

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy in Reducing Burnout Level of an Academician from Malaysian Research University

Kok Ban Teoh & Nik Rosila Nik Yaacob

School of Educational Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia

kokbanteoh@student.usm.my

ABSTRACT

Nowadays, academicians from Malaysian research university experience greater levels of burnout due to their high extents of job demands and low levels of job resources. Therefore, this study aims to examine the role of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) in reducing burnout level of an academician from Malaysian research university. A systematic search of the literature was conducted, and two studies identified which met the criteria for inclusion in the review. The results of the study demonstrated that ACT plays the role to reduce burnout level of the respondent while observing improved psychological flexibility. The findings of the study are helpful to both academics and practitioners who desire to manage burnout pervasiveness among academicians from Malaysian research university.

Keywords: Acceptance and Commitment Therapy; burnout; academician; Malaysian research university

ABSTRAK

Pada masa kini, ahli akademik dari universiti penyelidikan Malaysia mengalami tahap keletihan yang lebih tinggi kerana permintaan pekerjaan yang tinggi dan tahap sumber pekerjaan yang rendah. Oleh itu, kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji peranan Terapi Penerimaan dan Komitmen (ACT) dalam mengurangkan tahap keletihan seorang ahli akademik dari universiti penyelidikan Malaysia. Pencarian literatur yang sistematik dilakukan, dan tiga kajian yang memenuhi kriteria untuk dimasukkan dalam tinjauan dikenal pasti. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa ACT berperanan untuk mengurangkan tahap keletihan responden sambil memerhatikan peningkatan fleksibiliti psikologi. Penemuan kajian ini dapat membantu para akademik dan pengamal yang ingin menguruskan masalah keletihan di kalangan ahli akademik dari universiti penyelidikan Malaysia.

Kata kunci: Terapi Penerimaan dan Komitmen; keletihan; ahli akademik; universiti penyelidikan Malaysia

INTRODUCTION

Contemporarily, academicians from Malaysian RUs encounter greater burnout due to the high levels of job demands and low extents of job resources (Teoh & Kee, 2020). This is further supported when RU academicians are claimed to experience more burnout as opposed to academicians in other public universities due to the need in meeting the expected criteria of RUs, such as exhibiting high standard teaching, conducting remarkable research, and commercialising their research products (Sadeghi, Zaidatol, Habibah & Foo, 2012). Although burnout is an option for all academicians, but RU academicians are unavoidable from encountering burnout due to the requirements of conducting impactful research (Altbach, 2009), taking part in research contracts with business sector progressively, as well as publishing their research findings (Wang, 2001). Ministry of Higher Education (2012) stated that at least 30% of the Malaysian research are from RUs, while 10% of these research outcomes need to be commercialised. Hence, the findings of scientific research have become one of the criteria for promotion among RU academicians. This is further noted when a few specified KPIs must be achieved by each RU, especially in publishing two papers in national or international refereed and cited journal every year by each academic staff as well as obtaining research grant of RM50,000 for each academic staff per year which at least 20% from international sources and 20% from private sector (MOHE, 2017).

In conjunction with that, career advancement is the primary contributor of burnout among RU academicians (Arma & Ismail, 2016). They further stressed that the university demands or government for professional growth in each RU are the most stressful indication deriving from career advancement. The non-conformance in expectations between the university and academicians has led to deferred career advancement path, insufficient social support, and exhausted work environment (Ofoegbu & Nwandiani, 2006). Hence, higher level of stress is claimed emanating from impractical expectations from the university management (Ahmady, Changiz, Masiello & Brommels, 2007).

Likewise, the demanded publication for promotion in RUs is another factor that causes job burnout in career advancement (Arma & Ismail, 2016). Their study found that publication itself does not lend to burnout, but when publication is set as the prerequisite for promotion, most academicians regard this as a distressing event in their profession. The ambitiousness to be promoted to a higher academic rank is indeed stress driving since academicians ought to comply with the absolute criteria, such as the number of publications they need to produce each year (Archibong, Bassey & Effiom, 2010).

In respect to one of the Malaysian impulsions in the NHESP, the number of students enrolled in each RU needs to be increased, while attaining an average of 10% international students of the overall enrolment (MOHE, 2012). Consequently, the workloads such as marking examination scripts and collation of results will be intensified accordingly. As a result, the likelihood for academicians to work under short time frame while demanding for more assistance is increased due to the growth in enrolment of students which in turn increased workloads (Wei, Hui & Lie, 2011). Hence, teaching has become a source of burnout for Malaysian RU academicians.

The local researchers, Ahsan, Abdullah, Yong and Alam (2009) indicated a few stress triggering factors among academicians, such as work overburden, role doubtfulness, and performance stress. Besides, it is exhibited that role oppress, role inadequacy, and lack of research grant are significantly related to job stress among academicians in universities (Tytherleigh, Webb, Cooper & Ricketts, 2005). Hence, the mechanisms in reducing the prevalence of burnout for RU academicians due to stress from job demands need to be found so that the quality of teaching and high job commitment as well as paving the way for the Malaysian RUs to transit towards a world-class RU can be ensured.

However, there are limited studies in addressing burnout levels among academicians from Malaysian RUs (Watts & Robertson, 2011; Henny, Anita, Hayati & Rampal, 2014; Teoh & Kee, 2020). Therefore, the present study takes the initiative to use ACT as an

intervention to reduce burnout level of an academician from Malaysian RUs since it was shown useful in the past studies to reduce burnout level of an individual (Hayes et al., 2004; Emery & Vandenberg, 2010; Lloyd, Bond & Flaxman, 2013; Frögéli, Rudman & Gustavsson, 2019; Puolakanaho, Tolvanen, Kinnunen & Lappalainen, 2020; Reeve, Moghaddam, Tickle & Young, 2021). Furthermore, till date, there is lack of research which focuses on the effect of ACT towards the burnout level of an academician through counseling practice, particularly on academicians who are from Malaysian RUs. As a result, the present study presents its novelty by demonstrating the usefulness of ACT in reducing burnout level of a Malaysian RU academician through counseling sessions, and this undoubtedly enriches the scarce literature on ACT as well as burnout issues among academicians from Malaysian RUs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory

Based on the extended theory of cognitive appraisal delineated by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), the COR theory is proposed by Hobfoll (1989) to apprehend the stress phenomena from the resources perspective. Hobfoll and Shirom (2001) argued that Lazarus and Folkman (1984) had described the stress wrongly by claiming that stress takes place when demands surpass coping resources. It is asserted by Hobfoll and Shirom (2001) that stress does not certainly only happens when demands surpass coping resources, but also when individuals are struggling extraordinary. An individual tends to be stressful when there is a threat of possible loss of resources, absolute loss of resources or lack of anticipated gain in resources (Hobfoll, 1989; Hsieh, Pearson & Kline, 2009), which lead him to strain (Westman, Hobfoll, Chen, Davidson & Laski, 2005). Therefore, the COR theory explains the relationship between the stressor-strain theoretically from the context of resource loss or gain (Hobfoll, 1989; Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999; Westman et al., 2005).

As a result, the COR theory implies that individuals endeavour to construct, safeguard, and maintain the personal characteristics, conditions, and energies that facilitate them to deal with job demands. However, as individuals fail to do so when coping with the significant of job demands, the reduction of their resources may expedite to stress or burnout (Hobfoll, 1989). As a result, the COR theory delineates on how individuals are likely to be affected by stressful conditions, what those stressful conditions are, and how individuals respond to accumulate and protect their available resources (Westman, Etzion & Chen, 2009). Hence, the COR theory can contribute to the understanding of burnout scenarios among academicians from Malaysian RUs.

Burnout

Burnout is a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion due to long-term involvement in work-related situations that are excessively demanding (Harrison, 1999). Over the years, it is shown by empirical research that burnout involves all employees regardless of the job they do (Leiter & Schaufeli, 1996; Maslach, Leiter & Schaufeli, 2008) as long as there is an imbalance between their job demands (physical workload, time pressure, recipient contact, physical environment, shift work) and the available resources (feedback, rewards, job control, participation, job security, supervisor support) (Karasek, 1979; Demerout, Bakker, Nachreiner & Schaufeli, 2001).

Burnout can be represented by three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and loss of personal accomplishment (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Emotional exhaustion is referred as the main dimension of burnout syndrome. The emotionally exhausted individuals are in the state of feeling tired and worn out even after they wake up due to their physical and emotional resources are fully consumed (Wright & Bonnett, 1997). Depersonalisation, that is associated with interpersonal aspects of exhaustion, is known as the second dimension of burnout. Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter

(2001) stated that depersonalisation consists of negative, insensitive, and detached attitude toward clients, colleagues, and organisation. This is further supported when burnout is found to be the significant predictor of absenteeism in the workplace (Schaufeli, Bakker & van Rhenen, 2009; Petitta & Vecchione, 2011). The idea is that employees will be less likely to come into work when there are excessive work demands and pressure being expected on them. Therefore, they prefer to stay at home instead of facing the stress. Finally, the third dimension of burnout, personal accomplishment, is related to individuals' self-evaluation of work performance. Loss of personal accomplishment is described as a feeling of inefficiency and inadequately while dealing with job requirements (Togia, 2005). However, burnout is a long-suffering state of being out of energy and perpetually overwhelmed and exhausted, lacking the passion and enthusiasm for the job that was antecedently present and reduced motivation and professional efficacy (Henny et al., 2014). Hence, burnout is developed within individual through different stages from time to time.

Relational Frame Theory (RFT)

RFT is a functional contextual theory of human cognition and language evolved from an extensive experimental research programme (Hayes, Barnes-Holmes & Roche, 2001). According to RFT, the foundation of human cognition and language is the ability to learn and control contextually so that the mutual events and the combination of events can be related promptly (Hayes, Luoma, Bond, Masuda & Lillis, 2006).

Hayes (2004) and Hayes et al., (2006) highlighted three crucial characteristics of RFT that drive to the applied implications of the theory. The first characteristic is that human cognition acts as a particular type of learned behaviour, where the ability in fast applying the comparative relations can be trained as an overarching operant in young children (Barnes-Holmes, Barnes-Holmes, Smeets, Strand & Friman, 2004). For an instance, if a person learns in a specific context that A is smaller than B, then B is bigger than A. Meanwhile, the second

characteristic of FRT stresses that the comparative relations in the first characteristic show “combinatorial entailment” (Hayes, 2004). For example, if a person learns in a particular context that A is smaller than B and B is smaller than C, then it will be derived that C is bigger than A and A is smaller than C. Next, the last critical characteristic of RFT focuses that “combinatorial entailment” in second characteristic brings the possibility to change the stimulus functions among related stimuli. For the same example, if an individual needs to choose the biggest size among the alphabets of A, B, and C, while knowing that B is in the moderate size, then it will be derived that A is in a smaller size among all three alphabets whereas C is the biggest size to be chosen, without necessarily put all three alphabets together and compare. In conjunction with these three critical characteristics of RFT, a relational frame is said to be established when all three RFT characteristics are met within a given type of relational responding (Hayes, 2004).

There are four implications of RFT in the fields of psychopathology and psychotherapy extended from the three critical characteristics described earlier (Hayes et al., 2001; Hayes, 2004). Firstly, RFT provides verbal problem solving and reasoning which are based on some of the same cognitive process that can lead to psychopathology. Next, RFT prepares the common sense idea where cognitive networks can be logically restricted or eliminated due to the reflection of past learning process that are not psychologically sound. Thirdly, RFT directly alters attempts based on key nodes in cognitive networks so that the network in that area can be further elaborated and the functional importance of these nodes can be increased. Lastly, since RFT deals with the content and the impact of cognitive networks contextually, it is thus able to reduce the effects of negative cognitions from happening in the future. Consequently, Hayes et al., (2006) concluded based on these four implications that psychotherapists should not focus primarily on the content of cognitive networks during the clinical intervention, but they should focus on the functions of cognitive networks to benefit the clients. With that, ACT is built on RFT where its main function is to

accept what is in the cognitive network, while committedly working on it for a favourable outcome.

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)

In ACT, every part of the protocol is connected conceptually to RFT (Hayes, et al., 2006). From the perspective of ACT, a primary source of psychopathology is the way the language and cognition interact with direct contingencies to generate an inability to proceed or change behaviour for the long-term beneficial outcomes (Hayes et al., 2006). Based on Hayes (2004), this psychological inflexibility comes from two main processes, namely cognitive fusion, and experiential avoidance, which both are the direct aftereffects of human language and cognition itself. Cognitive fusion refers to excessive or improper regulation of behaviour by verbal processes, such as rules and derived relational networks (Strosahl, Hayes, Wilson & Gifford, 2004) whereas experiential avoidance refers to the attempt to avoid the form, frequency, or situational sensitivity of private events even when doing so causes behavioural harm (Hayes, Wilson, Gifford, Follette & Strosahl, 1996). According to Hayes et al. (2006), cognition fusion and experiential avoidance fuel each other and hinder one from finding alternative of coping efforts to deal with the life challenges, such as burnout. This is further explained that when an individual focuses on his cognitions to avoid internal stressors, he or she is less involved with ongoing experiences and can miss out the necessary information for active problem solving (Hayes et al., 2006). Additionally, one would tend to be less inclined to live in a way that can result in improved health and well-being from time to time. In conjunction with that, ACT is built on RFT to reduce experiential avoidance so as to increase effective values-based actions and to improve one's quality of life. This can be done through the techniques to increase the acceptance of internal events and to increase present-moment awareness. As a result, Hayes, Strosahl and Wilson (2011) defined ACT as a behavioural

therapy approach which focuses explicitly on decreasing avoidance of private events, that are stressful thoughts, feelings, and sensations.

METHODOLOGY

A systematic search was conducted across different databases to provide greater coverage of relevant journal title. The final search was conducted on 23 June 2021 and no date limit was fixed. In views to maximise the search strategy, search terms were set to three categories, that are population (academicians or teacher), intervention (ACT), and outcome (burnout), and the search was conducted on both the title and abstract for each category.

After the first stage of searching and duplicates removal, a screening process was then taking place. Screening was conducted through reviewing the title and abstract of each paper. The remaining papers were accessed with their full article texts and the selection criteria were applied on these papers to provide a final group of papers to be included in the review. As the inclusion criteria used in the present study, only papers with English language, intervention studies, academician or teacher population, outcome measures of burnout, and ACT-based intervention are retained. Meanwhile, papers with focusing on community work are excluded in the present study. Finally, two final papers were selected for review and the results are discussed in the next section.

RESULTS

For the first selected paper, which is the study by Biglan, Layton, Jones, Hankins and Rusby (2013), they used ACT workshop to address the stress related problems (stress, depression, and burnout) among preschool teachers who serve children with developmental disabilities. There are a total of 42 teachers who took part in the study. The study employed Maslach Burnout Inventory to measure teachers' stress related problems. Based on the findings of the

study, it was found that ACT workshops can assist in influencing factors that affect depression, stress, and burnout in an early childhood special education setting.

On the other hand, the second selected paper is from the study by Hosseinaei, Ahadi, Fata, Heidarei and Mazaheri (2013). In their study, they employed ACT to manage job stress and burnout among personnel from Islamic Azad University, Azadshahr branch. A total of 96 personnel was involved in the study and they were classified into three different groups, that are experimental group (received ACT therapy), let's talk group (received nutrients and sports instructions), and control group (received no training). To measure the job burnout, the researchers used Osipow's Occupational Stress Inventory and Maslach and Jackson Job Burnout Inventory as the measuring instruments. From the findings, it is noted that group training based on the ACT not only decreased total job stress, but also removed job stress factors, including role overload, role ambiguity, role boundary, and responsibility.

DISCUSSION

Based on the systematic search from the databases, it is realised that there is very limited research conducted on the effectiveness of ACT in reducing burnout levels among academicians or teachers. After the thorough search and strict screening process, only two related past studies were identified and used in the present study. Based on the two past studies, both studies' findings also suggested that ACT is an appropriate intervention to be used in reducing burnout levels among educators. This concurs with the findings of the prior research which employed ACT to manage burnout levels in a non-educational setting (Hayes et al., 2004; Emery & Vandenberg, 2010; Lloyd et al., 2013; Frögéli et al., 2019; Puolakanaho et al., 2020; Reeve, Moghaddam et al., 2021). As a result, it is convinced that ACT is relevant and feasible to be used as an intervention to reduce the burnout levels among academicians from Malaysian RUs. Additionally, an empirical study of using ACT to decrease the burnout levels among Malaysian RU academicians is necessarily to be

conducted as it can help to enrich the scarce literature on ACT as well as burnout issues among academicians from Malaysian RUs.

IMPLICATIONS

In conjunction with the discussions earlier, the findings of the present research are valuable and useful to the relevant parties as follows:

Mental Health Practitioners

The findings of the present study can serve as a reference to the mental health practitioners, such as counselors, psychotherapists, and psychiatrics, in reducing the burnout levels among academicians. The ACT intervention is relevant to be used in the context of academicians as they are capable in identifying their stressors, accept them, and manage them. As a result, the mental health practitioners can learn from the ACT intervention to facilitate their clients, particularly academicians, to undergo the intervention effectively and efficiently. On the other hand, the mental health practitioners are benefited from the present study as well since they can learn to manage their own burnout levels through the ACT intervention.

Academicians

Academicians from Malaysian RUs and non-RUs can learn from the ACT intervention in the present study that they should accept and not avoid their stressful thoughts, feelings, and sensations. In the core belief of ACT, the avoidance of these private events, that are experiential feelings, is assumed to be the fundamental of much human suffering, including burnout (Hayes, Strosahl & Wilson, 2011). Next, academicians can learn to take actions by managing what matters to them in their beliefs. This certainly assists academicians who experience a certain level of burnout due to the high levels of job demands as they learn to accept the stressors, while managing them steps by steps. Consequently, the present research

shed insights to academicians about the importance of acceptance and commitment in their lives, which in turn to reduce their burnout levels to the minimum levels.

RU Management

The RU management, that is from dean of each faculty to the policy makers of RUs, can understand their academicians better through the findings of the present study. Thus, they can understand the burnout levels of their academicians through the explicit burnout symptoms, while revising the KPIs which promise for well-being of academicians as well as the benefits of RUs. For the dean of each faculty in RUs, he or she can learn the effective ways to assist and manage his or her academicians. Though the dean does not perform the counseling intervention, he or she can communicate with academicians to understand their needs and wants better. With that, a proper arrangement can be made in each faculty internally so that academicians are not vulnerable to burnout easily.

Community Educators and Social Workers

Other than benefiting academicians from Malaysian RUs, it is also valuable to the community educators and social workers since they can promote self-care and ongoing wellness development through the ACT intervention to the public. Hence, the society tends to know the way to manage their life stressors when the community educators and social workers share the knowledge of the present study to them via psychoeducation or community activities.

SUGGESTION

Prior to the implementation of ACT, psychotherapists or counselors need to be well-trained in conducting the intervention, as well as understanding the psychometric instruments used so that a more effective therapeutic outcome is expected. Moreover, the future researchers can consider to use the hybrid version of ACT in their study, that is a preventive stress management intervention (ACT-SMI) (Bond & Hayes, 2002).

REFERENCES

- Ahmady, S., Changiz, T., Masiello, I., & Brommels M. (2007). *Organisational role stress among medical school faculty in Iran: Dealing with role conflict*. Retrieved from <https://bmcmededuc.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1472-6920-7-14>
- Ahsan, N., Abdullah, Z., Yong, D. G. F., & Alam, S. S. (2009). A study of job stress on job satisfaction among university staff in Malaysia: Empirical study. *European Journal of Social Science*, 8, 121-131.
- Altbach, P. G. (2009). Peripheries and centers: research universities in developing countries. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 10, 15-27.
- Archibong, I. A., Bassey, A. O. G., & Effiom, D. O. (2010). Occupational stress sources among university academic staff. *European Journal of Educational Studies*, 2, 217-225.
- Arma, N., & Ismail, N. H. (2016). Occupational stress and its associated factors among academicians in a research university, Malaysia. *Malaysian Journal of Public Health Medicine*, 16(1), 81-91.
- Barnes-Holmes, Y., Barnes-Holmes, D., Smeets, P. M., Strand, P., & Friman, P. (2004). Establishing relational responding in accordance with more-than and less-than as generalised operant behaviour in young children. *International Journal of Psychology and Psychological Therapy*, 4, 531-558.
- Biglan, A., Layton, G. L., Jones, L. B., Hankins, M., & Rusby, J. C. (2013). The value of workshops on psychological flexibility for early childhood special education staff. *Topics Early Child Special Education*, 32(4), 196-210.
- Bond, F. W., & Hayes, S. C. (2002). ACT at work. In F. W. Bond, & W. Dryden (Eds.), *Handbook of brief cognitive behaviour therapy* (pp. 117-140). Chichester, England: John Wiley & Sons.
- Demerouti, E., Bakker, A. B., Nachreiner, F., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2001). The job demands-resources model of burnout. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(3), 499-512.

- Emery, D. W., & Vandenberg, B. (2010). Special education teacher burnout and ACT. *International Journal of Special Education*, 25(3), 119-131.
- Frögéli, E., Rudman, A., & Gustavsson, P. (2019). Preventing stress-related ill health among future nurses: Effects over 3 years. *International Journal of Stress Management*, 26(3), 272-286.
- Grandey, A. A., & Cropanzano, R. (1999). The conservation of resources model applied to work-family conflict and strain. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 54, 350-370.
- Harrison, B. (1999). Are you destined to burn-out? *Fund Raising Management*, 30, 25-27.
- Hayes, S. C. (2004). Acceptance and commitment therapy, relational frame theory, and the third wave of behaviour therapy. *Behaviour Therapy*, 35, 639-665.
- Hayes, S. C., Barnes-Holmes, D., & Roche, B. (Eds.). (2001). *Relational frame theory: A post-Skinnerian account of human language and cognition*. Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.
- Hayes, S. C., Bissett, R., Roget, N., Padilla, M., Kohlenberg, B. S., Fisher, G., ... Niccolls, R. (2004). The impact of acceptance and commitment training and multicultural training on the stigmatising attitudes and professional burnout of substance abuse counselors. *Behaviour Therapy*, 35, 821-835.
- Hayes, S. C., Luoma, J. B., Bond, F. W., Masuda, A., & Lillis, J. (2006). Acceptance and Commitment Therapy: Model, processes, and outcomes. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 44, 1-25.
- Hayes, S. C., Strosahl, K., & Wilson, K. G. (1999). *Acceptance and commitment therapy: An experiential approach to behaviour change*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Hayes, S. C., Strosahl, K. D., & Wilson, K. G. (2011). *Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Second Edition: The Process and Practice of Mindful Change*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Hayes, S. C., Wilson, K. G., Gifford, E. V., Follette, V. M., & Strosahl, K. (1996). Experiential avoidance and behavioral disorders: A functional dimensional approach to diagnosis and treatment. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 64, 1152-1168.
- Henny, J., Anita, A. R., Hayati, K. S., & Rampal, L. (2014). Prevalence of burnout and its associated factors among faculty academicians. *Malaysian Journal of Medicine and Health Sciences*, 10(1), 51-59.
- Hobfoll, S. E. (1989). Conservation of resources: A new attempt at conceptualizing stress. *American Psychologist*, 44, 513-524.
- Hobfoll, S. E., & Shirom, A. (2001). Conservation of resources theory: Applications to stress and management in the workplace. In: R. T. Golembiewski (Ed.), *Handbook of organisational behaviour* (pp. 57-81). New York, NY: Marcel Dekker.

- Hosseinaei, A., Ahadi, H., Fata, L., Heidarei, A., & Mazaheri, M. M. (2013). Effects of group acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT)-based training on job stress and burnout. *Iranian Journal of Psychiatry and Clinical Psychology, 19*(2), 120–132.
- Hsieh, J. Y. C., Pearson, T. E., & Kline, S. F. (2009). The moderating effects of job and personal life involvement on relationship between work-personal life conflict and intention to quit. *Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality & Tourism, 8*, 1-14.
- Karasek, R. A. (1979). Job demands, job decision latitude, and mental strain: Implications for job redesign. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 24*(2), 285 -308.
- Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal, and coping*. New York, NY: Springer.
- Leiter, M. P., & Schaufeli, W. B. (1996). Consistency of the burnout construct across occupations. *Anxiety, Stress, and Coping, 9*(3), 229–243.
- Lloyd, J., Bond, F. W., & Flaxman, P. (2013). The value of psychological flexibility: Examining psychological mechanisms underpinning a cognitive behavioural therapy intervention for burnout. *Work and Stress, 27*(2), 181-199.
- Maslach, C., & Jackson, S. E. (1981). The measurement of experienced burnout. *Journal of Organisational Behaviour, 2*(2), 99-113.
- Maslach, C., Leiter, M. P., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2008). Measuring burnout. In C. L. Cooper & S. Cartwright (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Organisational Well-being* (pp. 86–108). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W. B., & Leiter, M. P. (2001). Job burnout. *Annual Review of Psychology, 52*, 397-422.
- Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia (2012). *Pelan Strategik Pengajian Tinggi Negara (PSPTN)*. Retrieved from <http://www.mohe.gov.my/portal/info-kementerian-pengajian-tinggi/pelan-strategik-html>
- Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia (2017). *Amanat Tahun Baru 2017*. Retrieved from <https://www.mohe.gov.my/index.php/muat-turun/awam/teks-ucapan-dan-slide/2017/amanat-tahun-baharu-2017/253-amanat-2017-menteri-pendidikan-tinggi>
- Ofoegbu, F., & Nwandiani, M. (2006). Level of perceived stress among lecturers in Nigerian Universities. *Journal of Instructional Psychology, 33*, 66-74.
- Petitta, L., & Vecchione, M. (2011). Job burnout, absenteeism, and extra role behaviours. *Journal of Workplace Behavioural Health, 26*(2), 97-121.
- Puolakanaho, A., Tolvanen, A., Kinnunen, S. M., & Lappalainen, R. (2020). A psychological flexibility-based intervention for Burnout: A randomized controlled trial. *Journal of Contextual Behavioral Science, 15*, 52-67.

- Reeve, A., Moghaddam, N., Tickle, A., & Young, D. (2021). A brief acceptance and commitment intervention for work-related stress and burnout amongst frontline homelessness staff: A single case experimental design series. *Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy*, 1-19.
- Sadeghi, A., Zaidatol, A. L. P., Habibah, E., & Foo, S. F. (2012). Demographic analysis on academic staff's job satisfaction in Malaysian research universities. *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities*, 20, 1-20.
- Schaufeli, W. B., Bakker, A. B., & van Rhenen, W. (2009). How changes in job demands and resources predict burnout, work engagement, and sickness absenteeism. *Journal of Organisational Behaviour*, 30, 893-917.
- Strosahl, K. D., Hayes, S.C., Wilson, K. G., & Gifford, E. (2004). An ACT primer: Core therapy processes, intervention strategies, and therapist competencies. In S. C. Hayes & K. D. Strosahl (Eds.), *A Practical Guide to Acceptance and Commitment Therapy* (pp. 31-58). New York: Springer.
- Teoh, K. B., & Kee, D. M. H. (2020). Psychosocial safety climate and burnout among academicians: the mediating role of work engagement. *International Journal of Society Systems Science*, 12(1), 1-14.
- Togia, A. (2005). Measurement of burnout and the influence of background characteristics in Greek academic librarians. *Library Management*, 26(3), 130-138.
- Tytherleigh, M. Y., Webb, C., Cooper, C. L., Ricketts, C. (2005). Occupational stress in UK higher education institutions: A comparative study of all categories. *Journal of Higher Education Research & Development*, 24, 41-61.
- Wang, Y. (2001). Building the World-class University in a Developing Country: Universals, uniqueness, and cooperation. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 2(2), 3-9.
- Watts, J., & Robertson, N. (2011). Burnout in university teaching staff: a systematic literature review. *Educational Research*, 53(1), 33-50.
- Wei, S., Hui, W., & Lie, W. (2011). Occupational stress and its related factors among university teachers in China. *Journal of Occupational Health*, 53, 280-286.
- Westman, M., Etzion, D., & Chen, S. (2009). Are business trips a unique kind of respite? *Research in Occupational Stress and Well-being*, 7, 167-204.
- Westman, M., Hobfoll, S. E., Chen, S., Davidson, O. B., & Laski, S. (2005). Organisational stress through the lens of conservation of resources (COR) theory. In P. L. Perrewe & D. C. Ganster (Eds.), *Research in Occupational Stress and Well-being* (pp. 167-219). Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing.
- Wright, T., & Bonnett, D. (1997). The contributions of burnout to work performance. *Journal of Organisational Behaviour*, 18, 491-499.