

UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN PSYCHOSOCIAL SAFETY CLIMATE AND JOB DEMAND RESOURCES TOWARDS BURNOUT AMONG COMMUNITY COLLEGE STAFF IN PENINSULAR MALAYSIA

CHANG VUI SENG WILSON

FPSK(m) 2019 31



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By

CHANG VUI SENG WILSON

Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

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Ву

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January 2019

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Psychological hazards are one of the relevant areas in occupational health with many studies done on occupational stress. However, the extreme end of mental health which is burnout that has a more serious impact has not been much explored. Previous study has shown that 10 to 15% of the working population in the Netherlands suffer from the burnout that has a more detrimental effect compared to occupational stress. Therefore in this study, it was proposed that Psychosocial Safety Climate (PSC) act as a precursor to working conditions and its effects on employees' psychological well-being. Furthermore, PSC will decrease emotional exhaustion, particularly through job demands (bullying and emotional demands), and job resources (i.e social support). A cross-sectional survey was conducted and respondents were sampled through multistage sampling were based on the number of community colleges in Peninsular Malaysia, approximately 50 colleges were first randomly chosen and later staff from each selected colleges were further sampled through simple random sampling. Finally, a total of 425 employees from 45 organizations agreed to participate in the study. For statistical analysis, Hierarchical Linear Modeling software was used as it is able to test a multilevel relationship. It was found that PSC was negatively associated with workplace bullying (γ = -.13, SE = .03, P<.001) and emotional demands ($\gamma = -.17$, SE = .05, P<.01) and positively associated with social support (y = .16, SE = .02, P<.001). In addition, the relationship between PSC with burnout was mediated by workplace bullying (z=-3.61, SE=.01, p<.001), emotional demands (z=-3.18, SE=.01, p<.001) and social support (z=-6.86, SE=.01, p<.001). In conclusion, these finding on PSC would provide community colleges staff a better guidance and understanding about the concepts of PSC to improve the psychological health especially with regards to burnout.

Keywords: burnout, community college, Psychosocial Safety Climate, Workplace bullying

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

HUBUNGKAIT DIANTARA IKLIM PSIKOSOSIAL KESELAMATAN DAN SUMBER TUNTUTAN KERJA TERHADAP KELETIHAN EMOSI DI KALANGAN STAF KOLEJ KOMUNITI DI SEMENANJUNG MALAYSIA

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Bahaya psikologi adalah salah satu bidang yang berkaitan dalam kesihatan pekerjaan dimana terdapat kajian yang dilakukan terhadap stres pekerjaan. Walau bagaimanapun, kesihatan mental yang keterlaluan iaitu keletihan emosi, tidak banyak diterokai. Kajian terdahulu telah menunjukkan bahawa 10 hingga 15% daripada penduduk yang bekerja di Belanda mengalami keletihan emosi yang mempunyai kesan yang lebih menjejaskan berbanding tekanan kerja. Oleh itu kajian ini, telah mencadangkan bahawa Iklim Keselamatan Psikososial (PSC) bertindak sebagai pencetus kepada keadaan kerja dan kesannya terhadap kesejahteraan psikologi pekerja. Tambahan pula PSC akan mengurangkan keletihan emosi, terutamanya melalui tuntutan kerja (buli dan tuntutan emosi), dan sumber pekerjaan (sokongan sosial). Kajian rentas keratan telah dijalankan dan responden telah dipilih melalui pensampelan berperingkat berdasarkan jumlah kolej komuniti di Semenanjung Malaysia, dimana daripada 50 kolej pertama dipilih secara rawak dan kemudiannya staf dari setiap kolej yang terpilih telah diambil melalui persampelan rawak mudah. Di akhirnya, sejumlah 425 pekerja dari 45 organisasi bersetuju untuk mengambil bahagian dalam kajian ini. Bagi analisis statistik, perisian Pemodelan Linear Hierarki digunakan kerana ia dapat menguji hubungan yang berperingkat. Didapati, Iklim Keselamatan Psikososial berkait secara negatif dengan buli di tempat kerja ($\gamma = -.13$, SE = .03, P < .001) dan tuntutan emosi (y = -.17, SE = .05, P < .01) dan berkait secara positif dengan sokongan sosial (γ = .16, SE = .02, P <.001). Di samping itu, didapati bahawa buli di tempat kerja menjadi perantara didalam hubungan perkaitan Iklim Keselamatan Psikososial dengan keletihan emosi (z = -3,61, SE = .01, p < .001), tuntutan emosi (z = -3,18, SE = .01, p < .001) dan sokongan sosial (z = -6,86, SE = .01, p < .001). Sebagai kesimpulan, penemuan mengenai Iklim Keselamatan Psikososial akan memberi bimbingan dan pemahaman yang lebih baik mengenai konsep kepada staf kolej komuniti PSC untuk meningkatkan kesihatan psikologi terutamanya berkaitan dengan keletihan emosi.

Katakunci : Keletihan emosi, Kolej Komuniti, Psikososial Iklim Keselamatan, Buli di tempat kerja



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to my supervisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Anita Binti Abd. Rahman of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences at Universiti Putra Malaysia who despite her hectic schedules and commitments was always available and helpful. The door to Assoc Prof Dr. Anita office was always open whenever I ran into a trouble spot or had a question about my research or writing. Similarly, my most heartfelt appreciation to my co-supervisor to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hejar Binti Abd Rahman and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mohd Awang Bin Idris for the time spent to put us through at all stages of our research journey together.

I would also like to express my appreciation to all those who contributed in one way or another during the course of my program. My sincere thanks to going out to all the academic staff that assisted, encouraged and motivated me during my data collection in 50 community colleges in Malaysia.

Warmest thanks to my mother who have laid the foundation for what I am today and for their endless support and prayers. Finally, my sincere appreciation to my colleagues and friends who have supported me throughout my study especially Edi Rizal Bin Kassim who always accompany and support me. This accomplishment would not have been possible without them. Thank you.

This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BO Burnout

COPSOQ Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire

ED Emotional Demand

JCQ Job Content Questionnaire

PSC Psychosocial Safety Climate

JDR Job Demand Resources

OLBI Oldenburg Burnout Inventory

MBI Maslach Burnout Inventory

NAQ Negative Act Questionnaire

SD Standard Deviation

MOHE Ministry of Higher Education

HLM Hierarchy Linear Modeling

SPSS Statistical Package for Social Science

JKEUPM Jawatankuasa Etika UNiversiti Putra Malaysia

IPTA Institutsi Pengajian Tinggi Awam

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In tandem with rapid technology development and the era of internet, organization climate has been fundamentally fabricated as having communal perceptions among the organizational community; as per aspects of the organizational climate that inform the role of behavior, which certain facets are rewarded and supported in any organization by the members that reinforce the same philosophy (Reichers & Schneider, 1990; Schneider, Bowen, Ehrhart, & Holcombe, 2000).

Consequently, ongoing researchers have coined and presented the Psychosocial Safety Climate (PSC) as an element of organizational climate that braces well-being of workers in terms of psychosocial aspect and play an essential role in developing work environments, work cultures, as well working conditions. Psychosocial Safety Climate (PSC) is coined as to have shared perceptions of "policies, practices, and procedures for the perception of workers' psychological health and safety" (Dollard & Bakker, 2010) that relates to psychosocial factors at work. The word "shared perceptions" is one of the defining characteristics of organizational climate research, empirically analyzed by aggregating information collected from many employees into a different group level (i.e., organisation, team, unit) (Neal & Griffin, 2006).

According to Law et. al 2011, have pointed out that PSC at the organizational level demonstrates that organizational PSC lead marker of psychosocial hazards at work. Furthermore, work related to hazards such as harassment and bullying shows average that 24% are accepted mental stress claims in Australia (2007-2008). Psychosocial safety denotes to being free from psychosocial and social risk or harm. Many studies have been carried out to look at the aftermaths of workplace bullying towards psychological health problems, as for instance; the post-traumatic stress, depression, burnout, physical health, and others. In addition, (Thompson, Ph, Mazumdar, & Monk in 2009) and (M. a-L. Vartia, 2001) reported that bullying may cause stress and apprehension that could lead to sleep disturbance and ultimately sleep deprivation.

Likewise, studies have been carried out that organizational PSC and bullying was negative significant (Law et al., 2011). Organizational PSC has a negative connection with job demands such as work pressure, workload, emotional demand and workplace bullying (Dollard & Bakker, 2010). The relationship between PSC and workplace bullying can be explained by Salin, 2003 model of enabling, motivating and precipitating factors. Generally, an organization

with a powerful PSC (i.e., where employees share the perception that their psychological health is valued and protected) is likely to encourage employee participation in decision-making, especially with respect to psychological well-being choices. Managers would also have a powerful commitment to take action to avoid bullying and to deal quickly and efficiently with bullying behaviours that occurred before the continuing trend escalated. Furthermore, considering the importance placed on psychological health, employees should feel more comfortable talking about threats well being and there would be mechanisms in place to deal with the problems occur. As such, energy imbalances can be minimized and it is unlikely that staff will be unhappy with the climate or leadership group as they may have a the high degree of participation and work control/latitude. Therefore, it is unlikely that powerful PSC organizations will provide fertile soil to allow bullying.

In the relation of motivating factors, high levels of competition or rewards systems for bullying behaviour are unlikely to exist within a strong PSC organization as these factors threaten employees' psychological safety and well being. In other words, when PSC is high the perceived returns of engaging in bullying are likely to be quite low. Finally, when precipitating factors (i.e. organisational changes) are present, enhanced internal competition and typical emotions of reduced job security, enhanced inner competition, threat, powerlessness and frustration (Salin, 2003) are likely to be reduced as employees stay aware of changes and are given the opportunity to express their issues and contribute to decision-making. Overall, a strong PSC is predicted to decrease the incidence of workplace bullying by minimizing and/or removing the enabling, motivating and precipitating factors needed for workplace bullying to happen together.

Emotional demands are concerned with emotionally charged intercommunication at work environment, people and work practices itself (Heuven et. al, 2006) that are thought to be a relevant source of job strain. In government service, similar to this study, employees are basically expected to practice positive emotions and suppress negative emotions in interactions with clients or students in transferring knowledge and skills. In a teaching institution, lecturers being the employees are likewise logically to show positive feeling in all aspects, particularly when interacting with demanding or unfriendly persons, however, in reality, it is not always the case where certain interactions may elicit negative emotions The negative association between emotionally demanding situations and employee well-being may be elucidated by the health impairment process of the job demands-resources (JD-R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Burnout is an occupationally-related stress syndrome which primarily seen among those who had a job. Initially, the job was considered a good factor as it promotes human economy, however, research of the past has shown the dark side of having a job which is the core dimensions of burnout; lethargy and cynicism or withdrawal from work. Based on definition by Demerouti, Bakker, Vardakou, & Kantas, 2003 that describe exhaustion as an end spectrum form of fatigue as a consequence of chronic and heightened physical, effective, and cognitive exertion generated from long term exposure to specific working conditions. While disengagement refers to breaking away oneself from one's work, work objects or work content which reflects an expanded reaction of an emotional, cognitive, and behavioural dismissal of the job and it depicts occupational disbelief.

1.2 Problem Statement

Work is supposed to have a well-known positive impact on employee's economic and productivity, however, it is now known that work can also cause negative effects employees' health with one of it is burnout. Burnout is becoming a relevant occupational related problem in this millennia and has even been considered as a special type of work stress that eventually compromise or affect the competency of ones to work (Salvagioni et al., 2017). In the previous study has shown that 10 to 15% of the working population in the Netherlands suffer from the burnout that has a more detrimental effect compared to occupational stress. This issue is somewhat preventable as for an employee to experience burnout, it needs a long time to develop and with early intervention may resolve the problem. This scenario can be seen in community college staff wheres staffs are needed to prepare for the new intake every Mac, July and November. Besides that, students background is the most challenging step. Marginal academic achievement from the SPM leavers is the most challenging that face by the lecturer.

One psychological factor that is associated with burnout is workplace bullying where many researchers have argued that there is a significant association between exposure to workplace bullying and health as well as well-being. The incidence of bullying is a global phenomenon, heartrending all countries, professions, and employees: 83% of European respondents reported that they had been emotionally or physically oppressed; 65% in the Americas; and 55% in Asia. Psychological health problems such as psychological dissatisfaction, depression, burnout, anxiety, aggression, psychosomatic and musculoskeletal health complaints have been reported in many studies. Bullying or mobbing is related to situations where someone is subjected to chronic, recurrent, ad serious negative or hostile acts and behaviour that are annoying and oppressive and by this definition, being bullied at work can definitely be a valid source of social stress at work like this in a way, denotes that individuals fail to defend themselves mentally. Example forms of bullying in a negative way which may be subtle yet obvious are being ignored or the other extreme end of being targeted constantly, being refused to talk or listen and belittling of the target's work. A local study has shown that physical and mental stress was closely

associated with workplace bullying that causes a plunge in job satisfaction and decreased productivity (Yahaya et al., 2009). Apart from that, a study was carried out in comparing between the psychosocial safety climate of public sectors and private sectors into occupationally related psychological ill-health (Zapf, 1999) where it showed that public sectors were riskier than the private sectors. In his study, it was reported that high bullying prevalence within the health sector, educational sector whereas teachers to be a low-risk group. Some researchers have justified in their research where it stated that targets of bullying often lack social support from coworkers and supervisors as well as family members.

There are many types of research that studied regarding workplace bullying and burnout and its related factors such as bullying issues. Most of the organization in Malaysia do not have the policy or practices and procedures to overcome workplace bullying by enacted PSC in the organizations. Therefore in-depth study needs to be done to identify the burden of workplace burnout and its related effect in an organization as over the years mental health has become a relevant occupational health hazard There are limited studies on the relationship between Psychosocial Safety Climate, workplace bullying, emotional demand and social support that can affect the productivity of staff. Therefore this will be able to determine the prevalence burnout among Community College staff and identify its risk factor that can be detrimental to staff as well as highlighting its protective factors that can improve PSC.

1.3 Significant of Study

In Malaysia, Psychosocial Safety Climate (PSC) studies are still needed and remain relevant to this date. Having a strong PSC in theory and practice should ensure the psychological health and safety of workers can be protected. With this study, the researcher can provide the baseline information with the studied factors as well as the prevalence of burnout among respondents from the community colleges. At the same time, the relationship between PSC and its related factors to burnout can also be known with determining what are the modifiable factors and social support factors that can be highlighted to add more information towards organizational development.

Eventually through predictive analysis, prioritizing significant factors that were found from this research can be used in recommending the organization to promote and strengthen PSC level between coworker and supervisor towards the betterment of the psychology organizations. Additionally, it is hopeful that all findings will be able to provide comprehensive prevalent information of the relationship between Psychosocial Safety Climate (PSC), Job Demand (e.g workplace bullying and emotional demand) and job resources (e.g social support) with psychosocial health problems for future research.

1.4 Research Questions

In order for this research to achieve its intention, the following research questions have been outlined:

- i. Is organizational climate (i.e. Psychosocial Safety Climate, PSC) influence the several processes (workplace bullying, emotional demand, and social support) at the individual level?
- ii. Is Psychosocial Safety Climate (PSC) able to predict burnout at the organization level?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

Therefore the objectives to answer the research questions was proposed as below:-

1.5.1 General Objective

To determine the relationship between organizational climate (i.e Psychosocial Safety Climate) towards workplace bullying, emotional demand, social support and burnout among the staff of Community College in Peninsular Malaysia.

1.5.2 Specific Objective

At the Organizational Level

- i. To determine the relationship of PSC towards workplace bullying, emotional demand and social support.
- ii. To determine the relationship of workplace bullying, emotional demand and social support as a mediator between Psychosocial Safety Climate and burnout.
- iii. To determine the relationship between PSC and burnout

At the Individual Level

 To determine the relationship of workplace bullying, emotional demand and social support towards burnout.

1.6 Research Hypothesis

1.6.1 At the Organizational Level

- **H**_a**1:** There is a significant relationship between Psychosocial Safety Climate and workplace bullying, emotional demand, and social support.
- H_a2 : There is a significant relationship workplace bullying, emotional demands, and social support as mediator between psychosocial safety climate and burnout.
- H_a3: There is a significant relationship between Psychosocial Safety Climate and burnout.

1.6.2 At Individual Level

H₂4: There is a significant relationship between workplace bullying, emotional demand and social support with burnout.

1.7 Conceptual Definition

i. Psychosocial Safety Climate

Psychosocial Safety Climate is defined as specific dimensions of an organizational climate that referring to the sharing perceptions regarding "policies, practices and procedures to protect the worker in terms of psychological health and safety (Dollard & Bakker, 2010).

ii. Workplace Bullying

Workplace Bullying defined as aggressive behaviour that repeatedly inflicts imbalance of power where the victim is unable or feels uneasy to defend himself/herself (Smith & Ananiadou, 2003).

iii. Emotional Demand

Emotional Demand concern about emotionally charged interactions at work (e.g colleague miss behaviour, Heuven, Bakker, Schaufeli, & Huisman, 2006) that are considered to be important to the source of job strain.

iv. Social Support

In this study, Social Support is referring to straight forward resources that function in achieving work goals. With this instrumental support from colleagues can help to get the work done in time

v. Burnout

Burnout defined as combinations lack of personal control, insufficient rewards, the absence of fairness and conflicting values. (Azeem & Nazir, 2008).

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My name is Chang Vui Seng Wilson who was born on 31st October 1978 in Sandakan, Sabah, I completed my secondary education (Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia) in 1995 with moderate results. Then, I pursued my three-year diploma in Mechanical Engineer in 1999 from Politeknik Kota Kinabalu, PKK. After graduating, I pursued my Degree of Bachelor of Technical & Vocational Education from Kolej Universiti Teknologi Tun Hussien Onn (KUiTTHO), presently known as Universiti Tun Hussien Onn Malaysia (UTHM). In August 2010, I enrolled as a Master candidate in the field of Occupational Safety and Health in Universiti Putra Malaysia under the Ministry of Higher Education Scholarship (HLP). During my candidature, I have attended several workshops organized by the local organization to enhance my knowledge in research and study field. In 2012, I attended a workshop on Managing the Research Journey Seminar conducted by a researcher from the University of Otago, New Zealand. At the same year, I manage to attend a seminar in Managing the Writing Process conducted by the local organizer. I participated in the "2nd Seminar on Developing" & Sustaining Safety Culture in Malaysia" seminar by Universiti Malaysia Pahang in 2012. In 2013, she had an oral presentation during the National Psychology Seminar II 2013 in Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. Currently, I am preparing to publish journals related to his Master research.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

Conferences

Chang Vui Seng Wilson, AR Anita, AR Hejar, M.A. Idris, Multi Level analysis of Psychosocial Safety Climate in Burnout and Production Deviance among Commnity College Employees in Peninsular Malaysia. National Psychology Seminar II 2013 in Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah 07-08 November 2013.

Publication

Chang Vui Seng Wilson, AR Anita, AR Hejar, M.A. Idris. Psychosocial Safety Climate, Workplace Bullying and symptoms of Burnout. International Journal of Public Health and Clinical Sciences (submitted)



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