

ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH, MINDFULNESS, AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT IN MALAYSIAN CHINESE PRIMARY SCHOOL FROM FEMALE TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE

^{1*}Abdul Ghani Kanesan Abdullah,²AlAmin Mydin,³Siti Noor Ismail,⁴Abdul Aziz,⁵Kinnery Wong, Z.H.

^{1,2,5}School of Educational Studies, University Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia

³School of Education, Universiti Utara Malaysia

⁴Universitas Islam Negeri, Malang, Indonesia

*Correspondence: agk@usm.my

ABSTRACT: *The main aim of this study was to investigate the influence of organizational health on school mindfulness and teachers' organizational commitment to Malaysian Chinese primary school female teachers perspective. In addition, the study also intended to investigate the mediating influence of school mindfulness on the relationship between organizational health and teachers' organizational commitment. A total of 306 teachers were randomly selected from 50 national-type Chinese primary schools in a Northern state of Peninsular Malaysia and data was collected from respondents by using a set of structured questionnaires. Research findings revealed that organizational health and teachers' organizational commitment is at a high level. On the other hand, school mindfulness is at a below average level. The results also found out that there is a significant influence of organizational health on teachers' organizational commitment and school mindfulness. Finally, the findings showed that school mindfulness has a significant mediating influence on the relationship between organizational health and teachers' organizational commitment. This study is able to fill the gap of human resource management in education studies in the local context. Meanwhile, this study showed that there is a need for school leaders to use mindfulness as an approach to increase school mindfulness through mindfulness programs for school leaders and positive reinforcement of organizational health and mindfulness to encourage teachers to be more committed.*

Keywords: Organizational Health, Mindfulness, Organizational Commitment, Female Teachers

INTRODUCTION

Current reforms in Malaysia's education has noted that the traditional roles and everyday jobs of Malaysian teachers has been reviewed and redefined in efforts to enhancing the quality of Malaysia's education in various aspects including the development of teachers' profession, such as implementing the school-based in-service training to enhance teachers' organizational commitment in order to achieve better performance for their students [1]. These efforts inadvertently nurtured mindfulness in teachers but its effect is not obvious due to the lack of research literature in the local setting. Previous studies have shown that Malaysian teachers tend to have a moderate commitment level towards the organization, teaching profession and students' learning outcome [2,3]. They also stated that teachers' organizational commitment is affected by leadership practices, school management, and psychological empowerment. Besides this, previous local study also has shown that teachers' professional behaviour is the best indicator to increase the level of teachers' commitment [4,5], the teachers' professional behaviour is similar to the mindful behaviour of teachers that explained by [6] to which teachers have the qualities of flexibility, vigilance, openness, and the ability to break set in continuously seeking and scans for subtle change that cause trouble. Furthermore, [7] have noted that a healthy school is one which the technical, managerial, and institutional levels are in harmony, thus, it can be explained that a healthy and mindful organization motivates teachers to have organizational commitment. Although there are very little studies to be found regarding mindfulness in education context given this juncture, it is crucial to understand the relationship between organizational health and mindfulness on teachers' organizational commitment especially the mediating influence of mindfulness on the relationship between this two variables. Research regarding organizational health, mindfulness and teachers' organizational commitment is mostly found in non-educational setting [8], as such the relevant studies are lacking research, especially in the Malaysian context. Therefore, this

study fills the gap of human resource management of educational studies in Malaysian Chinese primary school context which would enhance the present study of human resource management in an educational setting.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many studies have been conducted on organization health the concept of organization health does not have a clear definition that researchers agreed upon. Although many researchers have evinced their own approaches in the definition of organization health, nevertheless the mostly used conceptualization of organizational health is defined by [7,9]. [9] defines that the word 'health' in an organization is used to describe the schools' climate [10], and a healthy organization is an organization that not only survives in its environment but continues to grow using its abilities to cope with difficulties and surviving in the long run [7,11,12,13]. In general, organizational health is defined as the ability of an organization to adapt to its environment, create harmony among its members and achieve its goals [14,15,16]. Meanwhile, most of the studies of mindfulness are focusing on the research of psychotherapy and health care, especially in treating the behavioural and mental health of patients [17,18]. However, in recent years, mindfulness is a burgeoning interest among educational researcher, [14] sees mindfulness as a paradox that viewed problems as opportunities for growth in the organization. Therefore, a mindful organization is highly to be a healthy organization, as concluded by [19] that the mindfulness, collegial leadership and professional teacher behaviour are stronger when teachers are treated as professional colleagues by the school leaders whom demonstrates a democratic and open leadership style. Organizations, either public or private are alike in setting up and accomplishing their own goal by using people of diverse backgrounds both skilled and unskilled to exert their energies towards the accomplishment of their goals [20]. A successful organization mostly consists of highly committed employees that are willing to put in their efforts in improving and

accomplishing the goal of an organization. Many research has shown that the success of the organization is highly depends on the commitment level of employees [21,22,23]. Thus, teachers' commitment is highly needed by the school in order to accomplish the school's goals.

Previous studies found that organizational health and institutional integrity is associated with organizational commitment [24,25]. Meanwhile, school mindfulness research in the context of Malaysia is still at its infancy, the most recent study of mindfulness in Malaysia shows that well-being among university and faculty trust is the best predictor of faculty mindfulness faculty trust in the principal, thus they concluded that faculty trust and school [26]. Meanwhile, [27,28] found that teachers that had been trained through mindfulness programme have a higher level of mindfulness and commitment. Research regarding organizational health, mindfulness, and teachers' organizational commitment is mostly found in the research of profit organization (non-educational setting) [8,25] as such the relevant studies are lacking of research evidence especially in Malaysia context. Therefore, this study fills the gap of human resource management of education studies in Malaysia context which would enhance the present study of human resource management in an education setting.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main aim of the study is to investigate the influence of organizational health and mindfulness on teachers' organizational commitment in Malaysian Chinese primary school from female teachers' perspective. The specific objectives of this study are:-

- a. to identify the level of school organizational health, school mindfulness and teachers' organizational commitment in Malaysian Chinese primary school.
- b. to identify the main effects of organizational health on teachers' organizational commitment in Malaysian Chinese primary school.
- c. to explore the mediating effect of school mindfulness on the relationship between organizational health and teachers' organizational commitment in Malaysian Chinese primary school.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

In order to answer the research questions, three main hypotheses were designed and would be tested at a significant level of $p < .05$.

The hypotheses constructed for this study are as follow:

- H1: There is a significant positive influence of organizational health on teachers' organizational commitment
- H2: There is a significant positive influence of organizational health on the organizational mindfulness
- H3: There is a significant mediating effect of school mindfulness on the relationship between organizational health and teachers'

organizational commitment

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data for the research was obtained from 306 trained female teachers randomly selected from 50 public Chinese primary schools in a state of Northern Peninsular Malaysia. All the respondents have at least 3 years of teaching experience in the current schools. Regarding age, all the respondents are with a mean of 41.27 years old. In terms of teaching experience, the respondents ranged from a minimum of 4 years to a maximum of 37 years with a mean of 16.52 years.

A set of the questionnaire is used to obtain data from respondents. The adopted version of the Organizational Health Inventory for Elementary Schools (OHI-E) originated from [29] were used to measure organizational health by using 11-items to access school health in 2 dimensions: Collegial Leadership, and Teacher Affiliation. The items in this instrument are measured by using a Likert-type scale with a 5-point scale from (1) rarely occurs to (5) very frequently occurs. Meanwhile, the translated version of School Mindfulness Scale (M-Scale) by [30] was used to measure organizational mindfulness which comprises of 7 items. The measure is highly reliable with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from .88 to .92 for this study. Finally, adopted [31] Teachers' Organizational Commitment in Educational Organizational instrument was used to measure teachers' organizational commitment. This 9-items instrument which consists of two dimensions, namely (1) Commitment to Teaching Work, and (2) Commitment to Work Group by using Likert-type scale with a 5-point scale from (1) very seldom to (5) always occurs. All the measures were highly reliable with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from .88 to .92 for this study. The data were analyzed using descriptive, and multiple regression analyses

RESEARCH FINDINGS

1.Level of Organizational health, Mindfulness and Teachers' Commitment to work

In order to identify the level of mindfulness and teachers' academic optimism, the benchmark is determined according to the recommendation by [32], where mean score from "1.00 to 1.80" is categorized as very low, "1.81 to 2.60" is categorized as low, while "2.61 to 3.40" is categorized as medium, "3.41 to 4.20" is categorized as high, and "4.21 to 5.00" is categorized as very high.

The overall finding from Table 1 reflects a high level of OH (collegial leadership, teachers' affiliation) and teachers' commitment to work and workgroup except for the level of mindfulness is a medium only. Nevertheless, this study shows that the dimension of OH, mindfulness, and COM are had positive relationship with each other with the $.24 \leq r \leq .40$.

Table 1: Mean score, standard deviation and inter-correlations of research variables

| Research variables | Mean | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|-------------------------------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|
| 1 Collegial Leadership | 3.84 | .31 | - | | | | |
| 2 Teacher Affiliation | 3.72 | .40 | .24 | - | | | |
| 3 Mindfulness | 3.31 | .61 | .34 | .31 | - | | |
| 4 Commitment to teaching work | 3.51 | .83 | .36 | .37 | .45 | - | |
| 5 Commitment to workgroup | 3.42 | .78 | .38 | .40 | .39 | .40 | - |

Note: All the r values are significant at $p < .01$

Table2: Result of hierarchical regression analysis

| | Commitment to work | | Commitment to workgroup | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|---------|-------------------------|---------|
| <i>Organizational Health</i> | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 |
| Collegial Leadership | .14* | .10 | .15* | .11 |
| Teacher Affiliation | .58* | .48* | .44* | .34* |
| <i>Mediator</i> | | | | |
| Mindfulness | - | .23* | - | .25* |
| R ² value | .46 | .49 | .38 | .41 |
| Adjusted R ² value | .45 | .48 | .37 | .40 |
| F value | 51.28** | 47.53** | 36.02** | 34.19** |

*p<.05, **p<.01

2. Hypothesis testing

For testing the hypotheses, a hierarchical regression analysis was conducted by putting study variables in two steps [33]. Table 2 shows the results of the hierarchical regression analysis performed to test H1-H3. As shown in Model1 and Model3, OH (collegial leadership, $\beta = .14, p < .05$; teacher affiliation, $\beta = .58, p < .05$) is related with teacher's commitment to work and to a workgroup, thus supporting H1. Further, as results show in Model2, OH (collegial leadership, $\beta = .15, p < .05$; teacher affiliation, $\beta = .44, p < .05$) is negatively associated with organizational mindfulness, supporting H2.

H3 was tested by following [33] method of mediation analysis. As presented in Table2, when mindfulness is entered into the relationship OH (collegial leadership, teacher affiliation) and teacher's commitment to work and workgroup as shown in Model 2 and 4, the beta value for collegial leadership was decreased and not significant ($\beta = .14, p < .05$ to $\beta = .10, p > .05$ in commitment to work; and $\beta = .15, p < .05$ to $\beta = .11, p > .05$ in commitment to work) which indicate mindfulness merged as full mediator. While the beta value for teacher affiliation was decreased but significant ($\beta = .58, p < .05$ to $\beta = .48, p < .05$ in commitment to work; and $\beta = .44, p < .05$ to $\beta = .34, p < .05$ in commitment to work) whereby mindfulness merged as partial mediator on the relationship between OH (teacher affiliation) with teacher's commitment to work and workgroup. In sum, H3 was partially supported.

DISCUSSION

The findings show that there is a high level of school organizational health and teachers' Organizational Commitment, on the other hand, a below average level of school mindfulness practice in Chinese primary schools. This indicates that female teachers feel good to be in their school especially with their colleagues, moreover, the positive interaction with their colleagues encourage them to work with enthusiasm and are more committed to their students and colleagues [34]. Theoretically, the below average school mindfulness indicates that teachers' believed their school's ability to act mindfully is at the below average level, which in another word their school emphasis in 'doing' rather than 'being' [35] and their school usually stick to the daily routine, rules, and procedures that prevent beneficial changes to the school [31].

Meanwhile, findings also revealed that HO (collegial leadership and teacher affiliation) have a significant positive influence on teachers' organizational commitment and mindfulness, thus supported previous studies by [34]. These results indicate that the friendliness, supportiveness, This

results indicate that the friendliness, supportiveness, openness, and strong affiliation among teachers would promote a high level of commitment among teachers in workgroup and teaching work [36]. The results also shows that school mindfulness has a mediating influence on the relationship between collegial leadership and teachers' organizational commitment to workgroup and teaching work which explained that the teachers' commitment to their profession, colleagues, students, and teaching will enhance in the present of their school leader showing positive behaviour and quality through the mindful environment of the school. Thus this results in line with previous studies [34,35], which explain that, due to the similarity between teacher affiliation and school mindfulness, it is clear that female teachers in this study emphasize on the need to being more positively interactive or strongly connected with their colleagues would enhance the effects on teachers' organizational commitment.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that a healthy school is an important aspect of teachers' organizational commitment, it is under the obligation of school leaders to maintain it as it develops teacher loyalty, trust, commitment, and motivation. In examining the influence of organizational health and mindfulness on teachers' organizational commitment, this study helps to reduce the blind spots in Malaysia education settings. Therefore, much more research is needed to extend school mindfulness related studies to fill in the gap of present literature.

REFERENCES

1. Ministry of Education. (2013). Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013–2025. Ministry of Education, Malaysia.
- 2.Noordin, F., Rashid, R. M., Ghani, R., Aripin, R., & Darus, Z. (2010). Teacher professionalization and organizational commitment: Evidence from Malaysia. *The International Business & Economics Research Journal*, 9(2),49-57.
- 3.Ibrahim, M. S., Ghavifekr, S., Ling, S., Siraj, S., & Azeez, M. I. K. (2014). Can transformational leadership influence on teachers' commitment towards the organization, teaching profession, and students learn? *A quantitative analysis. Asia Pacific Education Review*, 15(2), 177-190.
- 4.Yusof, N. M. (2012). School climate and teachers' commitment: A case study of Malaysia. *International Journal of Economics Business and Management Studies*, 1(2), 65-75.
- 5.Raman, A., Ling, C. C., & Khalid, R. (2015). The relationship between school climate and teachers' commitment in an

- excellent school of Kubang Pasu District, Kedah, Malaysia. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 6(3), 163-170
6. Hoy, W. K., Gage III, C. Q., & Tarter, C. J. (2006). School mindfulness and faculty trust: necessary conditions for each other? *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 42(2), 236-255.
 7. Hoy, W. K., & Fedman, J. A. (1987). Organizational health: The concept and its measure. *Journal of Research and Development in Education*, 20(4), 30-37.
 8. Reb, J., & Choi, E. (2014). Mindfulness in organizations. Research Collection Lee Kong Chian School of Business. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(5), 825-831
 9. Miles, M. B. (1969). Planned change and organizational health: Figure and ground. *Organizations and Human Behavior*, 375-391.
 10. Smith, P. A., Hoy, W. K., & Sweetland, S. R. (2000). Organizational health of high schools and dimensions of faculty trust. *Journal of School Leadership*, 11, 135-151.
 11. Sezgin, F. (2009). Examining the relationship between teacher organizational commitment and school health in Turkish primary schools. *Educational Research and Evaluation*, 15(2), 185-201.
 12. Omoyemiju, M. A., & Adediwura, A. A. (2011). A study of teachers' perception of schools' organizational health in Osun State. *World Journal of Education*, 1(1), 165-169.
 13. Zahed-Babelan, A., & Moenikia, M. (2010). A study of simple and multiple relations between organizational health and faculty trust in female high schools. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2(2), 1532-1536.
 14. Hoy, W. K., & Miskel, C. G. (2012). *Educational administration: Theory, research, and practice*. 9th Ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.
 15. Hoy, W. K., & Tarter, C. J. (1997). *The road to open and healthy schools: A handbook for change - middle and secondary school edition*. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press.
 16. Mushref, A. M., & Al-jabiri, L. S. (2016). The empirical framework of the relationship between organizational health and strategic performance. *Net Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(1), 1-8.
 17. Coffey, K. A., Hartman, M., & Fredrickson, B. L. (2010). Deconstructing mindfulness and constructing mental health: Understanding mindfulness and its mechanisms of action. *Mindfulness*, 1(4), 235-253.
 18. Rix, G., & Bernay, R. (2015). A study of the effects of mindfulness in five primary schools in New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Teachers' Work*, 11(2), 201-220.
 19. Wisner, B. L. (2014). An exploratory study of mindfulness meditation for alternative school students: Perceived benefits for improving school climate and student functioning. *Mindfulness*, 5(6), 626-638.
 20. McCloskey, L. E. (2015). Mindfulness as an intervention for improving academic success among students with executive functioning disorders. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 174, 221-226.
 21. Bhuvanaiah, T., & Raya, R. (2014). Employee engagement: Key to organizational success. *SCMS Journal of Indian Management*, 11(4), 61-64.
 22. McCallum, S., Forret, M., & Wolff, H.-G. (2014). Internal and external networking behavior: An investigation of relationships with affective, continuance, and normative commitment. *Career Development International*, 19(5), 595-614.
 23. Mosadeghrad, M.A. (2014). Why do TQM programmes fail? A pathology approach. *The TQM Journal*, 26(2), 160-187.
 24. Singh, A. P. (2014). Does organizational health enhance the level of commitment in police employees? *International Journal of Scientific & Engineering Research*, 5(1), 808-827.
 25. Yücel, A., Doğanalp, B., & Kaya, Ş. D. (2013). The relation between organizational health and organizational commitment. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 4(10), 781-785.
 26. Jayaraja, A. R., Tan, S. A., & Ramasamy, P. N. (2017). Predicting the role of mindfulness and procrastination on psychological well-being among university students in Malaysia. *Journal Psikologi Malaysia*, 31(2), 29-36.
 27. Vogus, T. J., & Sutcliffe, K. M. (2012). Organizational mindfulness and mindful organizing: A reconciliation and path forward. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 11(4), 722-735.
 28. Kearney, W. S., Kelsey, C., & Herrington, D. (2013). Mindful leaders in highly effective schools: A mixed-method application of Hoy's M-scale. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 41(3), 316-335.
 29. Hoy, W. K., Tarter, C. J., & Kottkamp, R. B. (1991). *Open schools, healthy schools: Measuring organizational climate*. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press.
 30. Hoy, W. K., Gage, C., & Tarter, C. J. (2004). Theoretical and empirical foundations of mindful schools. *Educational Organizations, Policy and Reform: Research and Measurement*, 305-335.
 31. Celep, C. (2000). Teachers' organizational commitment in educational organizations. *National Forum of Teacher, Educational Journal*, 10(E). p.1-22.
 32. Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach*: Sage Publications.
 33. Baron, R. M., & Kenny, D. A. (1986). The moderator-mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51(6), 1173.
 34. Devi, M. N. U., & Vijayakumar, C. (2015). A study on the impact of morale on organizational commitment, through structural equation modeling (SEM). *Annual Research Journal of Symbiosis Centre for Management Studies*, 4, 16-38.
 35. Wells, C. M. (2015). Conceptualizing Mindful Leadership in Schools: How the Practice of Mindfulness Informs the Practice of Leading. *Education Leadership Review of Doctoral Research*, 2(1), 1-23.
 36. Hausman, C. S., & Goldring, E. B. (2001). Sustaining teacher commitment: The role of professional communities. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 76(2), 30-51.