

HOW AFFECTIVE WELL-BEING MODERATES THE ETHICAL WORK CLIMATE AND WORK ENGAGEMENT RELATIONSHIP IN MALAYSIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

^{1*}Abdul Ghani Kanesan Abdullah, ²Abdul Jali Ali, ³Yokgan Thanasinge

^{1,2,3}School of Educational Studies, University Sains Malaysia, Penang

*Corresponding author's E-mail: agk@usm.my

ABSTRACT: *This study aimed to determine the influence of ethical work climate on work engagement among Malaysian secondary school teachers and the role of affective well-being as moderator. Data was collected from 348 school teachers from a total of 39 national secondary school across Penang Island of Malaysia. The findings revealed that there is a positive and significant effect of ethical work climate on work engagement and affective well-being. Meanwhile ethical work climate also have a positive and significant effect on affective well-being. And finally, the findings also show that affective well-being attributed a significantly moderation effect on the relationship between ethical work climate and teacher work engagement. Thus this study has contributed to several implications. Firstly, this study represents the theoretical or empirical research regarding the influence of ethical work climate on teacher work engagement and affective well-being in school. Secondly, despite the fact that affective well-being is an important factor which could enhance teacher work engagement, these findings also have added value to educational management literatures since is no empirical research done to prove this, especially in Malaysian context. As a conclusion, this study suggests that school administrators should fully exploit the role of affective well-being and promote a supportive ethical work climate in order to increase teachers' work engagement and performance.*

Keywords: Affective Well-Being, Ethical Work Climate, Work Engagement

INTRODUCTION

Work is something that is done by a person as a profession, deliberately to earn an income. Work can also be interpreted as energy that produces by a person to meet certain goals. According to [1,2], work is planned activities and the capabilities to change physical activity or brain activity to fulfil their need in life, and the purpose of work is to live [3]. Within this perspective, to do work effectively and efficiency, ethical work climate will be one of the reasons, which make this happen [4,5]. Ethical work climate refer to part of organizational climate, which employers' collective understanding of organizational policies, practices, and procedures, as well as patterns of interaction and behaviors [6,7,4]. The organizations always need employees who are very much connected to their work, willing and able to invest themselves fully in their roles and committed to high quality performance standards [6]. Therefore, work engagement is another important factor which help a person to perform effectively. Work engagement is defined as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption [8].

In Malaysian context, education system is changing dynamically and this has caused teachers to play an important roles in creating an ethical work climate and engaged cognitively, physiologically, and affectively, committed to and satisfied in organization [9]. Research evidence shows that there is a positive significant relationship between ethical work climate and work engagement [10,11,12]. Hence the research on both these premises; ethical work climate and work engagement in school highlights the importance of school leadership in the aspect of developing successful environment and changes in school.

Relatively, in order to enhance and nurture successful transformation and excellence in schools, the school administrators are encouraged to create affective well-being, at workplace, a form of control on individual mind to maximizing their work performance and achieving their own

potential work with teachers [13]. Hence, it is believed that affective well-being as a construct would enhance work outcomes, including increased productivity, and higher quality of work [14]. Nevertheless, the emerging constructs such as affective well-being which brings teacher to engaged at work, transform the schools from merely a mission-driven organizations into a place where individuals and collective well-being are encouraged and integrated into day-to-day work life.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to [5] ethical work climate organization is the shared perceptions of what is ethically correct behavior and how ethical issues should be handled. Meanwhile [15] defined ethical work climate as a reflects on how ethical issues in an organization are handled, which is communicated through organizational policies, procedures and practices. Research by [10,12,16] has found that there is a positive relationship between ethical work climate and work engagement. Engaged employees are enthusiastic and intensely involved in their work and able to bring their full capacity in their work to solve problems [1]. Moreover, they perform well and commit and strive to reach challenging goals [1]. This give true meaning especially for teachers because engaged teachers are important for at least two reasons. First, research finding have showed that the more teachers engaged in their work, the better the pupils perform and the better they are prepared for future [7]. Second, if teachers are engaged, they are less willing to quit their jobs [17]. More specifically, a global study in which teachers working in 25 countries including Malaysia were sampled showed the reason will be teachers are concerned about the effects of a high workload, stress, poor working environments on their job satisfaction and their effectiveness [17]. Work engagement can help teachers to deal with high workload and accompanying stress [4].

According to Kesebir [17], affective well-being reviewed in

two perspective which are hedonism and eudaimonism view. According to hedonism, happiness exists from effect of experience of individual at workplace [18]. Whereas, in the view of eudaimonism happiness happen through the involvement of a person while doing something noble, moral and produced meaningful progress [19]. The combination of these two views, Tomer [18] create a model of happiness which have three elements, namely set point (personal characteristics inherited), hedonic (personal capital, consumption, health, economy, and social relationships) and eudaimonic (experience and realization of human potential). In school context, every teacher wants happiness at work to enable them to work happily. The fact is that not all teachers can feel the happiness (positive mood). This is because process of education transformation which demanded changes and reforms in schools. Teachers are the first to receive impact on the transformation. One of the effect of this transformation is the work of teachers which is considered to be routine has been changed to become 'multitasking' [20]. Now the work of teachers is not only focused on the delivery of teaching and learning but more workloads to be done in from time to time. Hence, all uncertainties work will lead to emotional anxiety that would interfere the teachers. Therefore, teachers need to stay emotionally positive or always feel safe in the workplace to address the challenge of transforming education. Through happiness at work, teachers able to contribute and put full involvement on their work. Feeling of well-being in the workplace that makes teachers always put happiness in their face will directly affect the enjoyment of students during the lessons. Feeling of well-being can also stimulate innovative behavior in teachers and this can help teachers to add more new ideas in their pedagogy [18] to ensure excellence among students in all aspects which work towards educational goals.

Past research also showed that work engagement has a positive relationship with affective well-being [21]. This means that high levels of work engagement correlate with high levels of affective well-being. In [21] study, suggested that factors like work engagement [10], lead to affective well being. But, there is no research done within ethical work climate and affective well-being. Thus, this study employs affective well-being as a moderator to test if it changes the strength and direction of relationship between ethical work climate and work engagement.

AIM OF THIS STUDY

In total, the literature review reveals that ethical work climate is strongly related to work engagement, but there is no empirical research done to prove this, especially in Malaysian context. Meanwhile, there was also no research done elsewhere to prove that the relationship between ethical work climate and work engagement is moderated by affective well-being. Therefore, this study is exploratory in nature that attempts to establish the relationship between ethical work climate (EWC) and work engagement (WE), and also to establish the moderating effects of affective well-being (AWB) on the relationship between ethical work climate (EWC) and work engagement (WE) in Malaysian schools.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Three null hypotheses were constructed to test the hypotheses at p level of $<.05$, the hypothesis are;

- H1: There is a positive and significant relationship between ethical work climate (EWC) with work engagement (WE)
- H2: There is a positive and significant relationship ethical work climate (EWC) and affective well-being (AWB)
- H3: There is a significant moderating influence of affective well-being (AWB) on the relationship between EWC and WE among secondary school teachers.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Participants and sampling: Simple random sampling was used to gather data for this study. Data were collected from 348 school teachers from a total of 39 national secondary school across Penang Island. In each school, the researchers personally contact a member of top management team (school principal), asking for cooperation and permission to distribute and collect questionnaire. The number of teachers queried in each schools range between 7 and 20. Only individuals (teachers) with school tenure of more than 2 years take part in the study, as this appears to be the minimum period necessary for people to gain a reliable impression of their organizations.

Descriptive findings reported that females teachers account for 68.2%; mean age is 39.5 years (standard deviation: 9.8); mean organizational tenure is 6.6 years (SD: 5.9 years), mean teaching experience is 4.09 (SD: .82).

Measures

Work engagement. Work engagement inventory developed by [4] was utilized to measure teachers work engagement in school (WE) in this study. The inventory comprises three dimensions: vigor, absorption and dedication. This construct was tested by using 17 item on five-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) "strongly disagree" to (5) "strongly agree". Cronbach's α was .80.

Ethical work climate. For this study, teachers' perceptions of ethical work climate (EWC) were measured using an instrument developed by [15]. This construct was examined by using 34 items. EWC comprises four dimensions: moral sensitivity, moral judgment, moral motivation and moral character. The items were measured on five-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) "strongly disagree" to (5) "strongly agree". Cronbach's α was .87

Affective well-being. To investigate teachers' affective well-being (AWB), the researcher used a measurement instrument developed by [22]. This construct was examined by fifth teen items. The AWB comprises five dimensions namely optimism, trust, compassion, integrity, and forgiveness. The items were measured on a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) "never" to (7) "always". Cronbach's α was .86.

Control variables. In recent study, we controlled for gender, age, organizational tenure and teaching experience due their inter-relationship that could lead to task domain expertise or knowledge, which in turn could a play role in determining affective well being.

Analytic approach. The data were analysed at the individual level by SPSS and AMOS 20th version. A confirmatory 2nd-order factor analysis (CFA) was applied to verify all the three construct (WE, EWC and AWB) merged in a single factor.

Discriminant validity between the three constructs

The study uses 2nd-order confirmatory factor analysis to compare the fit indices of three factor models covering the WE, EWC and AWB constructs. Thus considering that WE (merging 3 dimensions as a single factor); EWC (merging 5 dimensions as a single factor), and AWB (merging 5

dimensions as a single factor). The measurement model through CFA, which indicated a good fit ($\chi^2 = 816.9$, $df=522$, $GFI= .895$, $AGFI=.890$; $NFI=.958$, $CFI=.917$ and $RMSEA=.062$). Thus it can be concluded that the results as shown in Table 1 indicated that model adaptability was satisfactory. Discriminant validity was also tested to determine the extent of distinctness for each construct. Table 2 shows the correlations among construct were smaller to caused multi collinearity between the research constructs. Results on Table 2 also shows that EWC, WE and AWB were correlated positively among the constructs.

Table 1: Reliability of constructs and factor loadings of indicators

Construct	Indicators	2 nd -order factor model				
		Loadings	AVE	MSV	ASV	Cronbach/CR
Work Engagement	WE1	.649	.501	.356	.304	.809/.81
	WE2	.678				
	WE3	.909				
Ethical Work Climate	EWC1	.880	.606	.604	.391	.869/.870
	EWC2	.823				
	EWC3	.617				
	EWC4	.925				
Affective Wellbeing	AW1	.784	.591	.237	.210	.861/.863
	AW2	.748				
	AW3	.804				
	AW3	.895				
	AW4	.942				

Note: n=348. All loadings were significant at $p < .001$

Table 2: Correlations Between Variables

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	Gender	-						
2.	Age	.04	-					
3.	Org.Tenure	-.51**	-.48**	-				
4.	Experience	.32**	-.15*	-.19**	-			
5.	EWC	.02	-.02	.04	.06	-		
6.	WE	.04	.05	.10	.07	.50**	-	
7.	AWB	-.07	-.09	-.02	-.17*	.44**	.49**	-

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

FINDINGS

To test the direct effects of EWC and AWB on WE, Hierarchical regression analysis was conducted. *H1* anticipated that EWC was positively and significantly associated with WE. The results form Table 3 shows that EWC as perceived by teachers has a positive and significant effect on WE ($\beta=.36; p < .01$). Therefore, *H1* was supported. Meanwhile *H2* predicted that AWB was positively and significantly related to teachers' WE. The findings declares that AWB as perceived by teachers positively and significantly impacts teachers' WE ($\beta= .15; p < .01$). *H2* thus, was supported. *H3* anticipated that the moderating effects of AWB. Therefore, hierarchical regression analysis was deployed to test the degree to which AWB moderates the relationship between EWC and WE in this research. To examine the moderating effects, procedure suggested by [23] was used. Table 3, shows that the interaction of EWC with AWB ($\beta=.43; p > .01$) has resulted change on ' ΔR^2 ' by 4

percent and produce a significant value of F for the WE. This findings explains that the interaction variable has led to an increase in the number of variances involved significantly in explaining WE and this result enables the AWB. Figure 1 shows the plot of the significant interaction term. As presented, the association effects between EWC and WE is stronger when teachers have high rather than low perception of AWB. This findings recommend that *H3* is supported, and WE in this research. To examine the moderating effects, procedure suggested by [23] was used. Table 3, shows that the interaction of EWC with AWB ($\beta=.43; p > .01$) has resulted change on ' ΔR^2 ' by 4 percent and produce a significant value of F for the WE. This findings explains that the interaction variable has led to an increase in the number of variances involved significantly in explaining WE and this result enables the AWB.

Table 3: Hierarchical regression analysis results

Control variables	WE		
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Gender	.03	-.05	-.05
Age	-.06	.09	.09
Org.Tenure	.04	.08	.10
Experience	-.16	-.07	-.09
Independent Variable			
EWC	.36**	.36**	.40**
Moderator			
AWB	-	.15**	.26**
Interaction Variable			
EWC X AWB	-	-	.43**
F value	15.26**	12.89**	7.36**
R ²	.21	.26	.29
ΔR ²	-	.05	.04

**sig at p<.01

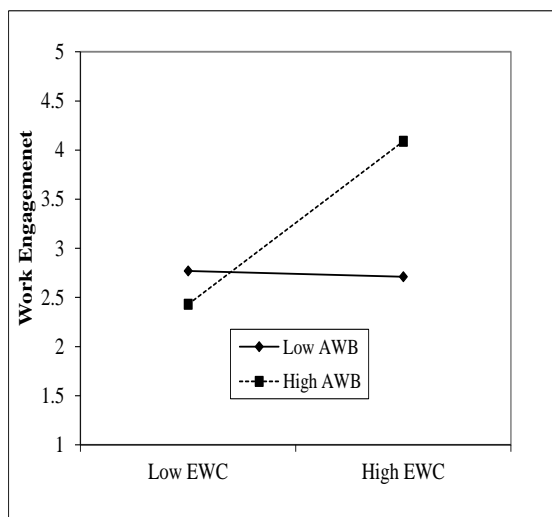


Figure 1: Scree pots of the moderating effect

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATION AND CONCLUSION

Total teachers work engagement can only be achieved if there is ethical work climate been practice and a supportive affective well-being climate in the workplace [4]. This study contributes to the literature indicating that ethical work climate has a positive impact on teacher work engagement. The role of ethical work climate is significant for work engagement, because when moral judgment is high, employee feel free and peace because they will experience fairness and security [24], thus they have high willingness to put extra effort, give better performance and perform the task successfully [15].

On the other hand, the findings also revealed that there is a significant effect between ethical work climate and affective well-being are consistent with the findings of studies by [4,7,8]. This shows that engagement is an effective-motivational state of work-related well being and in order to achieve this, teachers should have trust, confident, good school climate and contribution which drivers toward

work engagement. [2,12,18] found that affective well-being at workplace which individual and environment contributes to one’s work engagement. A supportive ethical work climate and affective well-being at work place is vital to advance and enhance teachers work engagement. The positive and significant moderation role by affective well-being on the relationship between ethical work climate and work engagement were found in this study. In this case, teachers able to engaged well because there is high ability of an individual to follow-through ethical course of actions that can increase vigorous and dedication level of teachers by having positive affective well-being. Affective well-being here refer to teachers having good relationship among colleagues with reduce conflict, more cooperation, and appreciate the value set by organization [21]. However, [16] also says that in a high level of ethical climate organization, teachers are willing to look after the welfare of others and having good relationship with them, commit to moral standard, and follow societal value [4.8]. Besides that, if there is more cooperation and good relationship among teachers can help them to gain more experience by sharing idea and suggestions. Dedication is the result of individual identification with the work and meaningful experience gained while working [16]. In sum, the findings of this study has contributed some suggestions for workplace implications in Malaysia. It also contributed to the volume of scholarly work focusing on ethical work climate, work engagement and affective well-being in school settings that still remains small. It also suggest that these fields have many gaps to be filled theoretically and empirically. The finding also shows that the management in most of the secondary schools in Malaysia did not aware on important of ethical work climate and affective well-being in school to produce a high work engagement among secondary school teachers. Thus, school principals must ensure teachers practices high level of ethical work climate and affective well-being in school so that teacher work engagement can be improvement. Besides that, principal must also make sure there is no ethical problem happen among teachers. This may cause problems to other teachers as well in ways to reduce their work engagement. Furthermore, principal must create happiness at workplace such as giving freedom to teachers, listen to their problems and views. These situations will contributed to happiness for teachers and happiness environment at workplace will be able to be achieved. As a conclusion, the results of this study show that ethical work climate has a positive and significant relationship on both the affective well-being and work engagement in Malaysian secondary schools. Furthermore, the findings of this study indicated that teachers’ perceptions on affective well-being have a moderating effect on the relationships between ethical work climate and teachers’ work engagement. This suggests that people in management positions need to provide enough space to create ethical work climate and affective well-being in order to have a positive impact on teachers’ engagements. The results of this study corroborate these ideas. However, to generalize these results, additional empirical investigation is needed in the context of overall Malaysian schools.

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