their families, and their institutions. This pressure can lead to intense stress, especially when students perceive their academic workload as unmanageable (Beiter, Linden, Matyka, Hermsen, Morris, & Silva, 2015). Moreover, the competitive nature of university environments can increase stress. Students frequently compare themselves to their peers, leading to feelings of inadequacy and heightened anxiety. The fear of not meeting academic or career expectations can be paralyzing, especially in high-stakes programs where performance impacts future opportunities (Rosen, Dorr, & McMillan, 2014).

### Environmental Issue

Environmental factors, including toxic surroundings, poor internet connection, noise, crowdedness, transportation and location issues can also affect stress levels among university students. Living conditions are a prominent environmental factor influencing stress among university students. Many students live in on-campus housing or shared apartments, where they must adapt to communal living arrangements. Issues such as noise, lack of privacy, and inadequate living space can contribute to heightened stress levels. About this, informant 1 said:

*"I'm the type of person who finds it difficult to focus when I'm in a noisy place. When I'm in the dorm, I can't avoid chatting with my roommate or friends who come to my room. At the same time, I have to put up with my roommate when he plays music or watches a movie on his laptop, which indirectly causes me to not be able to focus on what I am studying at the time."*

Research indicates that students residing in dormitories or shared housing often report higher levels of stress compared to those living in private accommodations (Kircaburun, Demirtaş, & Özen, 2019). Poor quality of housing, including issues with maintenance or overcrowding, can exacerbate stress. Students who experience such conditions may face difficulties in focusing on their studies, leading to increased stress and a negative impact on academic performance (Ragheb, Sloane, & Smith, 2021). Additionally, the lack of a quiet and comfortable space for studying or relaxing can further contribute to stress. Addressing various environmental stressors that can significantly impact the well-being and academic performance is crucial for promoting student well-being and academic success. By understanding and mitigating the effects of environmental stressors, universities can create more supportive and conducive environments for student growth and achievement.

### Health Issue

While academic pressures are commonly recognized as primary stressors, health factors also play a crucial role in influencing stress of university students. Sleep is a critical component of health that is often neglected by university students. For this, informant 3 had to say:

*"Throughout my studies, I realized that my sleeping time was erratic. Sometimes, I will sleep late at night or stay up all night to prepare an assignment. Sometimes, my head feels very dizzy because I don't sleep enough. As a result, when I come to class in such a state, it is difficult for me to absorb the lessons taught by the lecturer during class."*

The National Sleep Foundation (2015) recommends that young adults, including university students, aim for 7 to 9 hours of sleep each night. However, numerous studies indicate that many students fall short of this guideline. A survey conducted by the College Sleep Study (Hirshkowitz et al., 2015) revealed that nearly 60% of college students reported not getting enough sleep during the academic year. The stress associated with inadequate sleep is multifaceted. Sleep deprivation has been shown to impair cognitive performance, increase irritability, and heighten emotional reactions. According to Walker (2017), lack of sleep disrupts the brain's ability to regulate mood and stress responses, making it more challenging for individuals to cope with stressors. The American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) (2016) also emphasizes that insufficient sleep is linked to mental health disorders such as anxiety and depression, which are prevalent among university students.

### Socio-Economic Issue

Another external factor causing stress among university students is financial stress, as one of the most significant socio-economic factors affecting the university students. According to a study by Coyle, Smith, & Johnson (2023), students who experience financial difficulties are more likely to report higher levels of stress and lower academic performance. The pressure to manage tuition fees, student loans, and living costs can lead to anxiety and a sense of helplessness. Many students work part-time jobs to alleviate financial burdens, which can further strain their academic commitments and lead to a cycle of stress. About this, informant 7 said:

*"I come from a simple family. Only my father works, and my mother is a housewife. My father's source of income is not able to cover my expenses at university and my siblings who are still in school. There are many books and other study requirements that I need, but I can't afford to buy them because I don't have the money. I feel quite sad and stressed with my current life."*

Research by López, Martínez, & Chen (2023) also highlights that students from lower socio-economic backgrounds often face additional challenges, such as limited access to resources and support systems. These students may struggle with the dual pressures of academic expectations and financial instability, leading to increased stress levels. The lack of financial security can hinder their ability to focus on studies, resulting in poorer academic outcomes and heightened stress. Fostering an environment that promotes financial literacy can help alleviate the stress experienced by students and enhance their academic success.



## INTERNAL FACTORS

### Attitude or Behaviour

While various external factors contribute to this stress (i.e., family-related, peers and classmates, academic-related, environmental, health, and socio-economic issues), internal factors, on the other hand, play a crucial role in shaping students' experiences. One of the internal factors is the students' attitude or behaviour. Attitude factors encompass a range of beliefs, perceptions, and emotional responses that can either exacerbate or alleviate stress. For instance, poor time management. Time management refers to the process of planning and exercising conscious control over the amount of time spent on specific activities. In an academic context, poor time management leads to overwhelming workloads and a perception of being out of control. Caught in a web of deadlines and obligations, students often succumb to stress, as they feel they have inadequately allocated time to complete tasks.

Laziness, often characterized by a lack of motivation and procrastination, is another critical factor contributing to stress among university students. Procrastination among students is a common phenomenon that is often mischaracterized as laziness. Research has shown that procrastination leads to heightened stress levels. A study conducted by Sirois and Pychyl (2013) found that students who procrastinate tend to experience increased stress because they often rush to complete assignments at the last minute, leading to a cycle of stress and inadequate performance. This stress can manifest physically and emotionally, resulting in symptoms such as headaches, anxiety, and depression.

### Cognitive Issue

University education is often a challenging transition from high school, marked by greater academic demands, diverse teaching styles, and the need for independent learning. Among the myriad factors contributing to student stress, difficulty understanding lectures stands out as a significant concern. This stress is influenced by the complexity of the material, varying teaching methods, and individual student differences. Understanding lectures effectively is paramount for academic success in university settings. However, numerous studies indicate that many students struggle with lecture comprehension, leading to stress and anxiety. According to a study by Sweeney and McDaid (2020), approximately 30% of university students reported feeling anxious about their ability to grasp course material during lectures. This anxiety often stems from a variety of factors including language barriers, dense content, fast-paced teaching, and inadequate note-taking skills.

The pressure to perform academically can compound the stress associated with lecture comprehension. A lack of understanding can lead to poor grades, which, in turn, increases feelings of inadequacy and anxiety among students (Reddy, Ramesh, & Jadhav, 2018). This cycle of anxiety and performance pressure can undermine students' mental health and overall well-being.

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

Aiming to explore the factors that influence stress among university students, our findings found that internal and external factors are perceived as factors that contribute to their stress. Findings of this study indicate the importance of stress management programs to be carried out in the effort to help students adapt with coping mechanisms in dealing with different stressors. Despite the sufficient sample size of the study, conducting it in a single public university in Johor limits the generalization of its results to all university students across Malaysia. Thus, further study is suggested to be carried out by involving numbers of institutions for better comparison or generalization.

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## PUBLIC UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS

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### Abstract

Cybersecurity is crucial for safeguarding virtual interactions, financial transactions, and sensitive data in the digital age. Academic institutions, like the National Defence University of Malaysia (NDUM), are particularly vulnerable due to their role in diverse information sharing. This study aims to evaluate and improve cybersecurity awareness among NDUM students, focusing on their knowledge, attitudes, and password security practices. Preliminary observations suggest significant deficiencies in students' understanding of cybersecurity threats and mitigation strategies, leading to complacency and inadequate password management. Through a quantitative survey involving 136 students, this research explores the relationship between cybersecurity knowledge, attitudes, and practices. Findings indicate high levels of cybersecurity awareness among most students but reveal variability in attitudes and knowledge, underscoring the need for targeted educational initiatives. Enhancing cybersecurity awareness is imperative to protect personal and institutional data, ensuring the preparedness of future defense leaders against cyber threats.

*Keywords:* Cybersecurity awareness, University Students, Cyber threats, Higher Education

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### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In today's digital era, the pervasive integration of technology into everyday life has elevated the significance of cybersecurity. Safeguarding virtual interactions, financial transactions, and sensitive data from cyber threats is now imperative. Given their role as hubs of diverse information sharing, academic institutions are particularly vulnerable to these threats. This necessitates the establishment of robust cybersecurity infrastructure and comprehensive awareness initiatives.

The National Defence University of Malaysia (NDUM), renowned for its dedication to grooming leaders and professionals in defense and security, is not immune to the challenges of the cyber landscape. NDUM places great emphasis on instilling cybersecurity awareness among its students, acknowledging their pivotal role as avid users of digital platforms and future defense leaders. This entails not only shielding students from potential online risks but also equipping them with the knowledge and skills needed to navigate the digital environment securely. This awareness involves a deep understanding of potential hazards and strict adherence to cybersecurity best practices.

Ideally, National Defence University of Malaysia (NDUM) students would possess a profound understanding and consciousness of cybersecurity. This implies that they would possess a thorough comprehension of cyber threats, favorable dispositions towards cybersecurity practices, and rigorous adherence to password security protocols. These students would possess extensive knowledge regarding potential cyber threats and the most effective methods for mitigating them. Nevertheless, the present situation at NDUM demonstrates a notable deviation from this ideal. Preliminary observations, supported by informal discussion evidence, suggest that many students need a better grasp of cybersecurity threats and the most effective mitigation strategies. This lack of knowledge often leads to a complacent or indifferent attitude toward cybersecurity, resulting in lax behaviors when protecting digital assets.

Moreover, the existing password security practices among students require enhancement. Many students employ easily predictable passwords or exhibit inadequate password management practices, heightening their susceptibility to cyber threats. The difference between the ideal and the current reality emphasizes a significant weakness within the student population, posing a substantial threat to individual and institutional security. The ramifications of this disparity in cybersecurity awareness are substantial and extensive. Students lacking cybersecurity knowledge and exhibiting negative attitudes towards protective measures are more vulnerable to cyberattacks, including phishing, malware, and data breaches. Given the sensitive nature of the information the university manages, insufficient password security measures can result in unauthorized entry to confidential data, putting personal information at risk and possibly endangering national security. The absence of robust cybersecurity measures undermines the overall security of NDUM, jeopardizing its mission to educate future defense professionals in a secure and protected setting. Hence, it is imperative to tackle these issues. Promoting a culture of cybersecurity awareness and resilience among students is crucial, as it ensures they are adequately equipped to confront and reduce the impact of cyber threats effectively. Implementing this measure will not only safeguard personal and organizational data but will also enhance the overall cybersecurity strength of the defense industry.

This paper aims to evaluate and improve cybersecurity awareness among NDUM students by assessing the levels of knowledge, attitudes, and password security and exploring the connections between these factors.

## ■ 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The cybersecurity knowledge levels among public university students in Malaysia currently indicate notable deficiencies, highlighting the necessity for improved awareness initiatives. Alqahtani (2022) found that students lacked cybersecurity understanding, emphasizing the immediate need for enhanced instructional programs. Kamalulail et al. (2022) highlight that knowledge factors are crucial in predicting cybersecurity awareness. Their study revealed no notable disparities in awareness depending on demographic criteria, indicating that the problem is widespread among different student groups.

Multiple studies have investigated particular habits that impact the level of knowledge regarding cybersecurity. Alqahtani (2022) highlights password security, browser security, and social media usage as crucial domains in which students require enhanced comprehension and adherence. In addition, Hamzah (2021) discovered that students at the University Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia exhibited a reasonable degree of cybersecurity awareness, highlighting the significant contribution of stakeholders in mitigating cybercrime through education. The contrast between the understanding of Malaysian students and their international colleagues, particularly those at Chinese colleges, highlights the worldwide significance of this matter. Guo and Tinmaz (2023) emphasize comparable vulnerabilities in password habits, underscoring the necessity for all-encompassing cybersecurity education in various educational settings.

### Relationship between Knowledge Factor, Attitude Factor, Password Security, and Cybersecurity Awareness

The relationship between knowledge, attitude, and password security practices is crucial in understanding cybersecurity awareness among university students. Alqahtani (2022) has identified key elements such as password security, browser security, and social media use as significant factors affecting cybersecurity awareness. This study suggests that a comprehensive understanding and practice of secure password management and cautious social media use are crucial for enhancing cybersecurity awareness.

Furthermore, Kamalulail et al. (2022) emphasize that knowledge factors significantly predict cybersecurity awareness. Their findings suggest that demographic factors do not significantly influence awareness levels, highlighting the critical role of targeted educational interventions in enhancing cybersecurity knowledge. Furthermore, a study conducted by various authors (2023) in Selangor, Malaysia, illustrates that password security awareness is a significant predictor of cyberbullying, indicating a direct correlation between robust cybersecurity practices and reduced cyberbullying incidents.

The qualitative study by Alsiddig et al. (2020) compares cybersecurity awareness levels between students and faculty, revealing that faculty members generally exhibit better awareness. This suggests cybersecurity initiatives must mainly focus on students to bridge the awareness gap. Moreover, the study by Mustafa et al. (2019) demonstrates how critical educational interventions are in increasing awareness of phishing attacks. They call for more testing with a broader range of student groups to ensure the proposed models are effective.

## ■ 3.0 METHODOLOGY

This research evaluates the level of cybersecurity awareness among Faculty of Defence Science and Technology students at the NDUM by thoroughly examining their knowledge, attitudes toward cybersecurity, and password security practices. Furthermore, the study aims to explore the connections between these factors to guide the creation of specific strategies to enhance cybersecurity awareness among the NDUM student community. This study employed a quantitative approach using a set of questionnaires. The selection of respondents was made via probability sampling. All respondents were recruited voluntarily and informed of the objectives of the study. This study involved a sample size of 136 students. The questionnaire instrument used consists of five (5) parts, namely (i) Part A: Demographics of Respondents, (ii) Part B: Level of Cybersecurity Awareness, (iii) Part C: Level of knowledge factor, (iv) Part D: Level of attitude factor and (v) Part E: Level of password security. A five-point Likert scale was used (5 = strongly agree - 1 = strongly disagree).

## ■ 4.0 RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The researcher used descriptive statistical methods to describe the information obtained from respondents. Table 1 shows the results of the level of Knowledge Factor, Attitude Factor, Password Security, and Cybersecurity Awareness. While Table 2 shows the relationship between Knowledge Factor, Attitude Factor, Password Security, and Cybersecurity Awareness.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistic**

Selected statistics	Descriptive	Variables			
		Y(Cyber Security)	X1 (Knowledge)	X2 (Attitude)	X3(Password Security)
Mean		3.86	3.82	3.63	4.01
Median		4.00	4.09	4.12	4.16
Standard Deviation		0.58	0.61	0.92	0.51
Minimum		1.75	1.64	1.38	2.83
Maximum		5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Range		3.25	3.36	3.63	2.17
Interquartile Range		0.72	0.64	1.47	0.67
Skewness		-0.85	-1.291	-0.7	-0.7
Level	Low	1(0.74%)	4(2.94%)	18(13.24%)	0
	Moderate	40(29.41%)	41(30.15%)	37(27.21%)	35(25.74%)
	High	95(69.85%)	91(66.91%)	81(59.56%)	101(74.26%)
Total		136 (100%)	136 (100%)	136 (100%)	136 (100%)

The data in Table 1 provides valuable insights. Most students show high levels in all these areas, indicating a positive attitude towards cybersecurity. The data reveals that a substantial majority of students exhibit high levels of cybersecurity awareness (69.85%), knowledge (66.91%), positive attitudes towards cybersecurity (59.56%), and secure password practices (74.26%). These figures indicate a generally proficient and positive disposition towards cybersecurity among the student population. The close alignment between mean and median values for all variables suggests symmetrical distributions, reflecting a central tendency towards positive outcomes in these domains. Notably, the higher standard deviation for attitude (0.92) compared to other variables indicates more significant variability in students' attitudes towards cybersecurity, suggesting that attitudes are more dispersed across the population.

The negative skewness values for all variables imply left-skewed distributions, indicating that most students have scores above the mean, reflecting positively on their cybersecurity posture. Specifically, the skewness of knowledge (X1) being the highest (-1.291) suggests a more pronounced left skew, highlighting a substantial proportion of students with higher-than-average cybersecurity knowledge. Furthermore, the range and interquartile range (IQR) metrics provide further granularity on the dispersion of scores. Password security (X3), with the smallest range (2.17) and IQR (0.67), indicates a more concentrated distribution around the median, suggesting consistent password security practices among students. In contrast, attitude (X2), with the most extensive range (3.63) and IQR (1.47), highlights more significant variability, pointing to a broader disparity in how students perceive and engage with cybersecurity issues. The distribution of students across different performance levels reveals critical areas for intervention. While very few students fall into the low category for cybersecurity awareness (0.74%) and password security (0%), a more notable proportion is low in knowledge (2.94%) and attitude (13.24%). This suggests that while most students maintain a high level of cybersecurity awareness and good password practices, a significant subset with inadequate knowledge and attitudes could potentially undermine overall cybersecurity efforts.

In conclusion, the data underscores a robust and positive relationship between high levels of cybersecurity awareness, knowledge, positive attitudes, and secure password practices among university students in NDUM. Students with better knowledge and positive attitudes towards cybersecurity are likelier to use safe password practices and exhibit higher cybersecurity awareness. However, the observed variability, particularly in attitudes and knowledge, highlights the necessity for targeted educational initiatives. These initiatives should enhance students' understanding and attitudes toward cybersecurity, ensuring a more uniform and comprehensive cybersecurity posture across the student body.

**Table 2: Relationship of Knowledge Factor, Attitude Factor, Password Security, and Cybersecurity Awareness.**

Cybersecurity Awareness			
	Magnitude of Relationship	Coefficient (r)	P value
Knowledge Factor	Moderate	0.581	0.000
Attitude Factor	Moderate	0.583	0.000
Password Security	Moderate	0.553	0.000

The analysis of the relationship between knowledge, attitude, password security, and cybersecurity awareness among university students in NDUM is shown in Table 2. The data reveals notable, positive correlations between cybersecurity awareness and three key factors: knowledge ( $r = 0.581, p = 0.000$ ), attitude ( $r = 0.583, p = 0.000$ ), and password security ( $r = 0.553, p = 0.000$ ).

The results of this study indicate that students with a higher level of cybersecurity knowledge tend to demonstrate better cybersecurity awareness. This correlation is consistent with previous research, which has shown that increased knowledge and understanding of cybersecurity principles significantly improve an individual's awareness and responsiveness to cybersecurity threats (McCoy & Fowler, 2004). Furthermore, the positive relationship between attitudes toward cybersecurity and awareness highlights the importance of cultivating positive student perceptions and attitudes. Research has illustrated that attitudes significantly influence behavior and awareness in cybersecurity, with individuals holding positive attitudes being more likely to engage in proactive security behaviors (Ifinedo, 2014). Moreover, the data shows a moderate positive correlation between password security practices and cybersecurity awareness. This finding aligns with existing literature, emphasizing that secure password practices are essential for overall cybersecurity hygiene (Florêncio & Herley, 2010). Students who adhere to proper password security measures demonstrate a heightened awareness of broader cybersecurity aspects, thereby improving their overall awareness.

Understanding the relationship between knowledge, attitude, password security, and cybersecurity awareness among university students in Malaysia is a complex matter that has attracted considerable attention in recent research. Several studies have emphasized the necessity of improving cybersecurity awareness and knowledge among students in academic environments (Alharbi & Tassaddiq, 2021; Khader et al., 2021). Research consistently points to gaps in students' knowledge, attitudes, and practices on cybersecurity, highlighting the need for comprehensive interventions (Alharbi & Tassaddiq, 2021; Khader et al., 2021).

Educational initiatives and awareness programs are crucial for enhancing cybersecurity awareness and behavior among students (Alrobaian et al., 2023; Garba et al., 2020). Utilizing innovative approaches, such as integrating traditional methods with interactive tools like videos and games, has shown promising results in engaging students effectively and improving their comprehension of cybersecurity principles (Alrobaian et al., 2023). Furthermore, integrating cybersecurity education into university curricula is essential in preparing students with the necessary knowledge and skills to combat cyber threats (Garba et al., 2020).

To optimize the effectiveness of cybersecurity awareness programs, tailoring them to specific student populations by considering factors like age, gender, and cultural background can significantly enhance their impact (Daengsi et al., 2021). Additionally, research underscores the importance of accounting for psychological factors, including knowledge, attitudes, perceptions, and motivations, when developing interventions designed to address cybersecurity awareness's cognitive and behavioral aspects (Parikh, 2023).

## ■ 5.0 CONCLUSION

Given the pervasive integration of technology in contemporary academic and defense environments, this study underscores the paramount importance of cybersecurity awareness among students at the National Defence University of Malaysia (NDUM). The findings reveal a generally high level of cybersecurity knowledge, positive attitudes, and secure password practices among the student population. However, significant variability, particularly in attitudes and knowledge, highlights critical areas that necessitate targeted educational interventions. These deficiencies in cybersecurity awareness pose substantial risks to both individual and institutional security, emphasizing the urgent need for robust and comprehensive cybersecurity education programs.

Promoting a culture of cybersecurity resilience and awareness is essential for safeguarding personal and institutional data, aligning with NDUM's mission to prepare future defense professionals. Addressing the identified deficiencies through tailored educational initiatives can enhance students' understanding and attitudes toward cybersecurity, ensuring a more uniform and comprehensive cybersecurity posture across the student body. By fostering a well-informed and proactive student population, NDUM can better protect its digital assets and contribute to the overall cybersecurity strength of the defense industry. This proactive approach will not only mitigate potential cyber threats but also equip future leaders with the essential skills and knowledge to navigate the increasingly complex digital landscape securely. The observed gaps in cybersecurity awareness, particularly concerning attitudes and knowledge, necessitate a multifaceted approach to educational interventions. These interventions should be meticulously designed to address both cognitive and behavioral aspects of cybersecurity, employing innovative and interactive pedagogical strategies. Integrating cybersecurity education into the core curriculum and leveraging technology-enhanced learning tools can significantly bolster students' comprehension and engagement.

Furthermore, this study contributes to the broader discourse on cybersecurity education by elucidating the intricate relationships between knowledge, attitudes, and password security practices. The positive correlations identified between these variables underscore the interconnectedness of cognitive understanding and behavioral practices in fostering a robust cybersecurity culture. Future research should explore longitudinal impacts of educational interventions on cybersecurity awareness and extend this inquiry to diverse academic settings to generalize findings.

In conclusion, enhancing cybersecurity awareness at NDUM is not merely an institutional imperative but a strategic necessity for national defense. By cultivating a cybersecurity-conscious student body, NDUM can ensure that its graduates are not only adept at safeguarding personal and organizational digital assets but are also capable of contributing to national security in an increasingly digitalized world. This study advocates for a sustained commitment to cybersecurity education, emphasizing its critical role in shaping the future landscape of defense and security.

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# HUBUNGAN ANTARA IDENTIFIKASI ORGANISASI DENGAN PRESTASI KERJA DI SEBUAH ORGANISASI PERKHIDMATAN AWAM

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## Abstrak

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji hubungan antara identifikasi organisasi dengan prestasi kerja dalam kalangan pegawai di sebuah organisasi perkhidmatan awam di Malaysia. Kajian ini dijalankan secara *cross-sectional* dan menggunakan kaedah kuantitatif dengan penggunaan soal selidik pengenalan organisasi (OIQ) dan soal selidik prestasi kerja individu (IWPQ). Kaedah pensampelan mudah (*convenience sampling*) telah dilaksanakan dan melibatkan seramai 103 orang responden yang mewakili 100% kadar pulangan. Data telah dianalisis menggunakan SPSS versi 27.0 dengan pelaksanaan analisis statistik deskriptif dan inferensi. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa tahap identifikasi organisasi serta prestasi kerja dalam kalangan responden berada pada tahap yang tinggi. Analisis korelasi juga mendapati bahawa terdapat hubungan sederhana yang signifikan di antara kedua-dua pembolehubah kajian. Organisasi disyorkan untuk meningkatkan program penglibatan pegawai yang lebih kerap, meningkatkan komunikasi dalaman tentang visi, misi, dan pencapaian organisasi, serta mewujudkan peluang untuk pegawai menyumbang kepada pembangunan organisasi. Cadangan ini diharapkan dapat membantu memantapkan pemahaman pegawai terhadap objektif organisasi dan meningkatkan penglibatan mereka dalam mencapai matlamat yang ditetapkan serta meningkatkan prestasi kerja.

**Keywords:** identifikasi organisasi, prestasi kerja, perkhidmatan awam

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## 1.0 PENGENALAN

Identifikasi organisasi, menurut Edwards dan Peccei (2015), merujuk kepada hubungan psikologi yang wujud antara individu dan organisasi. Konsep ini merangkumi bagaimana seseorang individu melihat dan menilai organisasi berdasarkan pelbagai aspek seperti tanggungjawab sosial, budaya organisasi, dan sumber-sumber yang disediakan. Identifikasi organisasi juga dipengaruhi oleh perasaan pekerja terhadap ikatan mereka dengan organisasi, keselarasan dengan matlamat dan nilai organisasi, serta rasa kepunyaan yang mereka miliki. Peningkatan tahap identifikasi organisasi telah terbukti membantu meningkatkan prestasi kerja, komitmen, dan keterikatan pekerja dengan organisasi. Campbell dan Wiernik (2015) mendefinisikan prestasi kerja sebagai tingkah laku individu yang berkaitan dengan pencapaian, yang memberi nilai dan menyumbang secara langsung kepada matlamat organisasi. Takrifan ini menekankan bahawa prestasi kerja bukan hanya dinilai berdasarkan hasil akhir, tetapi juga meliputi proses dan tindakan yang diambil oleh pekerja semasa melaksanakan tugas mereka.

Kajian-kajian lepas (Karanika-Murray *et al.*, 2015; Blader *et al.*, 2017; Klimchak *et al.*, 2019) menunjukkan wujudnya hubungan signifikan antara identifikasi organisasi dan prestasi kerja. Walau bagaimanapun, kekuatan hubungan ini didapati tidak konsisten antara kajian-kajian tersebut. Justeru, wujud jurang keperluan untuk mengkaji kekuatan hubungan di antara kedua-dua pembolehubah di kajian semasa. Di samping itu, maklumat di laporan tahunan organisasi kajian juga mendapati wujud isu peningkatan aduan kes salah laku melibatkan responden kajian sebanyak 50.91% berbanding tahun 2021 yang mungkin melibatkan ketidakselarasan antara objektif organisasi dan objektif pegawai. Peningkatan ini membimbangkan kerana mencerminkan tahap identifikasi organisasi yang rendah, yang seterusnya memberi kesan negatif kepada prestasi kerja.

## 2.0 KAJIAN LITERATUR

Konsep identifikasi organisasi, prestasi kerja dan hubungan antara kedua-dua pembolehubah ini dibincangkan dalam bahagian ini.

### Identifikasi Organisasi

Identifikasi organisasi merujuk kepada pengenalan diri pekerja sebagai ahli sesebuah organisasi untuk menyesuaikan diri dengan organisasi tersebut (Kaifi, 2013). Konsep ini penting dalam keberkesanan organisasi kerana mempunyai hubungan positif dengan prestasi dan tingkah laku kerja pekerja, serta berkorelasi negatif dengan niat untuk berhenti kerja dan kadar pusing ganti pekerja (Terzioglu *et al.*, 2016). Piccoli *et al.*, (2017) menekankan peranan penting



identifikasi organisasi dalam membentuk sikap dan tingkah laku pada peringkat individu dan organisasi. Hal ini disebabkan oleh penerapan identiti organisasi yang berbeza-beza, di mana rasa kekitaan terhadap organisasi membentuk sikap dan tingkah laku individu sejajar dengan identiti organisasi tersebut. Lee *et al.*, (2015) menjelaskan bahawa identifikasi organisasi adalah perlakuan yang mendorong seseorang individu ke arah pencapaian matlamat dan nilai organisasi dimana mereka cenderung untuk membuat keputusan yang memberi manfaat kepada keseluruhan organisasi berbanding menumpukan perhatian kepada kepentingan diri sendiri.

### **Prestasi Kerja**

Menurut Afzali *et al.*, (2014) prestasi ditakrifkan ingkah laku berkaitan pencapaian yang melibatkan unsur penilaian, iaitu sejauh mana pekerja memenuhi objektif prestasi organisasi secara menyeluruh. Campbell dan Wiernik (2015) memperluas lagi pemahaman tentang prestasi kerja dengan menyatakan bahawa tingkah laku individu yang memberi nilai kepada organisasi dan menyumbang kepada matlamat organisasi boleh dikelaskan sebagai prestasi kerja. Definisi ini menekankan kepentingan tingkah laku yang boleh diukur dan diperhatikan, termasuk aktiviti fizikal dan psikologi seperti pemprosesan kognitif dan penyelesaian masalah. Carpini *et al.*, (2017) menyatakan bahawa prestasi kerja merupakan pemboleh ubah yang paling ketara dan banyak dikaji dalam pengurusan industri dan tingkah laku organisasi dan ini menunjukkan kepentingan prestasi kerja dalam kajian organisasi dan pengurusan.

### **Hubungan antara Identifikasi Organisasi dan Prestasi Kerja**

Beberapa kajian lepas menunjukkan wujudnya hubungan yang positif antara kedua-dua pemboleh ubah ini. Contohnya kajian Karanika-Murray *et al.*, (2015) menunjukkan bahawa individu yang mempunyai identifikasi yang baik dengan organisasi mereka lebih cenderung untuk berusaha demi kejayaan organisasi tersebut. Kajian oleh Duan Junqiang (2015) pula mendapati identifikasi organisasi mempunyai hubungan positif dengan sikap kerja aktif pekerja, tingkah laku dan ciri-ciri lain serta meningkatkan kesetiaan dan prestasi kerja pekerja. Sementara kajian oleh Muthuswamy dan Tajuddin (2022) menunjukkan bahawa identiti organisasi dan penglibatan kerja secara signifikan menyederhanakan hubungan antara kepimpinan dan prestasi kerja. Selain itu, Tuna *et al.*, (2019) dalam kajian yang dijalankan terhadap jururawat di hospital kerajaan mendapati hubungan korelasi dan regresi yang signifikan antara prestasi kerja, identifikasi organisasi dan 'organizational cynicism'. Walaupun kajian ini mempunyai beberapa batasan, termasuk saiz sampel yang terhad dan penggunaan skala laporan sendiri, dapatan kajian ini menyokong bahawa prestasi kerja meningkat apabila dipengaruhi secara positif oleh identifikasi organisasi. Kajian-kajian lepas ini menyokong bahawa identifikasi organisasi mempunyai hubungan dengan prestasi kerja. Apabila pekerja mempunyai identifikasi yang tinggi terhadap organisasi, mereka cenderung mempunyai komitmen, kesetiaan, serta mempamerkan sikap dan tingkah laku positif yang meningkatkan prestasi kerja mereka demi manfaat dan kemajuan organisasi. Justeru hipotesis kajian ini melibatkan "terdapat hubungan antara identifikasi organisasi dengan prestasi kerja".

## **3.0 METODOLOGI**

Kajian ini dilaksanakan secara kuantitatif melalui pengedaran soal selidik secara keratan rentas untuk mengukur hubungan antara kedua-dua pemboleh ubah. Populasi kajian terdiri daripada 140 orang pegawai di sebuah organisasi perkhidmatan awam di Malaysia dengan saiz sampel sebanyak 103 orang berdasarkan Krejcie dan Morgan (1970). Organisasi kajian tidak dapat dinyatakan atas sebab integriti dan kerahsiaan dalam prosedur pelaksanaan penyelidikan di organisasi tersebut. Kajian ini menggunakan reka bentuk pensampelan bukan kebarangkalian iaitu pensampelan mudah (*convenience sampling*) bagi mengumpul data melalui pengedaran soal selidik. Terdapat 3 bahagian di dalam soal selidik yang melibatkan Bahagian A : Demografi, Bahagian B : Item Identifikasi Organisasi (Cheney, 1982) dan Bahagian C : Item Prestasi Kerja dengan tiga dimensi iaitu prestasi tugas, prestasi kontekstual dan prestasi tingkah laku tidak produktif (item *recode* ketika analisis) (Koopmans, 2014). Bagi Bahagian B dan C, pengukuran dibuat menggunakan Skala Likert terdiri daripada 5 deskriptor iaitu: 5 = Sangat Setuju, 4 = Setuju, 3 = Kurang Setuju, 2 = Tidak Setuju, dan 1 = Sangat Tidak Setuju. Proses pengumpulan data dilaksanakan selama 3 minggu bermula 26 Mac 2024 sehingga 19 April 2024. Untuk memastikan kecukupan data, pemantauan jumlah responden telah dilakukan secara mingguan. Ini membolehkan penyelidik memastikan jumlah responden mencukupi sebelum data dianalisis. Pendekatan ini selaras dengan cadangan Dillman *et al.*, (2014) yang menekankan kepentingan pemantauan respons dalam kajian tinjauan untuk memaksimumkan kadar respons. Kajian rintis telah dijalankan terhadap 15 orang pegawai dan dapatan analisis bagi identifikasi organisasi mencatatkan nilai pekali Alpha Cronbach sebanyak 0.890 manakala bagi prestasi kerja mencatatkan nilai pekali Alpha Cronbach sebanyak 0.743. Dapatan analisa menunjukkan kedua-dua pemboleh ubah berada pada tahap kebolehpercayaan yang tinggi. Ini membuktikan bahawa instrumen kajian yang digunakan mempunyai konsistensi dalaman yang baik dan boleh dipercayai untuk mengukur pemboleh ubah yang dikaji. Data telah dianalisis menggunakan SPSS versi 27.0 bagi menguji kebolehpercayaan, menganalisis statistik deskriptif, dan analisis statistik inferensi. Korelasi *Pearson* digunakan untuk mengenal pasti hubungan antara identifikasi organisasi dengan prestasi kerja berdasarkan taburan normal kedua-dua pemboleh ubah yang masih lagi diterima dalam julat nilai skewness dan kurtosis  $\pm 1$ .

#### 4.0 DAPATAN KAJIAN

Dapatan kajian menunjukkan kadar pulangan sebanyak 100% daripada sampel kajian. Analisis demografi menunjukkan majoriti responden adalah lelaki (51.5%) dan kebanyakan responden berumur antara 30-40 tahun (47.6%). Majoriti responden juga sudah berkahwin (88.3%) dan kebanyakan daripada responden mempunyai tahap akademik diperingkat Diploma (42.7%).

Jadual 1 Tahap Pembolehubah Kajian

Pembolehubah	Min	Sisihan Piawai	Tahap
Identifikasi Organisasi	3.79	0.557	Tinggi
Prestasi Kerja	4.27	0.434	Tinggi

Nilai Min (Rendah = 1.00 - 2.33; Sederhana = 2.34 - 3.67; Tinggi = 3.68 - 5.00)

Dapatan di Jadual 1 menunjukkan bahawa kedua-dua pembolehubah berada dalam tahap yang tinggi dengan nilai min 3.79 bagi identifikasi organisasi dan 4.27 bagi nilai min prestasi kerja.

Jadual 2 Hubungan antara identifikasi organisasi dengan prestasi kerja

Pembolehubah	Prestasi Kerja	
	r	Sig.
Identifikasi Organisasi	0.391**	0.002

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Jadual 2 menunjukkan dapatan analisis korelasi antara identifikasi organisasi dan prestasi kerja dengan nilai  $r = 0.391$  pada tahap signifikan 0.002 yang menunjukkan kekuatan hubungan yang sederhana. Nilai positif bagi pekali korelasi ini menunjukkan semakin tinggi tahap identifikasi organisasi maka tahap prestasi kerja turut akan meningkat.

#### 5.0 PERBINCANGAN DAN CADANGAN

Responden kajian menunjukkan tahap identifikasi organisasi yang tinggi berdasarkan beberapa aspek yang diukur seperti menunjukkan rasa bangga yang tinggi terhadap organisasi mereka, bersedia untuk mempertimbangkan kepentingan organisasi dalam membuat keputusan dan berasa gembira dengan pilihan bekerja di organisasi mereka. Penemuan ini selari dengan konsep identifikasi organisasi yang dikemukakan oleh Bartels et al., (2010) yang menyatakan bahawa pekerja yang mempunyai identifikasi organisasi yang tinggi cenderung untuk melihat kejayaan organisasi sebagai kejayaan peribadi mereka dimana pekerja menunjukkan rasa bangga terhadap organisasi, mengutamakan kepentingan organisasi, dan melaporkan kepuasan yang tinggi dengan pilihan kerjaya mereka. Hasil dapatan keseluruhan prestasi kerja pula menunjukkan bahawa pegawai di sebuah organisasi perkhidmatan awam ini menunjukkan tahap prestasi kerja yang tinggi dalam ketiga-tiga dimensi yang dikaji (prestasi tugas, prestasi kontekstual dan prestasi tingkah laku tidak produktif). Hal ini menyokong kajian Campbell dan Wiernik (2015) yang menekankan kepentingan prestasi kerja terhadap tahap keseluruhan prestasi organisasi. Pegawai menunjukkan kecekapan yang tinggi dalam merancang dan melaksanakan tugas, serta komitmen untuk terus meningkatkan kemahiran dan pengetahuan berkaitan pekerjaan. Ini mencerminkan sikap proaktif dan dedikasi terhadap pembangunan profesional dalam kalangan pekerja. Hasil analisis korelasi juga telah menunjukkan bahawa terdapat hubungan yang signifikan, positif dan sederhana antara kedua-dua pemboleh ubah tersebut. Ini bermakna pegawai yang mempunyai rasa kekitaan dan kesetiaan yang lebih tinggi terhadap organisasi cenderung untuk menunjukkan prestasi kerja yang lebih baik. Oleh itu hipotesis kajian telah diterima. Penemuan ini juga menyokong kajian Muthuswamy dan Tajuddin (2022) yang mendapati hubungan positif yang signifikan dimana pekerja yang mempunyai tahap identifikasi organisasi yang lebih tinggi cenderung untuk menunjukkan prestasi kerja yang lebih baik.

Cadangan kajian ini melibatkan cadangan kepada organisasi kajian dan pengkaji pada masa akan datang. Organisasi disarankan untuk terus memperkukuh strategi yang dapat meningkatkan identifikasi organisasi. Antara langkah yang boleh diambil ialah mengadakan program penglibatan pegawai yang lebih kerap, meningkatkan komunikasi dalaman tentang visi, misi, dan pencapaian organisasi, serta mewujudkan peluang untuk pegawai menyumbang kepada pembangunan organisasi. Langkah-langkah ini dapat membantu memantapkan pemahaman pegawai terhadap objektif organisasi dan meningkatkan penglibatan mereka dalam mencapai matlamat yang ditetapkan. Selain itu, penambahbaikan sistem pengurusan prestasi juga perlu diberi perhatian. Organisasi boleh membangunkan sistem penilaian prestasi yang lebih komprehensif dengan menggabungkan penilaian sendiri, penilaian penyelia, dan penilaian rakan sekerja. Ini akan memberikan gambaran yang lebih menyeluruh tentang prestasi setiap pegawai. Di samping itu, mewujudkan pelan pembangunan individu untuk setiap pegawai berdasarkan kekuatan dan bidang yang memerlukan penambahbaikan dapat membantu pekerja meningkatkan kemahiran dan prestasi mereka secara lebih sistematik. Peningkatan persekitaran kerja juga perlu diberi perhatian dalam usaha meningkatkan identifikasi organisasi dan prestasi kerja. Organisasi boleh menilai

dan meningkatkan faktor-faktor persekitaran kerja yang boleh mempengaruhi kedua-dua aspek ini. Ini termasuk mewujudkan budaya kerja yang lebih kondusif dan menyokong. Langkah-langkah seperti memperkenalkan jadual kerja yang fleksibel dan hybrid, serta menyediakan perkhidmatan sokongan, boleh membantu menangani faktor luaran yang mempengaruhi tahap identifikasi organisasi dan prestasi kerja pekerja. Cadangan kepada pengkaji pada masa akan datang melibatkan penggunaan kaedah campuran yang menggabungkan kaedah kuantitatif dan kualitatif. Walaupun kajian semasa telah menggunakan kaedah kuantitatif, penambahan pendekatan kualitatif seperti temu bual mendalam boleh memberikan pemahaman yang lebih terperinci tentang faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi identifikasi organisasi dan prestasi kerja. Seterusnya, kajian masa hadapan perlu mempertimbangkan penggunaan sampel yang lebih besar, melibatkan semua sektor dalam organisasi. Ini akan meningkatkan kesahan dan kebolehpercayaan dapatan kajian serta membolehkan hasil kajian digeneralisasikan kepada populasi yang lebih luas. Akhir sekali, penambahbaikan dalam pengukuran prestasi boleh dilakukan dengan menggabungkan penilaian prestasi objektif berdasarkan kriteria yang boleh diukur secara langsung dan tidak bergantung pada pendapat peribadi dengan laporan sendiri yang mana melibatkan penilaian yang dibuat oleh pekerja sendiri tentang prestasi mereka. Penilaian objektif memberikan data yang boleh diukur, manakala laporan sendiri memberikan konteks dan pemahaman yang lebih mendalam tentang faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi prestasi. Ini akan memberikan gambaran prestasi yang lebih tepat dan menyeluruh.

## 6.0 RUMUSAN

Dapatan kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa terdapat hubungan antara identifikasi organisasi dengan prestasi kerja di sebuah organisasi perkhidmatan awam di Malaysia. Walaubagaimanapun, skop kajian ini hanya melibatkan pegawai di sebuah sektor sahaja dan membatasi generalisasi penemuan kepada sektor atau bahagian lain di organisasi kajian. Berdasarkan penemuan kajian, beberapa cadangan dikemukakan untuk organisasi dan penyelidikan masa depan. Organisasi disarankan untuk memperkukuh strategi meningkatkan identifikasi organisasi, membangunkan sistem penilaian prestasi yang lebih komprehensif dan meningkatkan persekitaran kerja melalui jadual kerja yang lebih fleksibel, perkhidmatan sokongan, dan budaya kerja yang positif. Bagi penyelidikan masa depan, cadangan bagi penggunaan kaedah campuran melibatkan sampel yang lebih besar serta menambahbaik pengukuran prestasi diberikan. Kesimpulannya, dapatan kajian ini boleh digunakan sebagai asas untuk merangka strategi yang lebih berkesan dalam meningkatkan prestasi pegawai dan keberkesanan organisasi di sektor perkhidmatan awam di Malaysia.

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# KESAN SOSIODEMOGRAFI TERHADAP KESEJAHTERAAN INDIVIDU: SATU KAJIAN DI MALAYSIA

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## Abstrak

Isu kesejahteraan hidup boleh membawa kepada pelbagai masalah seperti masalah sosial, mental serta kesihatan. Dalam melayari kepesatan ekonomi, golongan miskin bandar adalah antara golongan yang menghadapi masalah kesejahteraan psikologi dan sosial yang membimbangkan. Untuk menjadikan Malaysia sebagai negara yang maju, adalah mustahak untuk memastikan kualiti kehidupan iaitu kesejahteraan psikologi dan sosial rakyat berada pada tahap yang selesa. Ketidakejahteraan akibat kemiskinan adalah membimbangkan dan mampu memberi impak yang serius kepada masyarakat dan negara. Namun begitu, terdapat kekurangan kajian berkenaan kesejahteraan psikologi dan sosial di Malaysia terutamanya dalam kalangan golongan miskin bandar yang terpaksa mengharungi hidup dalam kepesatan proses urbanisasi ini. Kajian ini melibatkan seramai 382 responden yang dipilih melalui persampelan bola salji yang memfokuskan kepada rakyat Malaysia berumur 20 tahun ke atas. Kesejahteraan psikologi, indeks kesejahteraan sosial, dan gejala emosi negatif dikaji melalui soal selidik yang diedarkan secara atas talian. Dapatan model regresi menunjukkan bahawa demografi meramalkan kesejahteraan psikologi, gejala emosi negatif, dan kesejahteraan sosial. Malahan, hubungan yang signifikan didapati antara pendapatan isi rumah, pencapaian pendidikan, dan kesejahteraan psikologi. Umur, bilangan tanggungan, dan pendapatan isi rumah juga berkaitan dengan gejala emosi negatif. Jantina, pendidikan, dan pendapatan isi rumah juga didapati memberi kesan kepada kesejahteraan sosial. Dapatan kajian ini mempunyai kesan yang signifikan dan memberikan maklumat penting kepada pihak berkepentingan yang bertanggungjawab membangunkan intervensi untuk meningkatkan kesejahteraan rakyat Malaysia. Dapatan ini menekankan kepentingan pelaksanaan intervensi bersesuaian bagi individu yang menunjukkan ciri-ciri seperti usia yang lebih muda, pencapaian pendidikan yang rendah, dan pendapatan yang berkurangan bagi meningkatkan kesejahteraan mereka.

*Kata kunci: Kesejahteraan, Sosiodemografi, Malaysia*

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## 1.0 PENDAHULUAN

Malaysia ialah sebuah negara di rantau Asia Tenggara dengan populasi sebanyak 32.7 juta dan pertumbuhan ekonomi tahunan sebanyak 0.2% (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2022). Memandangkan kemajuan ekonomi pesat Malaysia dan statusnya sebagai negara membangun, populasinya terdedah kepada cabaran yang mungkin menjejaskan kesejahteraan psikologi dan sosial. Konsep luas kesejahteraan merujuk kepada kesihatan, kebahagiaan, dan kualiti hidup serta merangkumi aspek fizikal, sosial, emosi, dan psikologi (Aked et al., 2008). Ruggeri et al. (2020) menekankan bahawa kesejahteraan mencerminkan lebih daripada kebahagiaan dan kepuasan hidup seseorang individu. Ukuran kesejahteraan psikologi biasanya terdiri daripada pelbagai dimensi yang mengukur kecekapan, kestabilan emosi, keterlibatan, makna, optimisme, emosi positif, hubungan positif, daya tahan, harga diri, dan vitaliti (Ruggeri et al., 2020). Ciri-ciri sosiodemografi tertentu diketahui sebagai penunjuk kesejahteraan di peringkat masyarakat dan individu. Menurut Eiroa-Orosa (2020), kesejahteraan psikososial dipengaruhi oleh pelbagai faktor termasuk jantina, etnik, kedudukan ekonomi, dan keupayaan. Keyes dan Lopez (2002) menyatakan bahawa kesejahteraan psikologi meningkat dengan umur, tahap pendidikan, dan kesedaran diri. Dalam kajian terhadap pekerja di Malaysia, Teh (2014) mendapati bahawa kesejahteraan dipengaruhi oleh pendapatan dan kesihatan. Eiroa-Orosa (2020) pula menekankan bahawa meneroka kesejahteraan psikososial adalah perlu kerana terdapat perbezaan budaya dia antara negara berbeza. Kajian terdahulu mengenai kesejahteraan psikologi dan sosial di negara-negara Barat mungkin tidak sesuai untuk orang di Asia atau Asia Tenggara. Oleh itu, tujuan utama kajian ini adalah untuk menyiasat kesejahteraan psikologi dan sosial serta hubungannya dengan demografi dalam sampel dewasa Malaysia.

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Kesejahteraan psikologi berkait dengan konsep falsafah eudaimonia, yang bermaksud emosi positif yang mempromosikan fungsi adaptif dan pencapaian potensi diri (Huppert, 2009; Ryff, 1989). Ryff dan Keyes (1995) menerangkan bahawa kesejahteraan ini telah dikaji dalam bidang psikologi klinikal dan psikologi perkembangan. Dari perspektif klinikal, kesejahteraan didefinisikan sebagai keadaan kesihatan positif yang merangkumi penerimaan diri dan pertumbuhan peribadi. Dalam psikologi perkembangan, kesejahteraan dilihat sebagai proses perkembangan berterusan yang

merangkumi elemen psikososial, kehadiran keperluan asas hidup, dan perubahan personaliti yang adaptif (Ryff, 1995). Ryff (1995) mengembangkan model kesejahteraan psikologi yang terdiri daripada enam dimensi: penerimaan diri, pertumbuhan peribadi, autonomi, hubungan positif dengan orang lain, penguasaan persekitaran, dan tujuan hidup. Pelbagai faktor boleh menjejaskan kesejahteraan rakyat Malaysia, termasuk kos sara hidup yang tinggi, pendapatan rendah, ketidakstabilan ekonomi dan politik. Menurut Jabatan Perangkaan Malaysia (DOSM, 2021), purata pendapatan kasar bulanan isi rumah menurun sebanyak 10.3% (RM7,089) dari 2019 ke 2020. Ini mungkin disebabkan oleh kehilangan pekerjaan, pengurangan waktu bekerja, dan pengangguran dalam kalangan pekerja mahir akibat pandemik (DOSM, 2021). Selain itu, peratusan rakyat yang berpendapatan kurang daripada RM2,500 sebulan meningkat sebanyak 12.5%, manakala 20% daripada mereka dalam kategori pendapatan pertengahan (M40) jatuh ke kategori berpendapatan rendah (B40) pada tahun 2020 (DOSM, 2021). Kos sara hidup di Malaysia juga meningkat dengan ketara, dengan Tinjauan Pendapatan Perbelanjaan Isi Rumah 2019 menunjukkan peningkatan perbelanjaan sebanyak 3.9% dari 2016 ke 2019 (DOSM, 2020) dan perbelanjaan isi rumah 1.6 kali lebih tinggi di kawasan bandar berbanding kawasan luar bandar. Utiliti rumah seperti air, elektrik, dan gas, serta makanan dan minuman merupakan perbelanjaan terbesar (DOSM, 2020). Gabungan kos sara hidup yang tinggi dan pendapatan yang rendah mungkin menjejaskan kesejahteraan rakyat Malaysia, terutamanya di kawasan bandar.

Walaupun terdapat kajian tentang kesejahteraan psikologi dan sosial di Malaysia, namun dapattannya masih terhad. Kebanyakan kajian terdahulu memberi tumpuan kepada kesejahteraan psikologi atau sosial dalam kalangan pelajar universiti (Kunjiapu & Kunasegaran, 2021; Rahimi et al. 2021; Bilong et al. 2021; Panahi et al. 2016), manakala kajian lain menyelidik kesejahteraan psikologi atau sosial dalam kalangan kumpulan dewasa tertentu seperti di kawasan bandar (Prihadi et al. 2022), wanita (Othman, 2022), komuniti pesisir pantai di Terengganu (Ibrahim et al. 2021), dan kaunselor (Voon et al. 2021). Walaupun ciri umum kesejahteraan psikologi atau sosial telah didokumentasikan dengan baik, faktor demografi khusus yang mungkin mempengaruhi aspek-aspek kesejahteraan ini sebahagian besarnya tidak diterokai. Selain itu, Indeks Kesejahteraan Malaysia (MyWI) 2020 menunjukkan penurunan sebanyak 2.1% daripada tahun sebelumnya (DOSM, 2021b). Indeks ini merangkumi komponen yang mengukur kesejahteraan ekonomi dan sosial. Kesejahteraan ekonomi diukur dengan lima dimensi: pengangkutan, pendidikan, komunikasi, pendapatan dan pengagihan, dan kehidupan kerja. Kesejahteraan sosial diukur dengan sembilan dimensi: perumahan, hiburan dan rekreasi, keselamatan awam, penyertaan sosial, tadbir urus, kesihatan, budaya, persekitaran, dan keluarga. Indeks ini tidak menilai kesejahteraan psikologi, dan indikator kesihatan dalam MyWI tidak menilai kesihatan mental. Menurut The Star (2018), Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye dari Institut Keselamatan dan Kesihatan Pekerjaan Negara telah menyatakan keperluan untuk indeks kesejahteraan psikologi di Malaysia untuk meningkatkan kesedaran tentang pentingnya kesihatan mental dan menilai kesejahteraan mental semasa negara. Kajian terdahulu di Malaysia yang menyelidik kesejahteraan psikologi dan sosial adalah terhad (Latiff et al., 2017), dan kebanyakannya berasaskan perspektif Barat yang mungkin mengabaikan norma, nilai, dan faktor budaya negara-negara Asia Tenggara. Oleh itu, kesejahteraan psikologi dan sosial dalam konteks Malaysia memerlukan penyelidikan lanjut.

Kesejahteraan psikologi dan sosial saling bergantung, namun kedua-duanya penting untuk mencapai pertumbuhan peribadi dan integrasi sosial. Kesejahteraan sosial merujuk kepada rasa kepunyaan dalam komuniti, hubungan sosial, dan akses mencukupi kepada kemudahan dan sokongan tempatan (Aked et al., 2008). Faktor utama yang mempengaruhi kesejahteraan sosial ialah ketidakseimbangan antara kos sara hidup dan pendapatan. Kos sara hidup yang tinggi menghalang kesejahteraan dan boleh memaksa golongan muda berhenti sekolah atau terlepas peluang pendidikan. Ini boleh menyebabkan pengasingan sosial dan seterusnya meningkatkan jenayah. Chien dan Mistry (2013) menunjukkan kesan langsung kos sara hidup tinggi terhadap pencapaian akademik dalam keluarga di Amerika. Mereka mendapati keluarga miskin di kawasan dengan kos sara hidup tinggi mengalami sedikit kekurangan berbanding keluarga di bandar lain, terutamanya jika bapa mereka mempunyai tahap pendidikan rendah dan merupakan imigran (Chien & Mistry, 2013). Kekurangan akses kepada pendidikan membawa kepada peluang pekerjaan yang lebih buruk, yang menjejaskan kesejahteraan sosial. Kajian lain menunjukkan bagaimana pengasingan sosial dan kekurangan sokongan sosial dikaitkan dengan kesejahteraan yang lebih rendah (Dahlberg & McKee, 2018; Nóbrega et al., 2022).

Persekitaran hidup yang sihat dan boleh diakses serta ikatan sosial yang kuat juga memainkan peranan penting dalam kesejahteraan sosial di peringkat individu dan masyarakat. Kajian oleh Zainal et al. (2012) mendapati kualiti hidup penduduk Lembah Klang terjejas oleh keadaan perumahan yang buruk dan tahap penyertaan sosial serta politik yang rendah. Abu Bakar et al. (2015) mendapati kesejahteraan ekonomi dan sosial di Malaysia ditentukan oleh hubungan positif dengan orang lain dan persekitaran yang sihat. Indeks Kesejahteraan Malaysia yang digunakan dalam kajian itu terdiri daripada dimensi ekonomi dan sosial. Abu Bakar et al. (2015) mengkritik ukuran tersebut dengan menyatakan bahawa beberapa penunjuk kurang berguna untuk menilai kesejahteraan. Sebagai contoh, penunjuk perumahan mengukur peruntukan unit rumah kos rendah dan bukan kadar pemilikan rumah. Oleh itu, indeks kesejahteraan yang dikemaskini diperlukan untuk mengukur kesejahteraan psikologi dan sosial rakyat Malaysia dengan tepat.

### ■ 3.0 METODOLOGI

Kajian kuantitatif keratan rentas ini menggunakan teknik pensampelan *snowball* bagi memilih responden dalam kalangan rakyat Malaysia yang berumur 20 tahun ke atas. Seramai 453 responden mengisi soal selidik dalam talian, namun hanya 382 mengandungi data yang lengkap. Oleh itu, analisis dijalankan ke atas data daripada 382 responden iaitu seramai 229 perempuan dan 153 lelaki.

### Instrumen Soal Selidik

Soal selidik kajian ini terdiri daripada tiga bahagian yang memfokuskan kepada soalan demografi, kesejahteraan sosial, dan kesejahteraan psikologi. Sebanyak 81 soalan diajukan. Kesejahteraan sosial dinilai melalui 13 dimensi: proses urbanisasi, tadbir urus, penyelenggaraan, perumahan dan reka bentuk bandar, pencemaran, keselamatan dan kadar jenayah, penjagaan kesihatan, pendidikan, kos hidup, kebersihan, tabiat pemakanan, kesihatan fizikal, dan sokongan sosial. Kesejahteraan psikologi dinilai melalui empat dimensi: kerohanian, pertumbuhan peribadi, kesihatan mental, dan kepuasan hidup. Item dikembangkan melalui siri perbincangan kumpulan fokus dan ulasan pakar. Kajian rintis dengan set soalan awal dijalankan ke atas 27 responden bagi mengukur kebolehpercayaan. Beberapa pengubahsuaian terhadap soal selidik telah dibuat berdasarkan hasil ulasan pakar dan kajian rintis ini.

Kesihatan mental dinilai menggunakan versi yang disesuaikan dari Skala Depresi, Kebimbangan, dan Tekanan (DASS; Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995 yang terdiri daripada 18 item, dengan tiga item dari skala asal (8, 14, dan 19) dikeluarkan berdasarkan maklum balas daripada kumpulan fokus dan ulasan pakar. Kepuasan hidup pula dinilai dengan Skala Kepuasan Hidup lima item (SWLS; Diener et al., 1985). Item dinilai menggunakan skala Likert 7 mata daripada 1-Sangat tidak setuju hingga 7-Sangat setuju. Manakala, kesemua soalan lain dalam kajian ini menggunakan skala respons 5 mata. Beberapa ciri demografi yang berkaitan dengan kesejahteraan sosial dan psikologi juga diukur. Ini termasuklah umur, jantina, pendidikan, bilangan tanggungan, dan pendapatan isi rumah.

Nilai alpha Cronbach dikira untuk menilai konsistensi dalaman soal selidik yang digunakan. Hasil kebolehpercayaan untuk setiap dimensi dan skor keseluruhan untuk soal selidik kesejahteraan sosial dan psikologi, dibahagikan kepada keputusan ujian rintis dan data akhir. Nilai untuk kesejahteraan sosial (0.915) dan psikologi (0.785) menunjukkan konsistensi dalaman yang tinggi. Kebanyakan dimensi juga menunjukkan konsistensi dalaman yang baik, antara 0.7 hingga 0.9. Beberapa dimensi, iaitu kesihatan fizikal (0.551), keselamatan dan kadar jenayah (0.635), dan pendidikan (0.658) menunjukkan nilai yang lebih rendah. Namun, Pallant (2020) menyatakan bahawa skor kebolehpercayaan lebih 0.5 boleh diterima jika faktor mempunyai kurang daripada 10 item.

### Prosedur Kutipan Data

Soal selidik diedarkan melalui platform kaji selidik dalam talian, SurveyMonkey. Responden direkrut melalui platform dalam talian termasuk WhatsApp, Facebook, dan Instagram. Peserta diberi pilihan untuk memberikan nombor telefon mereka untuk memasuki cabutan hadiah sebagai saguhati kerana melengkapkan kaji selidik. Persetujuan responden untuk menyertai kajian diberikan melalui borang kaji selidik tersebut.

### Analisis Data

Statistik deskriptif bagi ciri demografi dan skala kesejahteraan sosial dan psikologi dikaji beserta korelasi Pearson untuk menilai hubungan antara pembolehubah demografi dan skor keseluruhan kesejahteraan sosial dan psikologi. Pembolehubah demografi dikotomi sebelum analisis regresi seperti berikut: umur (bawah 40 tahun, atas 40 tahun), pendidikan (pendidikan rendah, pendidikan tinggi), bilangan tanggungan (0 hingga 5 tanggungan, lebih daripada 5 tanggungan), dan pendapatan isi rumah (< RM4849, > RM4850). Analisis regresi berganda dilakukan untuk menilai hubungan antara pembolehubah demografi dan kedua-dua kesejahteraan psikologi dan sosial, dengan mengambil kira varians berkongsi pembolehubah. Semua analisis dijalankan menggunakan perisian Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) versi 27.

## 4.0 DAPATAN

Ujian t bebas dan ANOVA satu hala dilakukan untuk menilai perbezaan dalam skor kesejahteraan psikologi dan sosial antara subkelompok demografi (Jadual 4). Skor kesejahteraan psikologi berbeza mengikut jantina,  $t(380) = 2.209$ ,  $p = 0.028$ , begitu juga dengan skor kesejahteraan sosial,  $t(380) = 3.010$ ,  $p = 0.003$ , dengan wanita mendapat skor lebih tinggi daripada lelaki. Mengikut usia, individu berusia 20 hingga 24 tahun menunjukkan kesejahteraan psikologi purata yang lebih tinggi daripada dewasa berusia 30 tahun,  $F(9,372) = 4.021$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . Tiada perbezaan ditemui untuk kesejahteraan sosial. Tiada perbezaan berdasarkan tahap pendidikan untuk kesejahteraan psikologi, walaupun individu yang memperoleh ijazah sarjana atau lebih tinggi menunjukkan skor kesejahteraan sosial yang lebih tinggi daripada mereka yang tidak mempunyai,  $F(7, 374) = 2.755$ ,  $p = 0.008$ . Majoriti responden tidak mempunyai tanggungan. Mereka dengan kurang daripada enam tanggungan menunjukkan kesejahteraan psikologi yang signifikan lebih tinggi,  $F(10, 371) = 2.892$ ,  $p = 0.002$ . Bagi pendapatan isi rumah, mereka dengan pendapatan lebih tinggi menunjukkan kesejahteraan sosial yang lebih tinggi,  $F(10, 371) = 2.441$ ,  $p = 0.008$ .

Jadual 1 Analisis regresi berganda untuk Kesejahteraan Psikologi dan Kesejahteraan Sosial dengan penunjuk demografi.

Indikator	Kesejahteraan Psikologi			Kesejahteraan Sosial		
	B	Beta	Sig. (p)	B	Beta	Sig. (p)
Jantina	-0.084	-0.107	0.037	-0.117	-0.140	0.006
Umur	0.062	0.08	0.149	0.131	0.160	0.004
Pendidikan	0.078	0.064	0.225	-0.054	-0.041	0.429
Jumlah Tanggungan	0.058	0.046	0.369	-0.071	-0.053	0.292
Pendapatan Isi Rumah	-0.034	-0.043	0.434	0.023	0.027	0.613

Ringkasan model Kesejahteraan Psikologi:  $R^2 = .023$ ;  $R^2$  diselaraskan = .010;  $F = 1.806$ ;  $p = .111$

Ringkasan model Kesejahteraan Sosial:  $R^2 = .056$ ;  $R^2$  diselaraskan = .043;  $F = 4.434$ ;  $p = .001$

Jadual 1 menunjukkan hasil analisis regresi berganda yang menguji hubungan antara penunjuk demografi dan kesejahteraan psikologi serta sosial dengan mengambil kira varian bersama antara penunjuk-penunjuk tersebut. Bersamanya, jantina, umur, pendidikan, bilangan tanggungan, dan pendapatan isi rumah menerangkan 2.3% varian kesejahteraan psikologi,  $F(5, 376) = 1.806$ ,  $p = 0.111$ . Model regresi keseluruhan tidak signifikan secara statistik. Pembolehubah yang sama menerangkan 5.6% varian kesejahteraan sosial, dan model ini signifikan secara statistik,  $F(5, 376) = 4.434$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . Walau bagaimanapun, jantina dan umur adalah satu-satunya Pembolehubah yang secara signifikan berkaitan dengan kesejahteraan sosial.

## 5.0 PERBINCANGAN DAN CADANGAN

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengembangkan indeks kesejahteraan psikologi dan sosial dalam kalangan penduduk Malaysia serta menilai hubungan kesejahteraan ini dengan faktor demografi. Secara keseluruhan, dapatan kajian ini melaporkan tahap kesejahteraan psikologi dan sosial yang tinggi. Kajian ini menemukan bahawa lelaki, usia tua, dan jumlah tanggungan yang banyak berkait rapat dengan kesejahteraan psikologi yang lebih rendah. Sebaliknya, tahap pendidikan dan pendapatan isi rumah yang lebih tinggi berkaitan dengan kesejahteraan sosial yang lebih baik. Penemuan ini selaras dengan kajian terdahulu yang menunjukkan bahawa pendidikan dan pendapatan yang lebih tinggi meningkatkan kesejahteraan sosial, sementara tanggungjawab sosial dan kestabilan kewangan turut menyumbang kepada daya tahan dan kesejahteraan yang lebih tinggi.

Dapatan kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa kesejahteraan psikologi dan sosial di Malaysia dipengaruhi oleh tahap pendidikan, pendapatan, jantina, umur, dan bilangan tanggungan. Oleh itu, dasar sosial dan ekonomi perlu meningkatkan akses kepada pendidikan berkualiti dan peluang pekerjaan berpendapatan tinggi. Program kesihatan mental perlu disesuaikan untuk kumpulan demografi tertentu, seperti wanita, golongan lebih tua, dan keluarga dengan ramai tanggungan. Pendidikan pengurusan kewangan harus diperkenalkan di sekolah dan komuniti untuk membantu individu mengurus kewangan mereka. Memperbaiki kemudahan awam dan menggalakkan aktiviti komuniti dapat meningkatkan sokongan sosial. Penilaian berterusan dan kajian lanjutan diperlukan untuk menilai kesan perubahan dalam kesejahteraan dan keberkesanan program. Kajian lanjut juga perlu untuk memahami kesan jangka panjang pandemik COVID-19 terhadap kesejahteraan psikologi dan sosial.

## 6.0 KESIMPULAN

Kajian ini mengenalpasti tahap kesejahteraan psikologi dan sosial serta kesannya dengan faktor demografi dalam kalangan rakyat Malaysia. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan kesejahteraan sosial dan psikologi yang tinggi dalam kalangan responden. Jantina, umur, dan bilangan tanggungan berkorelasi negatif dengan kesejahteraan psikologi apabila dinilai secara berasingan, tetapi tidak dalam model regresi berganda. Tahap pendidikan dan pendapatan isi rumah berkorelasi positif dengan kesejahteraan sosial iaitu selaras dengan kajian terdahulu, sementara jantina dan umur adalah peramal penting dalam model regresi berganda. Ini mungkin disebabkan oleh tanggungjawab sosial dan kestabilan kewangan, yang membawa kepada daya tahan dan kesejahteraan yang lebih tinggi. Namun, kajian lanjut diperlukan untuk mengenal pasti faktor-faktor lain yang mempengaruhi kesejahteraan psikologi dan sosial di Malaysia, serta membantu dalam penyusunan dasar untuk meningkatkan kesejahteraan rakyat. Penemuan kajian mungkin bermanfaat terhadap mereka yang membuat dasar untuk meningkatkan kesejahteraan sosial dan psikologi di Malaysia.

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## PROTEAN CAREER ORIENTATION AND INTENTION TO LEAVE

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### Abstract

This study examined the relationship between protean career orientation and intention to leave among Malaysian employees. A quantitative, cross-sectional research design was employed, utilizing an online questionnaire survey for data collection. The survey comprised three sections: demographic information, a 14-item protean career orientation scale and a 5-item intention to leave scale. A total of 75 respondents participated in the study, representing a small sample of the target population. This small sample size is acknowledged as a limitation of the study, potentially affecting the generalizability of the results. Descriptive statistics revealed high levels of both protean career orientation ( $M = 4.03$ ) and intention to leave ( $M = 4.02$ ) among the participants. Pearson correlation analysis indicated a significant positive relationship between protean career orientation and intention to leave ( $r = 0.467$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). These findings suggest that employees with stronger protean career attitudes are more likely to consider leaving their current employment. The study contributes to the understanding of career dynamics in the Malaysian context and has implications for human resource management practices, particularly in talent retention strategies. However, the results should be interpreted cautiously due to the limited sample size, and further research with larger samples is recommended to validate these findings.

*Keywords:* protean career orientation, intention to leave

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### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The contemporary work environment is characterized by unprecedented dynamism and constant change, leading to a shift from traditional career patterns towards more flexible and self-directed approaches. The concept of the protean career, initially proposed by Douglas T. Hall has emerged as a significant framework for understanding how individuals navigate their professional trajectories in this evolving landscape. The increasing prevalence of protean career orientations, driven by job instability, has prompted employees to take greater responsibility for their professional development (Xie & Fang, 2022). Hall (2004) posits that protean careers emphasize individuals' capacity to shape their professional paths in alignment with personal values and objectives. This perspective underscores the importance of individual autonomy and self-guidance in career management. Kale and Ozar (2020) further characterize protean careers as being defined by autonomy, self-direction, and value-driven decision-making. In this context, employees are more inclined to effectively navigate their career trajectories by seeking guidance and understanding available job market opportunities (Sultana & Malik, 2020). As job mobility increases, organizations face significant challenges in talent retention. Understanding the relationship between protean career orientation and employees' intention to leave has become crucial. Intention to leave is defined as an employee's deliberate and conscious decision to quit or depart from their current job or organization (Akgunduz, 2018). Bhayo et al. (2017) suggest that factors such as lack of aspirations, limited growth opportunities, and poor job performance can contribute to an increased intention to leave, potentially resulting in reduced organizational efficacy and profitability (Akgunduz, 2018).

While previous research has explored various antecedents of turnover intention, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and perceived job alternatives (Griffeth et al., 2000), the impact of protean career orientation on intention to leave remains inconsistent in the literature. Redondo et al. (2019) have reported a strong positive correlation between protean career orientation and intention to leave. However, Cerdin and Le Pargneux (2014) found no significant relationship between these variables. Moreover, there is a notable dearth of research examining this relationship within the Malaysian context. The present study aims to address this gap by investigating the correlation between protean career orientation and employees' intention to leave in Malaysia. By examining this relationship, we seek to contribute to both the protean career literature and the broader field of turnover research, offering insights that can inform organizational practices and individual career management strategies. This study's findings may have significant implications for human resource management practices, particularly in talent retention strategies and career development programs.

## ■ 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

There has been a notable change in how people approach and handle their professions in the modern professional world. The conventional, sequential trajectory of careers that used to dominate the labour market has been replaced with a more flexible and self-guided approach called the protean career. According to Kale and Ozer (2020), this paradigm shift signifies a significant alteration in how individuals manage their careers due to the growing uncertainty about job stability. The protean career notion, known for its focus on personal agency and self-direction, has become increasingly important as individuals want to exert control over their professional futures. According to Lin (2015), people who adopt protean career orientation prioritize personal satisfaction and autonomy over traditional markers of success like job advancements or income raises. This shift in career objectives highlights a fundamental transformation in how individuals perceive and strive for professional contentment. Hall (2004) highlights the crucial significance of personal agency and self-direction in determining an individual's professional trajectory within the protean framework. Briscoe, Hall, and DeMuth (2006) support the idea that individuals with protean career attitudes take on more responsibility for their own professional decisions, rather than relying on guidance from their employers. The protean career notion is complex, involving multiple aspects of personal and professional growth. Zafar's (2015) theory emphasises the significance of autonomous thinking and proactive behaviour in effectively controlling one's professional development. Hall and Chandler (2005) highlight the importance of self-development and independence in the mindset of career-oriented individuals who choose the protean approach. Briscoe et al. (2006) present a thorough model for comprehending protean careers, highlighting two essential components: value-drivenness and self-directedness. Individuals who have protean career orientations have a firm dedication to customising their professions according to their personal ideals rather than organisational standards. Additionally, they adopt a "self-directed" approach, claiming personal accountability for overseeing their professional conduct and decisions. This stands in stark contrast to individuals lacking a protean mindset, who tend to depend more extensively on external advice and help for managing their careers.

The correlation between protean career orientation and employees' intention to leave has received considerable focus in organisational behaviour research, resulting in varied and occasionally contradictory results. "Intention to leave," also known as "turnover intention," refers to an individual's stated desire or deliberate plan to voluntarily quit their current job (Akgunduz, 2018). Muhamad Khalil et al. (2020) propose that employees' intention may be swayed by their unfavourable impressions and ideas regarding their occupations and workplace environment. Several researches have examined the correlation between protean career orientation and intention to leave, yielding inconsistent findings. While certain researches have not discovered any noteworthy correlation between these characteristics (Cerdin & Le Pargneux, 2014), others have established a significant positive relationship. Redondo et al. (2019) found evidence of a significant positive connection between protean career orientation and intention to leave. The protean career orientation, which emphasises personal values and self-direction, seems to have a considerable impact on employees' career choices. According to Lin (2015), persons who have strong protean orientation are more likely to prioritise external employability above internal employability, which could lead to a greater intention to leave their current job. Redondo et al. (2019) highlights that individuals with protean career orientation tend to prioritise continuous learning, actively seek out possibilities for personal and professional improvement, and show a higher willingness to change professions. The focus on personal growth and development is in line with the fundamental principles of the protean career orientation, which highlights the importance of managing one's own career and making decisions based on personal values. Therefore, this study hypothesizes a significant and positive relationship between protean career orientation and employees' intention to leave.

## ■ 3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a quantitative, cross-sectional research approach to examine the correlation between protean career orientation and intention to leave among employees in Malaysia. Data were gathered by the distribution of a self-administered questionnaire survey via online platforms. The study employed a non-probability convenience sampling technique to recruit participants. The survey link was disseminated over multiple social media channels in order to access a heterogeneous set of Malaysian employees. The study included a modest sample size of 75 respondents, which represents a small portion of the target demographic. The survey utilized in this study consisted of three separate parts. The first part collected demographic data from participants using four items. The second part evaluated protean career orientation using the 14-item scale created by Briscoe et al. (2006). This scale assesses two aspects: self-directed career management and values-driven career orientation. The third part assessed the intention to leave using a 5-item measure that was adopted from Wayne et al. (1997). Both the protean career orientation and intention to leave scores were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, where participants could respond on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The reliability analysis indicated a high level of internal consistency for the protean career orientation scale (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.84$ ) and an adequate level of reliability for the intention to leave scale (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.70$ ). Statistical software was utilised to perform data analysis. Descriptive statistics, such as means, were computed to assess the levels of protean career orientation and intention to leave among the respondents. In order to examine the relationship between the variables, inferential statistics were utilized. Prior to conducting the correlation analysis, a normality test was performed to ensure the appropriateness of parametric statistical methods. The results of the normality test indicated that the data were normally distributed, supporting the use of parametric tests. Consequently, the study employed Pearson's correlation coefficient to assess the relationship between the variables. The utilization of convenience sampling and the

very little sample size may restrict the applicability of the results. Moreover, due to the cross-sectional design of the study, it is not possible to make causal conclusions about the link between the variables.

#### 4.0 RESULTS

The study sample consists of 75 participants, with a slightly higher representation of females (57.3%) compared to males (42.7%). The age distribution shows that nearly half of the participants (49.3%) are under 30 years old, while the remaining participants are evenly split between the 30-39 and 40-49 age groups (25.3% each). In terms of ethnicity, the sample is diverse, with Chinese participants forming the largest group (40%), followed by Malays (36%), and Indians (24%). This distribution roughly reflects the multi-ethnic composition of Malaysia's population. Regarding academic qualifications, the majority of participants hold a Bachelor's degree (38.7%), followed by STPM/Matriculation/Diploma holders (29.3%), and Master's degree holders (21.3%). A smaller portion (10.7%) have an SPM qualification. The marital status of participants shows that slightly more than half (52%) are married, while 46.7% are single. This demographic profile suggests a diverse sample in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, education level, and marital status, which could provide valuable insights into the relationship between protean career orientation and intention to leave across various demographic groups in the Malaysian context. However, the relatively small sample size ( $n=75$ ) should be considered when interpreting the results and their generalizability.

Table 1 presents the mean scores and corresponding levels for the two main variables in this study: protean career orientation and intention to leave. The mean score for protean career orientation was 4.03, which falls within the high-level range (3.68 - 5.00). Similarly, the mean score for intention to leave was 4.02, also categorized as high. These results indicate that the respondents generally exhibited strong protean career orientation and a high inclination to leave their current employment.

Table 1 Level of variables

Variables	Mean	Level
Protean career	4.03	High
Intention to leave	4.02	High

Mean value (Low = 1.00 - 2.33; Moderate = 2.34 - 3.67; High = 3.68 - 5.00)

To examine the relationship between protean career orientation and intention to leave, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted. The results are presented in Table 2. A statistically significant positive correlation was found between protean career orientation and intention to leave ( $r = 0.467$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This moderate positive relationship suggests that as an individual's protean career orientation increases, their intention to leave their current job also tends to increase. The significance level ( $p < 0.01$ ) indicates a high degree of confidence in this relationship, with less than a 1% chance that this correlation occurred by random chance. These findings support the hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between protean career orientation and intention to leave among the respondents. The moderate strength of the correlation ( $r = 0.467$ ) suggests that while protean career orientation is an important factor in predicting intention to leave, other variables likely also play a role in this relationship.

Table 2 Relationship between variables

Variables	Intention to leave	
	$r$	Sig.
Protean career	0.467	0.000**

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

#### 5.0 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The findings of this study reveal a significant positive relationship between protean career orientation and intention to leave among Malaysian employees. This aligns with previous research by Redondo et al. (2019) supporting the notion that individuals with strong protean career attitudes are more likely to consider leaving their current employment. The high mean scores for both protean career orientation and intention to leave suggest that the sampled Malaysian employees strongly value self-directed career management and are open to pursuing new opportunities that align with their personal values and goals. The moderate strength of the correlation ( $r = 0.467$ ) indicates that while protean career orientation is an important factor in predicting turnover intention, other variables likely contribute to this relationship.

Based on the results of this study, we recommend organizations in Malaysia to develop flexible career development programs that cater to employees with protean career orientations, offering opportunities for skill development, job rotation, and internal mobility. Human resource managers should implement regular career discussions with employees to understand their personal values and career aspirations, aligning organizational goals with individual career paths where possible. Companies should also foster a culture that supports continuous learning and personal growth, which may help retain employees with strong protean career orientation. Given the study's limited samples size, future research should aim to replicate this study with a larger and more representative sample of Malaysian employees or to conduct research

focusing on specific industries or targeting a single firm. While this study focused on the direct relationship between protean career orientation and intention to leave, future research should explore additional factors that influence the relationship between protean career orientation and intention to leave.

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

This study contributes to the understanding of protean career orientation and its impact on employee retention in the Malaysian context. The positive relationship between protean career orientation and intention to leave highlights the challenges organizations face in retaining talent in an era of increased career self-management. By recognizing and adapting to the changing nature of careers, organizations can develop more effective strategies to engage and retain employees with protean career attitudes, ultimately benefiting both the individual and the organization.

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# PROTOCOL FOR NAVIGATING CHALLENGES IN PRIVATE HOSPITALS: A QUALITATIVE INQUIRY INTO NURSE TURNOVER INTENTION

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## Abstract

This protocol outlines a qualitative study designed to address the critical shortage of nursing manpower and existing gaps in private hospitals in Johor Bahru, Johor, Malaysia. This shortage poses significant challenges to healthcare delivery and quality of patient care. Therefore, this study aims to explore the complex factors influencing nurses' turnover intentions, focusing specifically on the impact of the work environment and management support. A phenomenological approach will be employed to gain an in-depth understanding of nurses' lived experiences, providing rich insights into their perspectives and motivations. Data will be collected through semi-structured, in-depth interviews with a purposively selected sample of registered nurses currently employed in private hospitals within Johor Bahru who have expressed considerations of leaving their current positions. This targeted sampling strategy will ensure the inclusion of nurses at high risk of turnover, providing value

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The health data summary for Malaysia indicates a population of 33,938,222 as of 2022, with a projected increase of 21% to 41,032,435 by 2050 (WHO, 2024). Despite this growing population, the density of nursing and midwifery staff per 10,000 individuals has only increased by 17% over the past decade, from 16.9 in 2000 to 33.9 in 2019 (Health Statistic, Health System, WHO). In Johor Bahru, the nurse-to-patient ratio has deteriorated to one nurse for every 297 patients, exacerbated by the increasing number of nurses leaving for Singapore due to favorable currency exchange rates. While specific statistics on the nursing shortage are lacking, Mr. Ling Tian Soon, Chairman of the Johor Health and Unity Committee, has highlighted this growing concern (Malaymail, 2022). This nursing shortage represents a critical healthcare delivery gap requiring urgent research and intervention. Currently, there are insufficient nurses to meet the rising demand for healthcare services, leading to increased workloads and longer shifts for the existing workforce (Blake et al., 2020). This situation contributes to nurse burnout, negatively affecting their well-being and job satisfaction (Ayar & Karaman, 2021). Moreover, high turnover rates among nurses compromise the quality of patient care, as nurses often find their fundamental needs neglected during high-intensity shifts (Shin et al., 2023). Many nurses are also drawn to opportunities overseas, further depleting the local workforce (Tan, 2016). The implications of this shortage are profound, resulting in reduced access to healthcare services and increased stress on remaining staff, ultimately impacting community health outcomes (Twomey & Meadus, 2016; Marufu et al., 2021). Given this context, this research aims to explore the factors influencing nurse turnover intention, particularly the lack of supportive management and its role in creating a healthy work environment. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for addressing the nursing shortage and improving healthcare delivery in Johor Bahru. The current shortage of nursing manpower significantly impacts local healthcare systems. As of 2023, the population in Johor Bahru reached 1,107,001, growing at a rate of 1.91%. This makes it the second-largest city in Malaysia in term of population.

Management support plays a pivotal role in influencing job satisfaction among nurses. Transformational leadership, characterized by supportive and empowering managerial practices, has significantly enhanced job satisfaction (Choi et al., 2016). This is particularly relevant in the healthcare sector, where the emotional and psychological demands on nurses are substantial. Research indicates that when nurse managers actively listen to their staff and provide constructive feedback, it fosters a supportive work environment and mitigates turnover intentions (Bae et al., 2022). Moreover, supportive management can buffer the effects of job-related stress and psychological distress, which is common in nursing roles, especially during challenging times like the COVID-19 pandemic (Jung et al., 2020). The work environment itself is critical for nurse retention. Factors such as team collaboration, adequate staffing, and a positive safety climate are directly linked to nurses' job satisfaction and intention to stay in their current roles (Karlsson et al., 2019). A conducive work environment allows nurses to perform their duties effectively, reducing feelings of burnout and dissatisfaction that often lead to turnover (Stefanovska–Petkovska et al., 2020). For instance, a study found that nurses in public hospitals reported higher job satisfaction levels than their private hospital counterparts. This suggests that organizational factors, including work conditions and support systems, significantly influence nurses' decisions to stay or leave (Stefanovska–Petkovska et al., 2020). Additionally, integrating supportive practices—such as providing opportunities for career development and

fostering a culture of inclusion—can enhance nurses' sense of belonging and value within the organization. When nurses feel empowered and included in decision-making processes, their commitment to their roles increases, thereby reducing turnover intentions (Nunstedt et al., 2020).

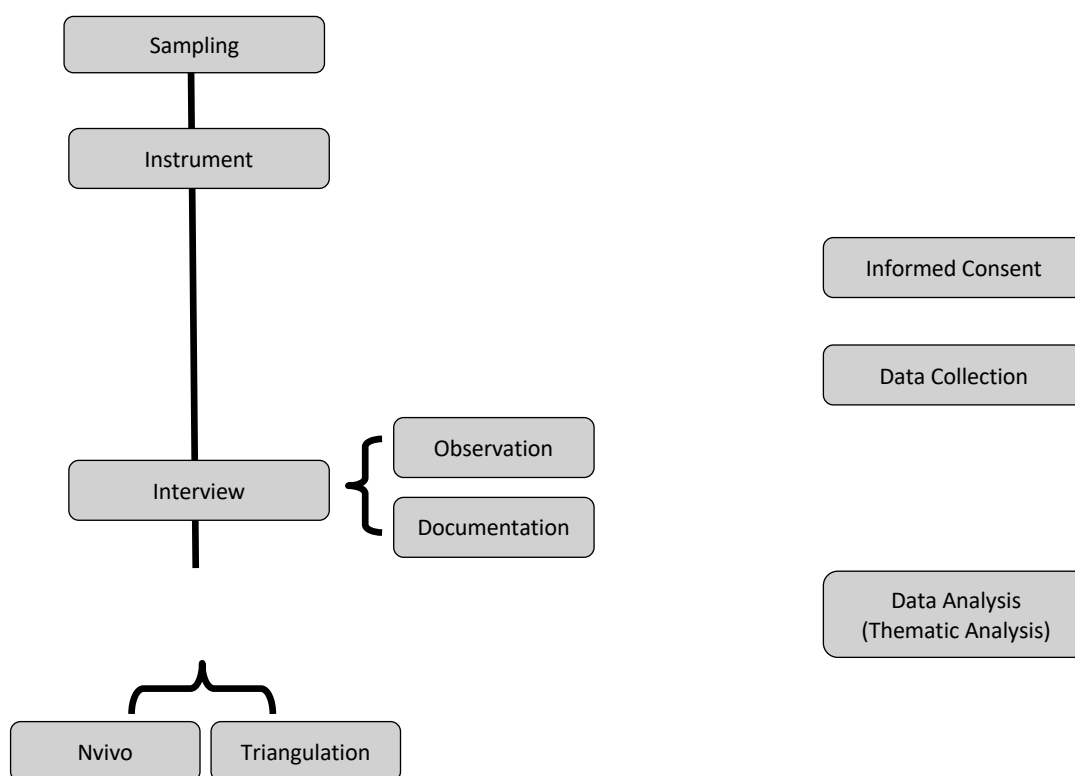
The effective management practices and supportive leadership are also essential for retaining nursing staff. For example, Chiat and Panatik (2019) applied Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory to assess the role of managerial support in job satisfaction and turnover intentions among nurses in Malaysian hospitals. Their findings indicated that insufficient management support significantly contributed to elevated turnover rates by adversely affecting nurses' job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Similarly, Ibrahim Alzamel and colleagues (2020) explored the quality of work-life for Malaysian nurses, revealing that organizational commitment mediates the relationship between work life quality and turnover intention, thereby underscoring the importance of management support in cultivating a positive work environment. Further, Nasurdin and friends (2018) identified high-performance work practices (HPWPs) among private hospital nurses in Malaysia as instrumental in reducing turnover intention. They posited that performance appraisals and compensation improve organizational commitment, diminishing intentions to leave. Ibrahim Alzamel and colleagues (2020) also noted a significant impact of work-life quality on turnover intention, with organizational commitment partially mediating this effect, suggesting that enhancing work-life quality and fostering commitment can mitigate turnover intentions. Krishnamoorthy and friends (2020) found that non-financial incentives, including promotional opportunities and manageable workloads, significantly bolster nurses' intentions to remain in their positions. These findings highlight the necessity of management support in creating a conducive work environment and offering career development opportunities to improve nurse retention. Recent studies consistently affirm the significance of management support and workplace conditions on turnover intentions. Hølge-Hazelton and Berthelsen (2021) found that nursing managers who provide adequate support and enhance workplace conditions contribute to lower turnover rates, particularly among novice nurses. This aligns with Poku and colleagues (2022), who emphasized that effective leadership and managerial support are vital for retaining nursing staff. Hashish (2015) identified various organizational factors, such as ethical work climates and perceived organizational support, that shaped nurses' commitment and job satisfaction, ultimately influencing turnover intentions. Zaheer and colleagues (2019) corroborated these findings, indicating that unsupportive management and poor communication significantly heighten turnover intentions among nursing staff. Collectively, these studies suggest that management should offer direct support and cultivate a collaborative and communicative environment to reduce turnover intentions.

A meta-analysis based on the Price-Mueller model further supports this notion, indicating that work engagement and perceived organizational support significantly diminish turnover intentions among nurses (Zhu et al., 2023). Additionally, a systematic review highlighted supervisor support as a critical factor in lowering turnover intentions, consistently associating it negatively with turnover, albeit with varying strength (Alshutwi, 2017). Ying and friends (2021) examined the relationship between the nursing practice environment and resilience, emphasizing that a supportive work environment can alleviate turnover intentions among critical care nurses. They highlighted the necessity of adequate staffing and resources in fostering a positive work environment crucial for nurse retention. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated challenges within the healthcare system, significantly increasing work-related stress among nurses. A study at Hospital Universiti Sains Malaysia found a significant positive correlation between work-related stress and turnover intention; however, moderate stress levels were associated with low turnover intentions, likely due to job security and benefits linked to employment in the semi-government sector. This finding underscores the importance of managing stress and improving the work environment to enhance nurse retention (Ling & Yusuf, 2022). Similarly, Wan and colleagues (2018) emphasized that a supportive work environment enhances nurse engagement and reduces turnover intentions. Their study revealed that the work environment's impact on turnover intention was more significant than that of other variables, advocating for management to involve nurses in decision-making processes to foster a sense of belonging and commitment. International studies have similarly highlighted the profound impact of the work environment on nurses' turnover intentions. A favorable work environment is consistently linked to lower turnover intentions. For instance, a study of experienced nurses in China found that a positive work environment correlated with higher work engagement and lower turnover intention, with work engagement partially mediating this relationship (Wan et al., 2018). Furthermore, job satisfaction and work engagement often mediate the relationship between the work environment and turnover intention. For example, a study of community health nurses demonstrated that work engagement partially mediated the relationship between their practice environment and turnover intention, while work pressure moderated this relationship. Another study indicated that job satisfaction moderated the relationship between work environment and turnover intention, suggesting that enhancing job satisfaction could improve working conditions and reduce turnover (Al Sabei et al., 2020).

Therefore, the research investigates the factors influencing nurse turnover intentions within the private healthcare sector in Johor Bahru, Malaysia. This study aims to explore the challenges of retaining nurses, particularly focusing on management support and the work environment in shaping nurses' decisions to remain in or leave their positions. By conducting qualitative interviews with nursing staff, this research seeks to understand the dynamics of job satisfaction, burnout, and organizational commitment in the context of increasing demands on healthcare services due to a growing population. Ultimately, the findings will provide insights into practical strategies that healthcare organizations can adopt to mitigate turnover intentions, enhance nurse retention, and improve overall healthcare delivery in the region.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research plays a vital role in exploring the personal and emotional factors contributing to nurse turnover intentions. Numerous studies have highlighted the detrimental impact of workplace incivility and verbal violence on nurses' emotional well-being, which subsequently influences their turnover intentions (Luo et al., 2024; Alsadaan et al., 2024). Design of the study is phenomenological qualitative research. By employing qualitative methodologies, researchers can gain deeper insights into the lived experiences of nurses, revealing how organizational culture and interpersonal relationships affect their job satisfaction and commitment (Maryanti, 2023; Nasiripour, 2014). Moreover, integrating qualitative findings with quantitative data can enhance the robustness of the research design, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of turnover intentions. This study will employ an inductive qualitative content analysis to explore the factors influencing nurse turnover intentions. This approach enables the identification of themes and patterns within the data, providing a rich and detailed understanding of the phenomenon (Hörberg et al., 2023; Lee et al., 2013). Understanding these factors is essential for developing effective retention strategies for nursing professionals. The proposed study will utilize a phenomenological approach, aiming to understand the lived experiences of nurses and the meanings they ascribe to their intentions to leave their current positions. The participant of the study is nurses employed in Johor state. This qualitative component will involve a purposive and snowball technique to acquire with several criterion such as of nurses who have either recently left their positions or are contemplating departure. Interviews will be conducted in private settings to ensure confidentiality and promote open communication. The interview questions will be thoughtfully designed to explore the nuanced experiences of nurses, focusing on the emotional, psychological, and contextual factors that influence their turnover intentions. The protocol of the study will undergo UTM ethics approval before being conducted. In this study analysis of the data is using thematic analysis to identify common themes and patterns within the qualitative data.



The sampling runs in snowball method by getting the participants through network that current practising in nursing works in the private hospitals randomly. The researcher serves as a pivotal instrument, fundamentally shaping the data collection and analysis processes. In qualitative research, the researcher playing the role of a research instrument which conducts interviews and observation to collect data by interacting with participants. Interviews serve as a dynamic interaction between the researcher and the participant, allowing for an exploration of personal experiences, beliefs, and perceptions. The interview is a conversation designed to procure information, where the interviewer asks questions and the interviewee provides responses (Chahal, 2021; Dursun, 2023). During conducting, the observation inherent to observing the participants' behaviours and expressions is observing the actual situation that happens to participants. This aligns with the assertion by Lestari that direct field observations are crucial for understanding behaviours and activities, thereby enriching the knowledge base of the research (Lestari, 2023). Documentation is important to keep the information not only for current analysis, would be helpful for future study or

revisit the information for triangulate findings. Documentation serves as evidence for information and ideas borrowed from both primary and secondary sources, which can significantly enrich the qualitative analysis (Fitria, 2020). Hartanto (2023) emphasizes that qualitative research aims to describe socio-cultural phenomena in detail and depth, often utilizing documentation as a key data collection method.

Data analysis is significantly important for a qualitative researcher to identify the common themes and patterns through the data collected. The approach applied in this study will be thematic analysis, where the primary data collected or documented by open-ended survey interview focus on one-on-one conversation due to the sensitivity of the information shared by the participants. Braun and Clarke (2014) outline a six-phase process that includes familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. This structured approach ensures that researchers can systematically explore their data while remaining open to the emergence of new insights. Nvivo software is a helpful tool that provides the ability to enhance rigor and depth of research through its features by gaining prominence owing to its strong data processing, coding, and visualisation skills. In triangulate the findings, determine the research question, select multiple data sources, choose appropriate collection methods, analyze data, compare results, and use results to draw conclusions and make recommendations. Meyer and his friends (2016) noted that triangulating various research techniques in qualitative case studies enhances the analysis and strengthens the conclusions' validity.

### 3.0 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, addressing nurse turnover intentions is essential for maintaining a stable healthcare workforce and ensuring high-quality patient care. The literature consistently identifies several key factors that influence turnover intentions among nurses, including job satisfaction, workplace environment, leadership styles, and organizational support. For instance, studies demonstrate that higher job satisfaction is associated with lower turnover intentions, indicating that improvements in work conditions, supervisory relationships, and organizational policies can significantly affect nurses' decisions to remain in their positions (Susanti & Rita, 2020; Uzuntarla et al., 2021; Kuntardina, 2017). Furthermore, research indicates that nurses who experience supportive leadership and feel empowered are less likely to contemplate leaving their jobs (Lyu et al., 2019; Han & Jekel, 2011). Conversely, environments characterized by incivility and a lack of procedural justice are linked to increased turnover intentions, highlighting the necessity for cultivating a positive organizational culture (Getie et al., 2015; Lee et al., 2021).

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# EFFECTIVENESS OF TRAINING AND LEARNING TRANSFER IN ORGANISATIONS: A CASE STUDY IN A PUBLIC SECTOR AGENCY IN JOHOR, MALAYSIA

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## Abstract

Training and learning are essential components of organizational success, enhancing employee performance, job satisfaction, and productivity while supporting human resource optimization as a company's most valuable asset. Well-designed training programs have been shown to boost employee engagement, motivation, and overall organizational outcomes. Based on Baldwin and Ford's (1988) model, the purpose of this study was to assess the level of training effectiveness and learning transfer and to identify the relationship between individual factors, training design and organisational environment with training transfer among employees in one of the public sector agency in Johor, Malaysia. A total of 108 employees were selected, all of whom provided feedback. The collected data was processed together with the statistical packages for social sciences (SPSS). The statistical technique used was descriptive analysis, t-test and Pearson correlation. The results showed that employees perceived that training and learning transfer in the organisation to be at moderate level. Moreover, training and learning transfer are linked to individual characteristics ( $r = .236$ ), design of training ( $r = .542$ ) and environmental organisations ( $r = .549$ ). The findings highlighted the importance of efficient training programs within an organisation and three factors; individual characteristics, design of training and environmental organisations needs to be taken into account when designing training programs.

*Keywords:* training transfer, demographic factors, individual characteristics

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Training and learning are critical to organisational success as they impact employee performance, job satisfaction, retention rates and overall productivity (Tan & Olaore, 2022). Training is essential in human resource management to optimise the use of human resources, which are considered a company's most valuable asset (Mahapatro, 2022). Studies show that well-designed training programmes increase employee engagement and motivation and ultimately lead to higher production (Wang et al., 2017). Well-structured training programmes are associated with improved employee morale and lower turnover rates (Kraiger et al., 2009). The development of training programmes that are tailored to the individual requirements of the company and its employees is crucial for success. This personalisation includes considering the company culture, goals and objectives when creating the curriculum and offering continuous feedback and support during the learning process (Coffman & Dixon, 2015). Organisations that prioritise soft skills development alongside technical expertise tend to have more success in the modern workplace (Dessler, 2018). Evaluating the impact of training programmes is crucial for companies to measure their effectiveness. Organisations can assess the effectiveness of their training initiatives by monitoring key metrics such as employee performance, job satisfaction and retention rates (Foster, 2014).

Effective training and learning programmes are crucial for companies that want to optimise their potential and achieve long-term success. The changes in the development of human resources have emphasised the importance of training in the creation of skilled individuals who may lead a society towards progress. Amini (2006) defines human capital as the human resource that accelerates the economy, development and progress of a nation. Junaidah (2001) argues that training is a methodical and organised effort that focuses on improving knowledge, skills and attitudes through learning in order to improve job performance. Training transfer is a measure of the extent to which the training programme undertaken has an impact on the employee's knowledge, skills and attitudes after participation in the training programme. Ibrahim (2001) in his paper entitled "Design and Management of Training: Concepts and Practises" states that training programmes are considered effective if they can change the treatment of the trainers when they return to work after attending a particular training programme or course. An interesting question to discuss is whether the employee can apply the training provided upon their return to work. Therefore, a case study was conducted with employees of a public agency in the state of Johor to determine (1) the extent of transfer of training among employees, (2) the differences between the demographic factor

(gender) of transfer training, and (3) the relationship between individual characteristic factors, training design and work environment to transfer training.

Baldwin and Ford (1988) stand for the philosophy of training transfer, which defines it as an attempt to apply the knowledge, skills and attitudes learnt during training to a real job over a period of time. Cascio (2003) argues that training transfer refers to the application of knowledge, skills and behaviours from training in the workplace. Training and learning transfer is influenced by the atmosphere of the transfer, the support from the supervisor, the support from colleagues, the opportunities to use the skills learnt and also the technological support. Furthermore, a training transfer programme is effective if it successfully changes the performance and treatment of current employees who return to work after attending a course (Ibrahim, 2001). This view was supported by Noe (2008), who describes training transfer as the effectiveness of trainers in continuously applying and transferring knowledge, skills, behaviours and cognitive strategies learned during training to the workplace. According to a study by Saks and Belcourt in Park and Jacobs (2008) in over 150 organisations, 62% of employees who attended professional development training applied what they had learnt directly in the workplace, 44% six months after attending the training and 34% one year after attending the training.

■ 2.0 METHODOLOGY

This study utilised a quantitative research design based on Baldwin and Ford’s (1988) model to evaluate the effectiveness of training and learning transfer in a public sector agency in Johor, Malaysia. Data were collected from 108 employees through structured surveys, with a 100% response rate, and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The analysis involved descriptive statistics to determine training effectiveness, t-test to identify differences of training and learning transfer based on gender, and Pearson correlation to examine the relationships between individual characteristics, training design, organisational environment and training transfer. The findings provided insights into the significant role of organisational environment, followed by training design and individual characteristics, in influencing training transfer within the agency.

■ 3.0 RESULTS

*Objective 1: Identify the level of training and learning transfer within the staff of public sector agencies in Johor, Malaysia.*

Based on Table 1, the training and learning transfer level was relatively high with an average score of 3.96. The results indicate that the training and learning transfer by the employees is at a high level. This shows that most respondents are able to apply what they have learnt during the training programme in terms of knowledge and skills to real-life situations and jobs. In a study by Baldwin and Ford (1988), positive training transfer is described as a stage where a trainer successfully applies the knowledge and skills acquired to a real workplace.

**Table 1:** Distribution of Mean Scores for the Level of Training and learning transfer

No.	Application	Mean Average	Level
1	Knowledge	3.91	High
2	Skill	3.96	High
Mean Average Level of Training and Learning Transfer		<b>3.96</b>	High

*Objective 2: Differences in the transfer of safety training courses depending on gender*

Based on Table 2, the t-test is used to determine differences in the transfer of safety training courses depending on gender. The results of the study show that the significant value for both genders is greater than the significant base of the study ( $t = .871, p > 0.05$ ). The results of these tests also show that there are no significant differences between male and female respondents. The study also revealed that the transfer of protective security training courses was higher for male respondents than female respondents based on the minimum scores obtained by male (3.99) and female respondents (3.90).

**Table 2:** T-test for the differences of training and learning transfer based on gender

Gender	Frequency (n)	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	t	F	df	p-value
Male	37	3.99	0.38	.871	.057	106	0.385
Female	71	3.90	0.48				

Table 3 shows the results of the Pearson correlation analysis between the individual characteristic factors, the training design and the organisational environment. The results of the study show that individual characteristics ( $r = 0.236, p < 0.01$ ), training design ( $r = 0.542, p < 0.01$ ) and organisational environment ( $r = 0.549, p < 0.01$ ) correlate with each other. All three factors, i.e. the individual characteristics, the training design and the organisational environment, have a moderate positive correlation with the transfer of training.

**Table 3:** Relationship between Individual Characteristics, Training Design and Organizational Environment with Training and Learning Transfer

	Individual Characteristics	Training Design	Organisational Environment
Training and Learning Transfer	Pearson Correlation	.236**	.542**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.014	.000
	N	108	108

#### ■ 4.0 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The researchers argue that there are barriers that staff face when it comes to improving the effectiveness of training transfer, such as selecting candidates to undertake training without going through the process of analysing training needs, the timing and content of the module, and the staffing of teachers, which are factors that stand in the way of effective training transfer. A study conducted by Elangovan and Karakowski (1999) has also shown that stress can be one of the barriers to the effectiveness of on-the-job training transfer. This is because the pressure that a trainer experiences after completing a training programme when carrying out everyday tasks at work tends to cause them to maintain the old pattern of behaviour at work.

Research studies show a correlation between individual characteristics, training design and organisational context with training transfer. This fact illustrates that these three criteria are closely linked when it comes to influencing the success of safety training transfer to employees. The findings of this study are consistent with previous research, such as the study by Shah Aruzaman (2009), which identified individual characteristics, training design and organisational environmental factors as key factors in the effectiveness of training transfer. It also showed a clear relationship between these factors and training and learning transfer. The results of the study indicate that environmental elements within the organisation show a significant correlation with training transfer, closely followed by training design and individual characteristics.

The Pearson correlation value of the environmental factors has the highest value of the three factors. There is therefore a correlation between the organisational context elements and the transfer of training. The study also supports Nor Azlinda's (2010) study on the influence of personal characteristics, training design and organisational environment on training and learning transfer through regression analysis. They found that contextual factors have the greatest influence on training transfer. Research shows that the design of training programmes significantly influences the transfer of training, as evidenced by high Pearson correlation values. The training design factor is of critical importance as it is one of the factors identified in the Holton Training Transfer Model by Yamnill and McLean (2001) that can hinder the transfer of on-the-job training and impede the cognitive development of the trainer. The training design component consists of three elements that influence the effectiveness of training transfer: Learning principles, organisation of learning activities and training content.

#### ■ 5.0 CONCLUSION

This study provides evidence that environmental elements within an organisation play a central role in facilitating training and learning transfer. Pearson correlation analysis shows a significant relationship between the elements of organisational context and training transfer, with organisational environmental factors showing the strongest correlation among the three variables examined, followed by training design and individual characteristics. These findings suggest that creating an enabling organisational environment is critical to maximising the effectiveness of training programmes and ensuring that the knowledge and skills acquired during training are successfully applied in the workplace. Organisations should prioritise interventions to optimise the organisational context in order to improve the transfer of training. This may include implementing strategies such as fostering a supportive management culture, providing opportunities for practise and feedback, aligning training with the organisation's goals and creating a learning-oriented work environment. By focusing on these key environmental factors, organisations can create fertile ground for the successful application of newly acquired skills and knowledge, ultimately leading to better performance outcomes and a higher return on investment in training initiatives. Future research is recommended to investigate the specific mechanisms by which the organisational context influences training transfer and to identify best practises for creating an optimal environment conducive to learning and skills application.

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## THE CONNECTION OF JINN, RUQYAH AND MENTAL HEALTH

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### Abstract

This article explores the intricate relationship between traditional Islamic beliefs and mental health, with a particular emphasis on the concepts of jinn (genies) and Ruqyah, and their impact on psychological well-being. Initially, the discussion delves into the definition and theological significance of jinn—supernatural entities in Islamic thought—and their purported influence on human health. Subsequently, the study addresses associated phenomena such as the evil eye and black magic, which are traditionally believed to cause various afflictions and misfortunes. The article delineates the characteristics of jinn possession and influence, juxtaposed with psychological disorders, by outlining common symptoms and providing relevant evidence. Ruqyah, a form of spiritual therapy involving the recitation of Quranic verses and supplications, is presented as a traditional therapeutic intervention. The paper critically examines the role of Ruqyah within the broader context of mental health care, assessing its effectiveness in alleviating symptoms attributed to jinn possession. By advocating for an integrative approach that respects both cultural and religious contexts, this study seeks to bridge the gap between contemporary mental health practices and spiritual traditions.

*Keywords: jinn, Ruqyah, mental health, Islamic perspektive,*

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The relationship between mental health and cultural beliefs presents a complex and nuanced challenge in clinical practice. Among Muslim patients, the attribution of mental health symptoms to supernatural entities like jinn is notably more prevalent than previously assumed (Lim et al., 2018). This highlights the importance of understanding Muslim explanatory models of disease and underscores the need for culturally sensitive interviewing techniques to facilitate accurate diagnosis and effective treatment. Khalifa and Hardie (2015) emphasize that possession states are multifaceted phenomena, best understood through an integrative approach that considers biological, anthropological, sociological, psychopathological, and experimental perspectives. This broad perspective allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the patient experience and the sociocultural factors influencing their beliefs and symptoms.

Furthermore, the association between spirit possession and mental illness is not exclusive to Islam but is also prevalent in other religious traditions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Judaism (Dein, 2013). This cross-cultural occurrence of spirit possession beliefs suggests a deeper, perhaps universal, connection between spiritual and psychological explanations of human distress. Uvais (2017) found that a significant number of Muslims believe in the existence of jinn and their ability to possess or cause mental illness in humans. These participants often recommended a dual approach to treatment, involving both medical professionals and religious figures, to address what they perceive as jinn afflictions. Such findings stress the necessity for a culturally competent and holistic approach to mental healthcare that respects and incorporates the religious and cultural context of patients.

In the realm of Islamic belief, the presence and impact of Jinn has been acknowledged for centuries. Nevertheless, the question remains: does jinn really exist? Can they take control of humans? Invisible entities, demonic possessions, and spiritual remedies — these might be seen straight out of horror movies. Jinn, a supernatural being are believed to have the ability to cause external possession to intercede with human affairs within the Muslim community. This phenomenon is characterized by symptoms like paleness and changes in behaviour. Yet, the challenge arises as these possession symptoms are often complicated by their overlapping with those symptoms of mental health. This long-standing belief in Islam has spurred the development of various alternative treatments.

Foremost among these treatments is *Ruqyah*, which is a traditional treatment and widely practiced. It was inherited by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ by using the Holy Al-quran to eliminate illness or disease caused by the jinn possession. But, the effectiveness of *Ruqyah* is being debated whether it can rely solely on eliminating jinn possession or can also be a treatment for people who are having mental health issues. Understanding these three concepts can greatly benefit us in recognising and distinguishing when people are experiencing illness or possession. Besides, the power of *Ruqyah* can be known as a beneficial and effective treatment for both (Mifti Jayanti, A., Nashori, F., & Rumiani, R. (2019).

The concepts and meaning of Jinn, supernatural beings referenced in Islamic theology, as well as their potential influence on human health, are thoroughly examined in the beginning of the discussion. It then explores associated phenomena that are said to bring about numerous ills and tragedies, especially the evil eye and black magic. This article defines Jinn possession and influence as well as psychological problems by listing typical symptoms and evidence linked to

the former. As a conventional therapeutic approach, *Ruqyah*, a type of spiritual therapy encompassing a recitation of passages from the Quran and prayers is presented. *Ruqyah*'s significance in the larger framework of mental health care as well as its efficacy in treating symptoms attributed to Jinn are rigorously examined. By promoting a comprehensive strategy that honors cultural and religious settings, this article aims to close the gap between contemporary mental health treatment and spiritual traditions (Mohyuddin, A., & Rehman, I., 2015).

## ■ 2.0 THE MEANING OF JINN, RUQYAH AND MENTAL HEALTH

In Islamic context, **Jinn** is one of the creatures created by Allah SWT who disguised themselves as humans, causing them to not be seen by human naked eyes, however, they still have the ability to see us. Al-Ashqar (2003) explained that Jinn also have the same needs as humans, for example, they also have the desires to eat, drink, procreate and die. Some might question whether Jinn also died as humans. Allah SWT, He said in Al-Quran,

*"Whatsoever is on it (the earth) will perish. And the Face of your Lord full of Majesty and Honour will remain forever." (Surah Ar-Rahman, 55: 26-27).*

According to Ibn Kathir, Allah SWT said that all the inhabitants of the earth will go and die as a whole. The same goes to all the inhabitants of the sky, except for what Allah SWT wills. Additionally, Allah SWT said;

*"They are those against whom the Word (of torment) is justified among the previous generations of the jinn and mankind that have passed away. Verily, they are ever the losers". (Surah Al-Ahqaf, 46:18)*

Therefore, this sentence has answered the question on whether jinn is included as other creatures who faced death. Apart from that, in the doctrine of Islam, Jinn is also capable of causing physical and psychological or mental harm to humans such as, through possession or causing ill health and misfortune. According to Mahyuddin Ismail (2011), he believes that mental illnesses are related to disturbances caused by jinn and demons. Psychiatric patients often see, hear, or feel things that cannot be perceived by the senses of other humans. Hence, all these harms caused by Jinn will affect human beings throughout their lives and might disrupt everything planned by humans.

However, modern medical standards, particularly in the West, often overlook factors such as the influence of "jinn" and "*shayṭān*" on human health. These elements are generally excluded from medical literature because they are not experimental in nature and tend to create a divide between religion and science (Siti Nasuha et. al, 2019).

Likewise, in the Islamic setting and culture, *Ruqyah* is a widely accepted idea that is acknowledged by all people, not only Muslims. To be clear, *Ruqyah* refers to the healing technique that, as long as it complies with Islamic law, entails reciting passages from the Quran, greetings from the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, and prayers (Ahmad et al., 2016). It includes reciting verses from the Quran, as well as prayers, remembering, and seeking refuge. *Ruqyah* in Islam refers to the practice of reciting specific verses from the Qur'an, supplications, or prayers to seek protection, healing, or relief from various ailments, including spiritual afflictions such as the evil eye, possession by jinn, or black magic. It is a form of Islamic spiritual healing that is deeply rooted in the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Humans frequently face life challenges, including illnesses, hardships, and various difficulties, as well as interference from the devil, who often incites and tempts them. Illnesses, whether physical or spiritual, can sometimes be caused by the influence of devils, satans, or jinn. As a result, regular practice, such as reciting the Quran, specific verses, or prayers as part of a daily routine, can serve as a protective shield (Nik Asilah, et. al, 2023). Moreover, the recitation of passages from the Quran, the invocation of Allah SWT's name and characteristics, or the usage of prayers in Arabic or any other language the supplicant knows are all employed in *Ruqyah* to treat illness and other issues. The principles and practices of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ for self-care or to support his Sahabah (companions) and others are the basis of the *Ruqyah* method.

Not less important too, one of the fundamental rights granted to humans is **mental health**. Examining the meaning and notion of mental health, we can clearly see that it encompasses our social, psychological, and emotional well-being while determining how people behave, feel, and perceive things that cross in our everyday lives. As such, it eventually plays a vital role in defining how one manages stress, interacts with people, and makes decisions. Upon closer inspection, the term "mental health" refers to a wide range of characteristics, including the ability to cope with stress, enjoy life, manage emotions, and sustain strong relationships, in addition to the nonexistence of mental disorders (Mifti Jayanti, A., Nashori, F., & Rumiani, R., 2019).

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), mental health is defined as "*A state of well-being that occurs when the individual recognizes his or her capabilities, endures with everyday challenges of life, is capable of functioning productively, as well as possesses the ability to contribute to the community*". It also affects a variety of other variables, such as biological elements like genetics and chemistry of the brain, life events like violence and trauma, and family histories of mental illnesses.

### ■ 3.0 THE JINN INTERFERENCE AND IT'S EFFECTS

#### Evil Eyes (Al-'Ayn)

Some Muslims hold the belief that certain individuals possess the ability to grant others the "evil eye," a concept that pertains to the capacity of jealousy to cause psychological or physical harm to another. In short, the evil eye is one of the evils triggered by the envious self of the human under the influence of the Evil. Evil eyes can be described as a reality. According to Islamic beliefs, the evil eye has been mentioned in the Qur'an;

*"The disbelievers would almost cut you down with their eyes when they hear you recite the Reminder and say, "He is certainly a madman." (Surah al-Qalam, 68:51);*

Islam considers envy and jealousy as the causes that stimulate the evil eye to cause harm. The harmful effects of envy and jealousy are described throughout the Quran. In heaven as much as on earth, envy was the first sin ever committed. Adam's son Qabil (Cane) was envious of his earthly brother Habil (Abel), while Iblis was envious of Adam in heaven. As previously mentioned, the Quran makes it clear that Syaitan was jealous and envious of the Prophet Adam when God commanded the angels to bow down to Adam. After God gently drove Syaitan from paradise, he promised to use all tricks at his disposal to turn humans off the path of righteousness. Similarly, in the Habil and Qabil story, Qabil killed Habil to satisfy enviousness. Another passage speaks directly to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, warning him of the evil eye that unbelievers attempt to inflict upon him as a result of their intense animosity and jealousy (Ibn Kathir, 2011).

Moreover, the evil eye is mentioned in various Islamic texts, including the Hadith. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is reported to have said, "The evil eye is real, and if anything were to overtake the divine decree, it would be the evil eye" (Sahih Muslim, Book 26, Hadith 5453). This highlights the seriousness of its potential impact. To protect against the evil eye, it is recommended to recite certain Quranic verses and to invoke the name of Allah, saying phrases like "Masha'Allah" (what Allah wills) when praising something (Al-Jibaly, 2002). This practice is believed to help mitigate the negative effects of envy and admiration.

*Ruqyah* is the term for reciting prayers as incantations, as found in the Quran in genuine Hadith. Numerous Hadith describe the use of *Ruqyah* as a means of healing and defence against poison, illness, and bad luck. The Holy Prophet ﷺ's wife, Aisyah claimed that Allah's Messenger had ordered the use of incantation to remove the effects of an evil eye, and Anas claimed that Allah's Messenger had given him permission to do so (as a remedy). The Prophet (peace be upon him) would recite *Mu'awwidhatayn* (Surat Al-Falaq and Surat An-Nas) and then blow his breath over his body whenever he was ill. She used to read aloud the final two chapters of the Quran to him and massage his hands over his body in the hopes of receiving its blessings when he fell very sick.

Additionally, before going to bed every night, the Prophet ﷺ would recite Surat Al-Ikhlās, Surat Al-Falaq, and Surat An-Nas, cup his hands together, blow on it, and then rub his hands over his head, face, and front of his body, starting with the areas he could reach. That is what he used to do three times. Therefore, the most popular and widely accepted Islamic healing technique involves reciting specific passages from the Holy Quran, praying as described in the Sahih Hadith, and blowing on the child usually three times. Water can also be used for *Ruqyah*, and those suffering from it can then consume the water. Given that children are vulnerable, parents ought to be aware of this technique and apply it themselves.

#### Black Magic (Sihir)

Allah said in Al-Quran;

*"Indeed, Satan is an enemy to you; so take him as an enemy. He only invites his party to be among the companions of the Blaze." (Surah Fatir, 35: 6)*

Black magic can refer to supernatural use of powers by following satanic rituals or calling fourth evil spirits to engage in harmful or violent actions against other humans. From an Islamic perspective, according to Ibn Qudamah, *sihr* involves acts such as spells, charms, or incantations—whether spoken, written, or performed—that cause harm to a person's body, heart, or mind, all without any physical contact with the victim. Additionally, it is used to hurt a person who is even a thousand miles away from them just for the sake of jealousy. It destroys the life of individuals, a whole life of others. Crossing limits, black magic is strictly prohibited in Islam as it involves shirk, which is the gravest sin in Islam. Not only that, it slowly destroys humane health, then wealth and eventually everything they have.

Black magic is prohibited in Islam, but Islam believes in magic, we have a big example of our Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ had been subjected to black magic by a Jewish magician. God says in the al Quran,

*"And they followed what the devils used to enchant in the reign of Solomon; Solomon did not commit kufr, but these devils did: they used to teach magic to people, and they followed such things as were revealed at Babylon to the angels Harut and Marut. But neither of these taught anyone (such things) without saying: we are only for trial; so do not commit kufr. These people used to learn from them that which could sow discord between a man and his 36 Mystic Thoughts wife whereas these things cannot harm anyone without Allah's permission". (Surah Al Baqarah, 2: 102)*

In Islam, black magic, or *sihr*, is regarded as a grave sin and a malicious practice that involves invoking supernatural forces to cause harm, illness, or discord. The Quran explicitly condemns black magic, describing it as a form of deception taught by devils to lead people astray, as seen in the story of Harut and Marut in Surat Al-Baqarah (2: 102). The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) also warned against practicing magic, listing it among the seven destructive sins that can lead to severe consequences in the Hereafter (Sahih Al-Bukhari, Book 76, Hadith 504).



Wahbah al-Zuhaili (2003), in *al-Fatawa al-Mu'asirah*, stated that it is forbidden to consult shamans, whether for performing sorcery or seeking treatment from it. He emphasized that this practice falls under the category of shirk (associating partners with Allah SWT), as mentioned in a Prophetic hadith, since it involves relying on knowledge of the unseen or seeking cures through means other than Allah SWT.

#### ■ 4.0 SIGNS OF JINN POSSESSION

The belief in possession by Jinn is an indelible mark in the Muslims. Al-Ashqar (2013), claimed in Jinn possession, there are some symptoms listed and they may be classified into four categories. The first one is physical symptoms that may include refusing to turn and get angered when one hears the adhan, fainting while the Al-Quran is being recited to the patient, falling during a seizure, and other similar effects; an abundance of unpleasant or scary dreams, sometimes it is difficult to wake up in the morning. They also engage in loneliness, avoiding people, and acting abnormally and the evil spirit which is dwelling in the particular person may start speaking the moment the Holy Al-Quran is read over him.

Next, from the personality perspective, which is personality changes which include oscillation, questionable personality traits, mania, emotional dysregulation, and/or social isolation. For instance, physical changes like unfamiliar strength, stiffness, inability to feel pain, acute pain in various parts of the body, seizures or voice modifications. Then, the cognitive changes, which include unnatural knowledge, ability to speak a language that cannot be understood, confusion of mentality, inability to sleep or constant nightmares. The last one is spiritual changes, which include such things as getting extremely moved by recitations from the Holy Al-Qur'an or even the occurrence of hysteria.

Nevertheless, Al-Jibaly, M. (2002) said there are many other actions or physical signs when they can pinpoint the jinn possession of a person. Jinn possession is utilized as an explanation of the person's behavioural change. Hence, there is no convergence of opinion indicating what the commonest symptoms of jinn possession are as different authors have given different results on the type of symptoms often observed in the possessed individuals. For example, autonomous work in Saudi Arabia includes the competence of faith healers. The most frequent manifestations include flaccid limb weakness, impaired speech, liquid speech, somaesthetic symptoms, paralysis, pathological laughing or crying, clouding of consciousness and hallucinations. However, in Iran, the manifestations were as follows such as changes in voice or muteness, glossolalia, abnormal physical sensation, paralysis, pathological laughing or crying, clouding of consciousness and auditory hallucinations.

By the same token, the signs of the evil eye in both adults and children in an effort to further inform and educate Muslims about this matter. It is crucial to be aware of the symptoms of evil eye. If the situation is more serious, it is advisable to consult a scholar who has a reputable background and extraordinary proficiency in the art of *Ruqyah*. Among the signs of the evil eye is persistent yawning. Even if people yawn naturally when they are sleepy or exhausted, yawning randomly is one of the signs of the evil eye. Next, itching is a common response to irritation or inflammation of the skin, but if the person itches all the time to the point where others find it strange, it may be an indication of an evil eye (Hamidi, et. al., 2019).

Besides, burping which some claim that the other individual may be overly gassy or that you simply burp frequently. The person will always feel the need to burp, whether or not they are bloated. when someone burps constantly, day and night, and they are clueless as to why this occurs. They simply cannot feel content if they do not burp, no matter how hard they try to control it. It is true that this is one of the more prevalent signs of the evil eye. Additionally, hot and cold flashes that elevate body temperature and periodic hot and cold flashes are among the signs of evil eye symptoms. The sensation is comparable to that of impending fever, wherein the person experiences sudden, intense body aches and extreme temperature changes, particularly in the absence of any underlying medical conditions.

Furthermore, bruising that appears on the body for no apparent reason could be an evil eye symptom that should not be disregarded. See a doctor or a skilled Raqi nearby to have the bruises examined, especially if we have been sleeping for a while. Last but not least, headache is another extremely typical evil-eye symptom. Headaches are frequently triggered by a variety of factors, including dehydration, unexpected temperature changes, a poor diet, exhaustion, stress, and a lot of others. However, headaches are one of the probable symptoms of the evil eye, so never ignore them. These are a few signs of the evil eye that show up when someone is a victim of witchcraft or the evil eye. Should we have any of these symptoms, or if we know someone who has these typical evil-eye signs, it is recommended to do *Ruqyah* or seek advice from an Islamic spiritual healer.

The evil eye is believed to be a malicious stare that can hurt the target of it in a variety of ways. It frequently originates from envy or jealousy. The Hadith and the teachings of the Quran form the foundation of this idea. The evil eye can have a variety of negative impacts, from bad luck to fatal illnesses especially to the children who are extremely susceptible due to their weakness. Mothers are also the easy targets, especially during both before and after giving birth. A common result of the evil eye is said to be problems during pregnancy, infertility, abortion, birthmarks on the child, and dry breasts.

As for a person struck by magic he might experience the following such as dislike of ones' spouse, as indicated in the Al-Quran by the following verse (interpretation of the meaning): "*And from these people learn that by which they cause separation between a man and his wife. . .*" (Al-Baqarah, 2:102), The practice of adultery. For example, a person will get the feeling that he or she is lagging behind in joining his or her family members at a certain place of dwelling when he or she gets home.

Next, love can quickly turn into intense hatred, one is unable to have a coital relationship or intimacy with their spouse, women frequently miscarry, and one is overcome with the feeling that they have done something wrong or even committed treason. However, as previously mentioned, it should be noted that if a person exhibits some of these

symptoms, it is not necessarily a sign that they are under the influence of jinn or black magic; rather, they may be experiencing a medical or psychological issue.

## ■ 5.0 INTERSECTION SYMPTOMS

The overlap between the symptoms of jinn possession and mental illness is a complex and sensitive topic in Islamic and psychological discussions. In many cultures, including within Islamic traditions, certain behaviours or experiences are sometimes attributed to jinn possession. However, these same behaviours may also be interpreted as symptoms of mental illness by modern psychology. Understanding the overlap is important for distinguishing between spiritual and psychological explanations and for providing appropriate care (Khalifah, et. al., 2011).

In brief, symptoms of Jinn Possession attributed can vary but often include sudden changes in personality, such as aggression or withdrawal; physical symptoms with no apparent medical cause, like paralysis or convulsions; hearing voices or seeing things that others do not; unexplained knowledge of hidden or distant events; aversion to religious practices, such as praying or reciting the Qur'an; and able to speak in unfamiliar languages or with different voices.

On top of that, common Mental Illnesses with similar symptoms such Schizophrenia are characterized by hallucinations (hearing voices, seeing things), delusions, disorganized thinking, and significant changes in behaviour. In some cases, it includes extreme mood swings, from manic episodes (elevated mood, hyperactivity) to depressive episodes (low energy, withdrawal). Include Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) where a person may exhibit distinct identities or voices, which might be interpreted as possession. Similarly, severe Depression or Anxiety can cause profound changes in behaviour, physical symptoms like fatigue, or panic attacks, which might be misinterpreted as spiritual attacks. Given the overlap, it is important to differentiate between the two to provide appropriate care.

## ■ 6.0 COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT & APPROACH

A comprehensive assessment is a critical step in providing effective care for individuals who may be experiencing symptoms that overlap between mental health conditions and spiritual or religious concerns, such as jinn possession. This type of assessment requires the combined efforts of both a qualified mental health professional and an Islamic scholar or healer, each bringing their unique expertise to the evaluation process.

### *Role of the Mental Health Professional*

The mental health professional, such as a psychiatrist, psychologist, or therapist, plays a key role in assessing the psychological and physiological aspects of the patient's condition. This process typically involves a detailed intake interview, where the professional gathers extensive information about the patient's personal and family history, current symptoms, medical background, and any previous mental health issues or treatments. The clinician may also use standardized diagnostic tools, psychological tests, and possibly neuroimaging or laboratory tests to rule out or confirm specific mental health disorders like depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, or bipolar disorder.

This detailed assessment is crucial for identifying any underlying mental health conditions that may present with symptoms similar to those attributed to jinn possession, such as hallucinations, mood swings, or personality changes. The mental health professional's goal is to diagnose the condition accurately and determine whether the symptoms are primarily due to a psychiatric disorder, a neurological issue, or a psychosomatic condition.

### *Role of the Islamic Scholar or Healer*

On the other hand, the Islamic scholar or healer contributes a deep understanding of religious beliefs, cultural practices, and spiritual phenomena that are significant within the Muslim community. Their role in the assessment process is to evaluate the spiritual dimensions of the patient's experience. They may ask questions related to the patient's religious practices, their understanding of spiritual concepts like jinn possession, and any spiritual or religious experiences the patient might have had. The scholar or healer might also observe how the patient responds to religious texts or rituals, such as the recitation of Qur'anic verses or participation in prayers, which could provide insight into whether the symptoms are spiritually rooted.

The Islamic scholar or healer's assessment is not just about diagnosing jinn possession but also about understanding how the patient's religious beliefs influence their mental state. For instance, a patient who believes they are possessed by a jinn may experience profound fear or distress, which can exacerbate their symptoms. The scholar or healer can offer spiritual guidance, reassurance, and potentially recommend religious remedies like *Ruqyah* (spiritual healing through Qur'anic recitation) if they believe that spiritual issues are contributing to the patient's condition.

### *Importance of Contextual Understanding*

The comprehensive assessment process also requires an in-depth understanding of the patient's broader context, which includes their cultural background, religious upbringing, community dynamics, and life circumstances. Contextual factors can significantly influence how symptoms are experienced and interpreted by both the patient and their family. For example, in some cultures, mental health symptoms might be primarily understood through a spiritual lens, leading to a preference for spiritual remedies over medical treatment.

By considering the patient's history, symptoms, and context, the assessment process becomes more nuanced and tailored to the individual's needs. This approach ensures that the patient receives a diagnosis and treatment plan that respects their cultural and religious beliefs while also addressing their mental health needs.

#### Collaboration for Accurate Diagnosis

When the mental health professional and the Islamic scholar or healer collaborate in this comprehensive assessment, they are better equipped to distinguish between symptoms caused by mental health conditions and those that may be related to spiritual or religious issues. This collaboration reduces the risk of misdiagnosis where a psychological disorder might be mistaken for jinn possession, or vice versa and ensures that the patient receives the most appropriate care.

For instance, if the assessment reveals that the patient's symptoms are consistent with a psychiatric disorder but are being exacerbated by spiritual fears, the treatment plan can include both medical intervention (such as therapy or medication) and spiritual support (such as *Ruqyah* or religious counseling). Conversely, if the symptoms are determined to be primarily spiritual in nature, the focus might be on spiritual healing, with mental health support provided as needed to address any related psychological distress.

In summary, a comprehensive assessment that involves both a mental health professional and an Islamic scholar or healer is essential for accurately identifying and treating conditions that straddle the line between mental health and spirituality. This dual approach ensures that all aspects of the patient's experience are considered, leading to a more holistic understanding of their condition and a more effective treatment plan. By respecting and integrating the patient's cultural and religious context, this collaborative assessment helps to provide care that is both compassionate and evidence-based, ultimately supporting the patient's overall well-being.

#### Holistic Approach

In nutshell, the importance of a balanced approach needs to be taken to avoid misdiagnosis. Misattributing a mental illness to jinn possession can lead to delays in receiving appropriate medical treatment, worsening the condition. Conversely, dismissing genuine spiritual experiences as mere mental illness can lead to spiritual neglect. Additionally, it is essential to consider cultural and religious sensitivity. Mental health professionals working with Muslim patients should be aware of the cultural and religious significance of jinn possession. They should approach such cases with sensitivity, respecting the patient's beliefs while also providing evidence-based care.

It is crucial to understand the significance of collaboration between mental health professionals and Islamic scholars or healers in providing comprehensive care for patients. This partnership allows for a more holistic approach to treatment, where both the spiritual and psychological aspects of the patient's well-being are addressed.

Mental health professionals bring expertise in diagnosing and treating psychological conditions, offering evidence-based therapies and interventions that can effectively manage symptoms and promote mental health. However, in many Muslim communities, spiritual concerns are deeply intertwined with mental health, and issues like jinn possession, spiritual distress, or concerns about religious practices can significantly impact a patient's overall well-being.

By collaborating with Islamic scholars or healers, mental health professionals can ensure that the patient's spiritual needs are not overlooked. Islamic scholars can provide insight into religious beliefs, cultural practices, and spiritual healing methods such as *Ruqyah*, which may be essential for the patient's sense of peace and spiritual balance. This collaboration also helps to build trust between the patient and the healthcare providers, as the patient may feel more comfortable knowing that their spiritual beliefs are being respected and incorporated into their care plan.

Moreover, Islamic scholars can help bridge the gap between traditional beliefs and modern medical practices, educating patients and their families about the benefits of combining spiritual and medical treatments. They can also assist in dispelling myths and reducing stigma associated with mental illness, encouraging patients to seek appropriate medical care alongside spiritual support.

In essence, the collaboration between mental health professionals and Islamic scholars or healers fosters a more integrated approach to care, where the patient's psychological and spiritual needs are addressed in tandem. This holistic care model can lead to more effective and meaningful outcomes, helping patients achieve a balanced and healthier state of mind and spirit.

The overlap between the symptoms of jinn possession and mental illness highlights the need for careful and comprehensive evaluation. While certain symptoms may seem similar, it is important to approach each case with an open mind, respecting both medical and spiritual perspectives. By doing so, practitioners can ensure that individuals receive the care they need, whether that involves medical treatment, spiritual healing, or a combination of both.

## 7.0 CONCLUSIONS

Jinn can negatively impact mental health by causing psychological and physical harm. In Islamic practice, *Ruqyah* is used as a healing method to counteract the adverse effects caused by Jinn and other spiritual ailments. This approach highlights the significance of spiritual remedies alongside conventional mental health practices. By incorporating *Ruqyah*, which entails praising Allah and reciting Quranic verses, people might find relief and recovery from psychological and physical ailments linked to Jinn. This comprehensive approach promotes a thorough framework for understanding and dealing with mental health concerns by highlighting the connection between spiritual well-being and mental health in Islam.

However, not all illnesses can be treated with the method of *Ruqyah* as some of the diseases may require help from professionals like psychologists or psychiatrists, such as if it is related to their mental health caused by their social environment. Difficult to say whether the disease someone faced was caused by the possession or their mental problem, but it is not wrong to use both scientific and religious methods simultaneously to get a better and fast conclusion rather than just solely hopping on one method just because you did not believe the other kind of method.

Hence, with the help of religious method i.e *Ruqyah*, one can increase their belief towards Allah SWT alongside keeping their stances in practicing religion. Mental health is also given by Allah SWT to test our loyalty to Him just the matter of the causes. Nevertheless, no one can be sure whether one disease was solely caused by the scientific, psychological, physiological, biological factors or caused by the evil deeds done by Jinn and Syaitan. However, as stated in Surah Al-Hadid, verse 3, Allah SWT said, “*He is the First (nothing is before Him) and the Last (nothing is after Him), the Most High (nothing is above Him) and the Most Near (nothing is nearer than Him). And He is the All-Knower of everything.*”

Therefore, we as human beings have limited knowledge compared to the knowledge owned by The Greatest Allah SWT, but, we can do all things within our power to solve the problem and any incident happened in our life because we do have Al-Aql given by Allah SWT for us to think the best way to overcome any situation under any conditions and circumstances. Believing in Allah is our first priority, but we need to have our own effort to overcome anything that we face including the scientific medical approach or using *Ruqyah* to treat the disease in this context.

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# DETERMINING THE RESILIENCE, OPTIMISM, AND RISK-TAKING MENTALITY AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN MALAYSIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

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## Abstract

Resilience has been an additional value that university graduates should have to help them overcome challenges and remain competitive. Research has indicated that optimism and a willingness to take risks significantly impact resilience. Hence, the current study aims to determine the relationship between resilience, optimism, and risk-taking mentality among undergraduate students in six Malaysian public universities. This study conducted a cross-sectional survey using a convenience sampling of 387 students. Data was analyzed with descriptive statistics and SmartPLS version 3.29. The information about the level of resilience and optimism was sought using Friberg, Hjemdal, Rosenvinge, and Martinussen (2003) and Schweizer and Kock (2001). Respectively. Meanwhile, the data on risk-taking mentality was adapted from Kolvereid and Isaken (2006). The results show a positive correlation between optimism and resilience at the 0.01 significance level. Additionally, the results show that risk-taking mentality and resilience were positively correlated in the sample at the 0.01 significance level. This study offers evidence of the contribution of optimism and a risk-taking mentality toward nurturing resilience among Malaysian public university students. Therefore, enhancing the existing co-curriculum module in Malaysian public universities is necessary to help students become more self-assured and adopt a risk-taking mindset, which will increase their resilience.

*Keywords:* optimism, risk-taking mentality, resilience, public university

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Resilience is a frequently discussed topic in graduate unemployment. Despite the many efforts made to improve the employability of higher education graduates, employers are nonetheless worried about the skills of today's graduates. Employers commonly voice their displeasure with graduates' deficiencies in socialization, communication, and problem-solving abilities (CBI, 2019). Graduating students must therefore equip themselves with a variety of abilities in addition to their academic knowledge. In line with this assertion, the literature in higher education has underlined how important resilience is in helping students maintain their well-being, persevere, and accomplish their academics (Resnick & Inguito (2011). Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has great implications for the employment sector. In 2020, it was reported that 800,000 workers lost their jobs (Mohd Nasaruddin Parzi & Luqman Arif Abd Karim, 2020). Recently, citing data from the Department of Statistics, the Human Resource Minister announced that the youth unemployment rate was 10.7% for the second quarter of 2023, representing 307,700 people. In the first quarter of 2023, the figure for unemployed youth was higher than the total unemployment rate of 3.5% (Shathana Kasinathan, 2023). According to a recent Khazanah Research Institute study, the number of newly qualified graduates who are overqualified is increasing. Specifically, our graduates are facing low-wage challenges, with 65.6 percent of graduates in 2021 receiving starting salaries of less than RM2,000 (Ainul Fatimah, 2024). The scenario will have a big impact on future graduates. How are they dealing with this?

According to Pidgeon and Pickett (2017), university students must cope with several stresses that can be harmful to their mental health. These include new social networks, financial changes, and adjusting to new family and societal responsibilities. There is evidence that less resilient students tend to have mental health issues, which then lead to increased levels of anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts (DeRosier et al., 2013). Similarly, Pidgeon et al. (2014) argued that three unpleasant emotional states that mostly occur among university students are depression, anxiety, and stress. The above views imply that many stressful events in university life might cause psychological distress and poor performance among students. Hence, being resilient is important, and can be an added value to graduates' skill sets to succeed in their future career.

Adding to the above lines of research, optimism has been found to enhance resilience (Kapikiran, 2012). Optimism is defined as the general expectancy that one will experience good outcomes in the future (Scheier & Carver, 1985, as cited in Gómez Molinero et al., 2018). Likewise, resilience has also been linked to the entrepreneurial attitude, including the

ability to perceive opportunities, take risks, solve issues, and act in difficult situations (Chen et al., 2012; McGrath & MacMillan, 2000; Mohamad et al., 2019). Because the Malaysia Education Development Plan (Higher Education) 2015–2025 demonstrated government policy towards developing graduates with a job-creating mindset, this study will consider optimism and risk-taking mentality as determinants of resilience. The primary objective of the current study is to determine the effects of optimism and risk-taking mentality on resilience among undergraduate students at selected Malaysian public universities.

## ■ 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Resilience*

According to Keye and Pidgeon (2013), resilience is the ability to recover from adversity and turn it into an opportunity for growth by learning how to adapt and overcome similar obstacles in the future. In a similar vein, the American Psychological Association (2014) defines resilience as the ability to successfully adapt to challenging life conditions like adversity, stress, trauma, tragedy, and danger by adjusting to both internal and external influences. Likewise, according to Tusaie and Dyer (2004), resilience is the ability to bounce back from failures and handle challenging circumstances. Adding to these views, Masron Mensih et al. (2021) emphasize that resilient persons are linked to toughness, self-worth, and accomplishment. Indeed, globally, employers seek graduates who are "work-ready," with resilience appears as the most important competency (CBI, 2019). Research indicates that resilience can improve an individual's general state of well-being. For example, Resnick and Inguito (2011) assert that resilient persons can remain in good mental health even after experiencing loss. Resilient people are better at sustaining self-control, and overcoming stress (Wu et al., 2013). Based on these views, it is logical that with resilience, students will be better able to handle stress, which can improve their quality of life and academic performance.

It is interesting to note that resilience is a skill that can be developed via proper education and practice (Forbes & Fikretoglu, 2018; Robertson et al., 2015). Research demonstrates that education on resilience can prevent mental health among college students (DeRosier, 2013). More scientifically, resilience training can enhance physical health markers such as cortisol, stress hormones, heart rate, blood pressure, and cholesterol (Forbes & Fikretoglu, 2018). Adding to these views, resilience training is said to increase positive effects and reduce negative effects. In another study, those who received resilience training reported greater levels of self-efficacy, optimism, and life purpose awareness than those who did not (Robertson et al., 2015). Hence, it is possible that adding resilience to the existing module can enhance resilience among university students.

### *Resilience, Optimism and Risk-taking Mentality*

Carver and Scheier (2014; as cited in Miranda and Cruz (2022) defined optimism as dispositional which refers to the general belief expectation that positive outcomes will happen in the future. There is substantial evidence that optimism leads to many positive outcomes. For example, optimist persons were found to experience positive emotions and positive perceptions about life (Bazargan-Hejazi et al., 2021), less failure expectation (Vehkakoski, 2020), and boosted life satisfaction (Tavakoly Sany et al., 2021). In a study in Spain, Gomez-Molinero et al. (2018) surveyed 132 students from the University of Cádiz (Spain). They found that optimism predicted students' resilience. Majority of students (72.5%) were female with average age = 21.71 year. In a study involving 300 first-year college students, Miranda and Cruz (2012) reported that optimism predicted subjective well-being partially mediated by resilience. Although resilience was only examined as a mediator, this study provided evidence for the association between optimism and resilience. This finding is consistent with a study by Hwang and Kim (2023) in which 195 nursing students in South Korea were surveyed. Using a cross-sectional research design, they found that optimism affects academic resilience among students mediated by self-directed learning competency. Hence, in this present study, optimism is expected to affect resilience.

The conceptualization of the entrepreneurial mindset seems to reflect resilience. For example, Mohamad et al. (2019) assert that individuals who possess an entrepreneurial mindset are likely to take risks and can better cope with situations of uncertainty. In addition to that, individuals with an entrepreneurial mindset are claimed to be creative, flexible, inclined to innovation, and love to do things differently (Ireland et al., 2003; Kuratko, 2009). In a study of 230 new entrepreneurs in the USA, Chen et al. (2010) found that the need for achievement and higher education influenced risk-taking propensity. In another study involving 350 undergraduate students in Nigeria, Femi et al. (2022) found that entrepreneurial intention was dependent on risk-taking propensity. Furthermore, like resilience, the entrepreneurship mind can be nurtured (Kuratko & Hodgetts, 2004; Zupan et al, 2018). In this sense, individuals with an entrepreneurial mindset particularly a risk-taking mentality will likely be more adaptive to adverse situations. In the present study, we expected a risk-taking mentality would significantly affect resilience.

## ■ 3.0 METHODOLOGY

We used convenience and snowball sampling to perform a cross-sectional survey among public university students in Peninsular Malaysia's middle and southern regions. Participating in this study were 387 students from six public universities. Using LinkedIn and WhatsApp, we reached the respondents through both offline and online between January and August of 2023. A link to the Google poll was sent to those who willingly consented to participate in the study. The seven items of Friborg, Hjemdal, Rosenvinge, and Martinussen's The Resilience Scale for Adults (RSA) (2003) were used to assess resilience. A seven-point Likert-type scale, ranging from "not at all" to "very much", was used to rate each item.

There was a 0.91 Cronbach alpha. The items for optimism were newly constructed based on the Assessment of Personal Optimism and Social Optimism-Extended (POSO-E, Schweizer & Kock, 2001). A Likert-type scale with seven points was used to measure the five items. There was a 0.862 Cronbach alpha. The items for the risk-taking mentality were also newly constructed based on the Entrepreneurial Intention Scale (Kolvereid & Isaken, 2006). Factor analysis was conducted to test the factor structure of these items based on N: 50 pilot data. The Likert scale used to measure the items had seven points. There was a 0.863 Cronbach alpha. SPSS software version 26 was used for data entry, cleaning, and checking for missing values. System missing and string variables were omitted from the quantitative analysis. SmartPLS version 3.29 was used to test the research hypotheses for partial-least Square Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM).

### Measurement Model

Measures of optimism, risk-taking mentality, and resilience are all reflective measures. Results of PLS Algorithm analysis were observed to identify the quality of each measure for its suitability for further structural model analysis. Hair et al. (2019) highlighted four criteria for the reflective measurement model; (1) outer loadings, (2) internal consistency reliability, (3) average variance extracted, and (4) the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of correlations (HTMT). The outer loadings value for all indicators of the three measures range from .670 to .830. Following Hair et al. (2019) recommendations, all items were retained as all of them bigger than 0.4 in addition to consideration of reliability and AVE. Internal consistency reliability of all three measures indicates good reliability with the scores for Cronbach alpha, rho\_A, and composite reliability were >.70 range from 0.812 to .904. Table 1 summarizes the reliability scores of all variables.

**Table 1** Internal Consistency Reliability and AVE

Construct	Cronbach alpha	rho_A	rho_C	AVE
Optimism	0.847	0.861	0.891	0.620
Risk-taking Mentality	0.812	0.820	0.869	0.572
Resilience	0.876	0.876	0.904	0.573

AVE values were observed to assess the convergent validity of all three constructs. All three constructs demonstrated acceptable AVE values (Table 1) indicating that >50% of the variance was explained by each of the respective constructs. HTMT values indicate appropriate discriminant validity with all the construct HTMT's correlations were <.85 range from .0717 to .776. In conclusion, all indicators of optimism, risk-taking mentality, and resilience demonstrated appropriate outer loading values, internal consistency reliabilities, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Hence, all the items in the three constructs were retained and included in the next structural analysis for hypothesis testing.

### Structural Model

The present study followed Hair et al. (2019) hypothesis testing method for PLS SEM Structural Model analysis focusing on four evaluation criteria; (1) identification of collinearity issues via Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), path coefficients of regression weights and t-test after bootstrapping, predictive accuracy via coefficient of determination scores (R<sup>2</sup>), and effect size (f<sup>2</sup>). The inner VIF values for the three constructs were <3. The value for both optimism to resilience and risk-taking mentality to resilience was 1.730. This indicates that multicollinearity is not an issue in the structural analysis. Results of the path coefficients as measured by regression weights and t-test after bootstrapping identified two significant direct effects. There were significant positive effects of optimism on resilience ( $\beta = .400$ ,  $t = 8.310$ ,  $p = .000$ ) and risk-taking mentality on resilience ( $\beta = .354$ ,  $t = 7.354$ ,  $p = .000$ ). Observation on the R<sup>2</sup> values for the endogenous variable, resilience, indicates substantial predictive accuracy (Cohen, 1988), R<sup>2</sup> = .469. Predictive accuracy for each significant direct effect explained 46.9% of the variances for resilience. Effect sizes for all significant path coefficients as measured by the f<sup>2</sup> scores indicate moderate and small effect sizes (Cohen, 1988). The f<sup>2</sup> score for the effect of optimism on resilience was f<sup>2</sup> = .174 and risk-taking mentality on resilience was f<sup>2</sup> = .136. In conclusion, the results of structural model analysis as measured by the path coefficients, coefficient of determination, and effect sizes indicate significant direct effects of optimism and risk-taking mentality on resilience.

## 5.0 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Our findings propose that the students' resilience level was moderate. Nevertheless, the findings suggest that students in Malaysian public universities are somewhat confident in their abilities to succeed and overcome challenges. They somewhat believe in themselves and are clear about what they want. Our findings revealed a moderate effect of optimism on resilience. It suggests that positive mindset students will be able to adapt to difficulties. This is an expected finding, given the consistent results of previous studies demonstrating the positive effects of optimism on the student's level of resilience (e.g. Gomez-Molinero et al., 2018; Hwang & Kim, 2023; Miranda & Cruz, 2022). Another important finding was a moderate effect of a risk-taking mentality on resilience. The findings seem to suggest that students who like challenges and see opportunities for growth and achievement can better deal with uncertainties. The findings provide considerable support for the influence of a risk-taking mentality on resilience (e.g. Ireland et al., 2003; Kuratko, 2009; Mohamad et al. (2019). Taken as a whole, it can be concluded that a positive mindset and perception or the way people see thing is crucial

in nurturing resilience. Mindset and perception shape one's responses and actions, and consequently, impact the outcomes of those action. Individuals, in essence, have the power to choose their responses to situations, thereby, influencing their life path. Our research supports the claim individual's action reflects their mental set (Abbas & Hasan, 2014).

The current study has limitations. The use of convenience sampling to acquire data limits the generalizability of the findings. We offer several practical recommendations, particularly for the management of public universities. To begin, the current research reveals that individuals' resilience can be strengthened by internal influences. If universities want to better prepare students for their future undertaking, they cannot disregard the importance of optimism and a risk-taking mentality in the current modules and courses. In this sense, the universities can organize positive thinking workshops and campaigns on campus. These can help students nurture a more positive mindset and teach them coping mechanisms for difficult situations. The universities can arrange for student participation in more community services and increase the number of courses that promote entrepreneurial thinking since they can provide students the courage to take chances and calculate risk in their decisions. Additionally, universities can enhance entrepreneurial skills through small-scale entrepreneurship projects and learning environments supportive of developing enterprise competencies (Geldhof, et al., 2013; Zupan et al., 2018).

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

Overall, the present study advances our understanding of the role of optimism and risk-taking mentality in enhancing students' resilience in Malaysian public universities. Our research revealed a moderate effect of optimism on resilience, emphasizing that students who see positive aspect about the future will be more adaptable when faced with challenges. Another important finding was that a risk-taking mentality predicted resilience at a moderate level. Hence, the universities might offer more experiential learning opportunities, such as invention competitions and projects that challenge the students' innovative thinking and decision-making abilities to let them experience risk in their decisions. By incorporating the findings of this research into the existing courses and curriculum in Malaysian public universities, the universities can better prepare the student's mental set to be adaptive and stronger in facing their future employment.

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