

Factors Affecting Employee Engagement during Covid-19 Pandemic: A Case Study of Healthcare Workers in Perlis

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Abstract: The arrival of the global coronavirus Covid-19 have certainly made a significant impact in our day to day lives. The way we do things on a regular basis are now changed and altered with the new normal. Face masks, sanitization, social distancing, vaccinations are all among the new implementations we need to get used to. Covid 19 have certainly affected all walks of life, particularly healthcare workers. This is because they are the first respondents and are highly acknowledged as frontliners who have sacrificed so much to ensure our safety. Thus, Covid-19 has significantly affected the way healthcare workers engage in their work in line with few factors that affect them. This research aims to study these factors namely, Motivation, Job Satisfaction and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour towards Employee Engagement among healthcare workers in Perlis, Malaysia. Data was collected through questionnaire in Google Forms format distributed to several healthcare workers in Perlis, Malaysia. The areas covered are among hospitals, clinics, and pharmacies in the area. All responses are used to analyze the data. A pilot test has been conducted beforehand through reliability test and have obtained substantial results. The data is analyzed via SPSS software. As a result, the Cronbach Alpha indicates good meaning that there is indeed significant relationship between Employee Engagement and Motivation, Job Satisfaction and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour. For future research, research can be done among healthcare workers from all states in Malaysia for a better understanding. Thus, it is utterly important for healthcare workers to be motivated, satisfied with their job and have organized citizenship behaviour especially during this Covid-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Employee Engagement, Job Satisfaction, Motivation, Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

1. Introduction

In accordance with the Goal 3 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) which is “Good Health and Well Being, it highlights the importance to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages, especially since the Covid-19 era began. Under this 3rd Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of “Good Health and Well-Being”, it is stated to have the goal to substantially try to increase the health financing as well as the recruitment, development, training, and even the retention of the health workforce in developing countries, especially in least developed countries and small island developing States (United Nations, 2015). In light with this goal, this study attempts to investigate and identify the most related key factors affecting employee engagement towards healthcare workers in Perlis, Malaysia. Globally, the Covid-19 pandemic has managed to challenge the ability of many healthcare industries in most countries, and Malaysia to some extents have experienced the same degree of consequences. Regardless, any organization be it healthcare or educational institutions, they are all built on the well-motivated and engagement of the human capital as well in the workplace. Employee engagement therefore has the right set of tools or the right environment to engage employees in their day-to-day work. In fact, many experts and even academicians have concluded that highly engaged employees will improve the organization, raise productivity and creativity, and promote greater teamwork and discretionary initiative (Ngozi & Edwinah, 2022).

2. Problem Statement

From the 29th of May 2020 to the 27th of July 2020, the Clinical Research Centre (CRC) of Hospital Tuanku Fauziah Kangar, Perlis, Malaysia have conducted research regarding the healthcare workers' Covid-19 knowledge, attitude, practice and MCO challenges. Some key points that can be highlighted from that research are that significant data have been collected in terms of Attitude, Knowledge and also in the terms of Practice. According to the survey from the Hospital Tuanku Fauziah Kangar's very own Clinical Research Centre (CRC), Perlis, Malaysia, almost all healthcare workers knew that social distancing is important in preventing the spread of disease (95.4%). As for Attitude terms, 38.9% of healthcare workers did not fear of getting infected by Covid

19 when they go to work and 43.2% of healthcare workers strongly agreed that good health is more valuable than good economy. Whereas for Practice, most healthcare workers always practice hand hygiene (70.2%), mask wearing (62.2%), use of hand sanitizer (58.2%) and social distancing (63.8%), (Anuar et al., 2021). Therefore, coherent with all these data, this research aims to study even further on how all these healthcare workers in Perlis, Malaysia, engages themselves as employees in their jobs as well as the factors that affect it.

3. Research Objectives

To examine the effect of motivation, job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behaviour and employee engagement among the healthcare workers in Perlis, Malaysia represents the general purpose of the research. To be specific, this research has the following objectives:

- i. To investigate the relationship between motivation and employee engagement.
- ii. To study the relationship between organizational citizenship behaviour and employee engagement.
- iii. To analyze the relationship between job satisfaction and employee engagement.

4. Literature Review

4.1 State of Healthcare Industry in Malaysia

The National Crisis Preparedness and Response Centre (CPRC), it was reported that six hospitals with the facility namely the Sungai Buloh Hospital, Kuala Lumpur Hospital, Serdang Hospital, Ampang Hospital, Selayang Hospital and Tengku Ampuan Rahimah Hospital in Klang were discovered to be surpassing the warning level of bed utilization rate of 70%, and several of them had already begun to approach 100% (Covid-19: Malaysia's healthcare system at breaking point again as active cases near 35,000 mark, 2021). As of the case of (Vicknasingam et al., 2021), in addition to nationwide implementation of Movement Control Orders (MCO), all interviewed participants noted that considerable organizational, programmatically progressive, and cure protocol related changes were being undertaken within the healthcare and support systems.

4.2 Employee Engagement

In management theory and practise, employee engagement is a critical problem. To fulfil the needs of certain business practices, many consulting organizations are conducting continuous research on employee engagement by surveying employers and employees. (Sun, 2019). Employee engagement has become a key tool in many organizations, healthcare industry included. As per (Mone & London, 2018), in recent years, different practitioners and scholars have studied and analysed employee engagement. There are myriad concepts explored by many researchers with different point of views on employee engagement. Employees are crucial to every organization's human capital, and maintaining them is a problem in today's world, which is characterised by a high turn of employees as well as rising absences (Reijseger et al., 2017). (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018) noted that employee engagement is critical and necessary, according to previous research, since strong employee engagement results in improved productivity, higher levels of citizenship behaviour, employee happiness, and, ultimately, higher performance.

4.3 Motivation

Motivation refers to a process that instigates and sustains goal-directed activities and it is these motivational processes which are rather personal or internal influences that eventually lead to outcomes such as choice, effort, persistence, achievement, and environment regulation. (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). Motivation directly links to individual performance that leads to organizational performance as well as acting as a catalyst for all individual employees that are working for an organization in order to enhance further their working performance or to complete tasks in a much better way than they usually do (Nethi, 2020). (Frederick Taylor and Scientific Management: Understanding Taylorism and Early Management Theory, 2017) highlighted employees are not mere individuals but are larger pieces of workforce and in order to motivate them, the best way possible is by supplying them with the best tools and paying them based on their productivity.

4.4 Job Satisfaction

The success of businesses depends on job satisfaction as it is a key part of the organization. (Maheshkumar Mohite, 2019). From the article "Factors Affecting Job Satisfaction" by Brian Hill (2018), indicated that by referring to the Seven Strategies for Keeping Employees Happy at work by the Society for Human Resource Management; as well as Promoting Employee's Happiness Benefits Everyone by Forbes, as it indicates that some of the aspects that contributed to overall satisfactory feelings were working circumstances, workloads, chances, respective dignity, connections, and monetary gains. In healthcare environment that is filled with tension and division of labour, the fundamental and basic challenge is to perform well in this type of

settings. According to (Troesh & Bauer, 2017), job satisfaction was investigated among career teachers and results showed that second career teachers are more likely filled with satisfaction with their occupation compared to first career teachers.

4.5 Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

Organizational Citizenship Behaviours in the workplace will aid in the development of organizational individuals who will help one another, as well as assisting organizations in achieving effective performance (Khahan Na-nan, 2016). Healthcare companies are people-intensive, and technology cannot replace the requirement for manpower or human resources. Furthermore, they suffer a high rate of turnover as a result of work stress and a mismatch between demand and supply of qualified employees. As a result, they must constantly contend with a labour shortage in order to carry out day-to-day operations (Eeman Basu et al., 2017). Based on the above context, Organ (as cited in Eeman Basu et al., 2017) stated that it is critical for hospital administrators to understand the concept of organizational citizenship behaviour and to try to identify, attract, and retain those employees capable of exhibiting such behaviours for organisational functioning and effectiveness. Hence, it is certainly true that one of the most desired behaviours in organizations is Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (Freire & Gonçalves, 2021).

4.6 Social Exchange Theory (SET)

Yin, N. (2018) also added that according to the Social Exchange Theory (SET), workers in organizations believe that investing in high work engaging activities will result in high organizational rewards, or that investing in low work engaging activities will result in low organizational rewards, the employee-organization relationship is based on fair amounts of social exchange relationship, and employees are more likely to be actively engaging and generating task performance.

4.7 Broaden-And-Build Theory

Parul Malik and Pooja Garg (2017) included in their article that the broaden-and-build theory implies that organizational policies that provide autonomy, competency, and meaningfulness should increase pleasant emotion experiences among employees. Positive emotions such as elation and pride, on the other hand, broaden an individual's range of perceptions, resulting in the growth of personal resources, which include both physical and psychological resources over time.

4.8 Theoretical Framework

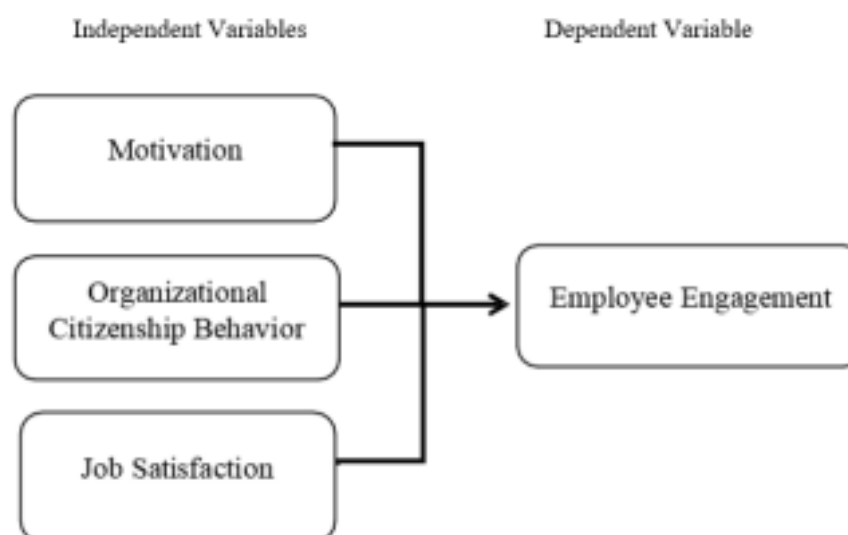


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

5. Research Methodology

With the Research Onion by Saunders (2017) as reference, this research applies a quantitative approach whereby it follows a positivism philosophy as the methodology and followed by deductive approaches. In terms of survey, the respondent's response is all measured statistically via questionnaires findings. All data are then run for various analysis using SPSS software.

Table 1: Disproportionate Sampling of Respondents

No	Category	Sample
1	Hospital	55
2	Clinic	46
3	Pharmacy	17
	Total	118

The disproportionate sampling of respondents are stated as above whereby the researcher will be distributing the questionnaires to a total of 118 respondents which broken down will be into three categories of healthcare facilities of hospital, clinic and pharmacy with numbers of 55, 46 and 17 respectively.

Table 2: Total Number of Facility in Perlis

No	Facility	Total
1	Jabatan Kesihatan Negeri	1
2	Hospital	1
3	Pejabat Kesihatan Daerah	1
4	Klinik Kesihatan	12
5	Klinik Desa	28
6	Klinik Pergigian	10
7	Farmasi	12

Healthcare workers in Perlis are chosen for this study. This covers the hospitals, several clinics and pharmacies in the area (Kangar). According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia, there is 1 private hospital, 1 government hospital, 1 state health department, 12 health clinics, 28 village clinics, 10 dental clinics and 12 pharmacies.

Table 3: Total Number of Healthcare Workers In Perlis

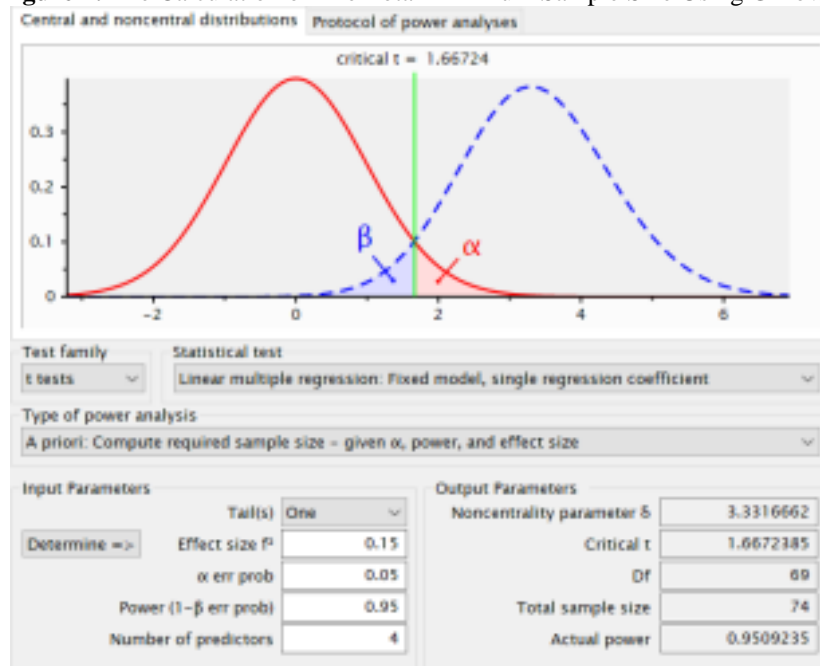
No	Bahagian/ Ptj	Tertinggi Khas	Pengurusan & Profesional	Pelaksana	Pegawai Perubatan	Penolong Pegawai Perubatan	Jururawat	Total
1	Bahagian Pengurusan	1	11	66	0	1	2	81
2	Bahagian Kesihatan Awam	0	34	18	19	4	3	78
3	Bahagian Perubatan	0	6	6	4	1	1	18

4	Bahagian Kesihatan Pergigian	0	76	249	0	0	0	325
5	Bahagian Perkhidmatan Farmasi	0	26	7	0	0	0	33
6	Bahagian Keselamatan Dan Kualiti Makanan	0	16	64	0	0	0	80
7	Bahagian Keselamatan Dan Kualiti Makanan	0	16	64	0	0	0	80
8	Pejabat Kesihatan Daerah	3	138	932	90	81	209	1453
	Total	12	654	2379	337	226	904	4512

The numbers of healthcare workers here are 4512. The sample size is 118 and the questionnaire has been distributed to answer the relationship between Motivation, Job Satisfaction and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour with Employee Engagement.

In this sampling selection, the researcher has obtained several data sets to be referred to and uses the table of size effect to determine the sample size.

Figure 2: The Calculation of The Total Minimum Sample Size Using G-Power



P A=0.05 Power=0.95		
High Effect Size = F Squared	=0.35	⇒ N=30
Medium High Effect Size =F Squared	=0.25	⇒ N=40
Medium Effect Size =F Squared	=0.15	⇒ N=65
Medium Low Effect Size =F Squared	=0.12	⇒ N=80

Table 4: The Effect for the Sample Size From Patrick Dattalo, 2008

Hence, as the last step, in order to determine the minimum, the total number of minimum sample size, the researcher uses the effect size as well as G-Power software. Thus. According to Krejcie and Morgan determination table as shown in Appendix H, 118 respondents were chosen as the sample size required for this study.

6. Results and Discussions

Demographics	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	48	40.7	40.7	40.7
Female	70	59.3	59.3	100.0
Total	118	100.0	100.0	

20-29 years old	43	36.4	36.4	36.4
30-39 years old	39	33.1	33.1	69.5
40-49 years old	24	20.3	20.3	89.8
50-59 years old	12	10.2	10.2	100.0
Total	118	100.0	100.0	
Less than 1 year	8	6.8	6.8	6.8
1-5 years	39	33.1	33.1	39.8
5-10 years	69	58.5	58.5	98.3
10-15 years	2	1.7	1.7	100.0
Total	118	100.0	100.0	
Hospital	55	46.6	46.6	46.6
Clinic	46	39.0	39.0	85.6
Pharmacy	17	14.4	14.4	100.0

Total	118	100.0	100.0	
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Table 5: Demographics

Variables	No. Of Item	Cronbach's Alpha	Indications
EE	10	0.885	Good
M	5	0.844	Good
JS	5	0.864	Good
OCB	6	0.877	Good

Note: EE: Employee Engagement, M: Motivation, JS: Job Satisfaction, OCB: Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

Table 6: Results of Reliability Tests

Variables	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
EE	118	3.9371	.53897
M	118	3.6831	.55305
JS	118	3.4440	.68422
OCB	118	3.7874	.60227

Note: EE: Employee Engagement, M: Motivation, JS: Job Satisfaction, OCB: Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

Table 7: Mean and Standard Deviation of Variables

	EE	M	JS	OCB
EE	1			.
M	.854**	1		
JS	.702**	.696**	1	
OCB	.716**	.734**	.462**	1

Variable	Beta	t-Ratio	p-Value	Hypothesis
M	.536	6.578	.000	Supported
JS	.229	3.683	.000	Supported
OCB	.217	3.290	.001	Supported

Note: EE: Employee Engagement, M: Motivation, JS: Job Satisfaction, OCB: Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

Table 8: The Result of Regression Analysis

Based on the results from SPSS, the results of Cronbach Alpha for the first independent variable (Motivation) is 0.844, second independent variables (Job Satisfaction) is 0.864 and the third independent variable (Organizational Citizenship Behaviour) is 0.877. All Cronbach's Alpha values indicates "Good" and this is due to most healthcare workers tend to relate more towards these variables especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. Next, is the descriptive analysis for both independent variable and dependent variable. The independent variables, firstly the mean results for Motivation is 3.6831, followed by the mean results for Job Satisfaction which is 3.4440 and lastly the mean results for Organizational Citizenship Behaviour which is 3.7874. For the dependent variable, which is Employee Engagement, the mean result is 3.9371. The correlation between Employee Engagement and Motivation is 0.854. This is due to healthcare workers having to be heavily self-motivated during the brink of Covid-19 pandemic. Healthcare workers such as doctors, nurses, medical officers and many more all need to overcome the burnout feeling by trying to keep themselves motivated especially during long working hours of overtime. Apart from that, the demographics too played a part of these results whereby younger healthcare workers especially from the 20-29 age group tend to be more motivated compared to the rest. The correlation between the Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction is 0.702. Job Satisfaction may differ among healthcare workers. Doctors are satisfied with their jobs if they successfully managed to perform surgery and save a patient especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, nurses on the other hand are more satisfied if they managed to care for their patients' needs and wants, a medical officer driving and ambulance is satisfied when they successfully drive a patient safely and on time into the hospital and many more. Next, the correlation between Employee Engagement and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour is 0.716. All healthcare workers have put in more significant effort to go the extra mile in order to cater to the spreading of the Covid-19 virus during the pandemic. As of the Regression Analysis, the coefficient of the study for Motivation and Job Satisfaction is both 0.000 while for Organizational Citizenship Behavior is 0.001.

7. Conclusions

These results are supported by the two theories of Social Exchange Theory and the Broaden-and-Build Theory. In terms of Social Exchange Theory, healthcare workers have chosen to engage more in their line of work during Covid-19 pandemic compared to pre-Covid times. Their high work engaging activities involves having long overtime working hours and around the clock patient care. The Broaden-and-Build Theory revolves more on the thoughts, activities and cognition. The healthcare workers in Kangar, Perlis needed to set their mindset right in order to perform better and engage amelioratory among their colleagues during the Covid-19 pandemic. Healthcare workers who consider the coronavirus Covid-19 as a health crisis which tends to be severe, will certainly feel the need and responsibility to put forth more personal attention, energy and efforts in order to keep their families, families as well as their own health and well-being away from the virus. (Liu et al., 2021) The coronavirus of Covid-19 has amplified the significance of pursuing a crisis-response mechanism in order to safeguard the health of the healthcare workers, thus, self-care, time-out for rest and breaks is highlighted. They are important especially for the healthcare workers on the frontline where their exposure of stress and burden are significantly very high. (Blake et al., 2020) Albeit, although the coronavirus of Covid-19 can trigger such emotional and cognitive exhaustion, healthcare workers with a higher sense of work direction tend to remain better positioned to recharge and refocus on their tasks (Liu et al., 2021).

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