Psychosocial safety climate, work engagement and organizational commitment in Malaysian research universities: the mediating role of job resources

Kia Hui Gan and Daisy Mui Hung Kee

Abstract

Purpose – *The current study is an examination of the effects of psychosocial safety climate on work engagement, organisational commitment and to mediate job resources in Malaysian research universities (RUs) during pandemic.*

Design/methodology/approach – *The population of this study consisted of full-time lecturers who work in Malaysian RUs at least a year. A sampling technique was used to select the respondents for this study. A total of 1,000 questionnaires were administered to respondents from 5 Malaysian RUs with 484 usable questionnaires were returned, giving a response rate of 48.4%.*

Findings – *The present study's objective is to examine psychosocial safety climate's (PSC) effect, job resources on work engagement and organizational commitment. The study also aims to test the mediating roles of job resources on PSC's relationship, work engagement and organizational commitment. It is interesting to note that the relationship between PSC and work engagement was not significant.*

Research limitations/implications – *Although the present study had contributed to the existing literature, the present study's result cannot be generalized. Suggestions for future research include an attempt to conduct a study over three-time points that looks at both the employee's perspective, managerial perspective and organizational perspective within the workplace. All correlation and cross-sectional studies identified the need for a comprehensive three-wave study to examine the model's longitudinal effects accurately.*

Practical implications – *The finding shown that university is suggested to apply higher PSC to allow their management discover more ways to increase the adequate job resources to support lecturers in RUs and in improving their work engagement and organizational commitment.*

Originality/value – *The integration of PSC in academicians of Malaysian RUs provides a novel perspective.*

Keywords *Psychosocial safety climate, Work engagement. Organizational commitment, Job resources, Covid 19*

Paper type *Research paper*

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1. Introduction

In early 2020, a new respiratory virus, Coronavirus disease (COVID-19), caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, is a global pandemic. Scientists estimate that 40%–70% of our population will be affected. On 30 January 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a global health emergency. WHO announced the COVID-19 outbreak as a

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pandemic on 11 March 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged our nation, economy and social systems. Malaysia started a nationwide semi lockdown or Movement Control Order (MCO) on 18 March 2020 (Prime Minister's Office of Malaysia Official Website, 2020). People were asked to practice social distancing and stay at home. These are effective infection-control practices to prevent the spread and to slow the pandemic significantly. As the COVID-19 pandemic made its rapid and implacable advance across the globe, forcing sweeping closures of schools, universities and workplaces, the education industry had no choice but to conduct teaching online using Webex, Zoom, Google Meet and other applications (*New Straits Times*, 23 May 2020). Some university lecturers reported they were exhausted and stressed mentally. Lecturers also commented that online lectures via technology were more time-consuming than the conventional teaching method. Working from home with online teaching may impact the lecturers' work engagement as well as their level of commitment. This situation will continue until the end of the year 2020, as mention by the Department of Higher Education (MalayMail, 2020). Besides online teaching, lecturers faced other challenges, such as conducting research, seminars, meetings and conferences online (UKM Portal, 2020).

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, education in Malaysia implemented online teaching and learning immediately (Arumugam, 2020) without training. Online teaching is a norm today due to the global pandemic. Hence, lecturers and students need to adapt it in a short period, particularly for lecturers who need to spend more time in preparation. Feedback from a lecturer mentioned that it is difficult to conduct online classes in rural areas where the internet is an issue (Bernama, 2020). Working from home and teaching online may impact lecturers' work engagement and commitment due to mental stress and exhausting their energy while preparing online lessons. In this paper, we propose that engaged lecturers are more willing to spend their time learning the technology and adapting to the new trend than less engaged lecturers. We also propose that engaged employees are more likely to commit to their organizations. Committed lecturers can actively comply with universities' decisions (Saraih *et al.*, 2017).

We argue that a psychosocial safety climate (PSC) can influence work engagement and organizational commitment. If the organization can provide a workplace with a high PSC context, it also means that employers are more alert to employees' needs (Gan and Kee, 2020a). This paper will show how PSC, a safety culture, can win and direct work engagement and organizational commitment. We also propose that job resources mediate the relationship between PSC and work engagement and organizational commitment.

2. Literature review and hypotheses

Work engagement is always associated with sustaining employees' well-being and productivity (De Lange *et al.*, 2008). Work engagement results from a productive working environment that encourages the physical and emotional well-being of employees. Three construct dimensions, vigor (energy and resilience), dedication (enthusiasm and inspiration) and absorption (immersion), have been used to explain and measure work engagement (Korunka *et al.*, 2009). Authors tend to agree that the term "work engagement" refers to an individual's 'state of mind' (Chughtai and Buckley, 2011; Korunka *et al.*, 2009). When employees are engaged with the organization, they are more likely to show high energy levels and perform positively (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008). Furthermore, an engaged employees will feel joy in their work even though it is overloaded because they have a strong drive that motivates them. In other words, engaged lecturers are more sincere in helping each other when needed (Bakker *et al.*, 2004) and willing to enhance their skills and abilities to complete their tasks (Sulistiowati *et al.*, 2018). Besides, lecturers will have better performance if they work under a university with higher PSC. (Gan and Kee, 2020b).

Apart from work engagement, organizational commitment is another focus of organizational psychology. Organizational commitment includes employees' emotional state, influencing them to be more loyal to their job and organization (Khan *et al.*, 2014). According to Chen and Hseeh (2006), organizational commitment can be considered a bond between employees and employers. A lack of commitment from the employee can result in turnover opportunities (Naser, 2007). A psychosocial safety climate enhances employees' organizational commitment (Geisler *et al.*, 2019). When lecturers feel the university has taken care of their psychological needs, they will commit more to the university. Hence, commitment is an important variable to study in the present paper.

Job resources are a variable used as a motivational tool to motivate employees (Van den Broeck *et al.*, 2010). Besides, job resources can help employees grow, learn and develop (Bakker, 2011). Job resources are aspects of the job that:

- are functional in achieving goals set out in the workplace;
- reduce the impact of job demands; and
- encourage learning, growth and development in the workplace (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti and Bakker, 2011).

Job resources, like job demands, have physical, psychological and social/organizational manifestations. However, these aspects of a job motivate and facilitate work goals (Balducci *et al.*, 2011). Job resources facilitate active learning processes that lead to competence in individual abilities (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2009). In this paper, we look at the motivational pathway from job resources to work engagement. JD-R theory suggests that the more job resources made available by the organization, the more likely an employee will be engaged with the workplace (Balducci *et al.*, 2011; Bakker and Demerouti, 2008; Dollard and Bakker, 2010). We predict that job resources may positively link with organizational commitment if job resources are associated with work engagement.

PSC, representing senior management and organizational structures, has played a vital part in the constructs described in the JD-R pathway. The extent to which the organization and senior management facilitate and promote psychosocial well-being and development is categorized under four areas (Hall *et al.*, 2010). These include senior management support and commitment to stress prevention, a priority for psychological health and safety, participation and communication from the organization towards implementing strategies to achieve well-being. Dollard and Bakker (2010) suggested that PSC acts as an organizational resource that influences lower-level resources. The existence of PSC can facilitate appropriate resource allocation and job control within the workplace. Employees see this increase in resource allocation and perceive that the organization cares about their well-being, thus encouraging work engagement and organizational commitment. A positive relationship was found between PSC and job resources related to work engagement (Idris and Dollard, 2011). This result suggested that PSC was a trigger for the motivational pathway for work engagement. Similarly, Law *et al.* (2011), found that PSC was a trigger for the motivational pathway, but this was only with organizational rewards as a job resource.

A good PSC in the workplace may promote employee engagement (Idris *et al.*, 2015) with their organization. PSC can be considered a signal to the employees whether the workplace has provided enough job resources (Dollard *et al.*, 2012). Similarly, if the organization provides a low PSC working environment, it will threaten resource loss or reduce job resources. However, if the university can provide a high PSC working environment, it may enhance the lecturer's commitment in the workplace. In other words, lecturers can enhance their engagement and commitment when working in their universities with high PSC. Employees will perform better and are willing to do more than they realized, now that the workplace is a safe environment (Karanika-Murray *et al.*, 2017). This is because the lecturers feel protected when the university provides a high PSC working environment

(Krasniqi *et al.*, 2019). Based on their study, in the workplace with high PSC concerns, management will be more delicate towards employees' needs in the workplace (Loh *et al.*, 2018). Management can provide sufficient job resources to support lecturers in universities.

PSC has a significant relationship with job resources (Idris and Dollard, 2011). If the organization can provide a high PSC working environment, the organization can support their staff with sufficient job resources (Loh *et al.*, 2018). This is because when the organization operates in a high PSC working environment, the management will be more alert and concerned with their employees' needs (Dollard *et al.*, 2012) and the importance of job resources in the organization (Loh *et al.*, 2018). The management understands that job resources are important for employees. Based on the discussion above, researchers believed that high PSC has a significant relationship with job resources.

Job resources positively affect the significance of work engagement and organizational commitment (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). Employees will be strengthening their engagement (Xanthopoulou *et al.*, 2009) and commitment (Joiner and Bakalis, 2006). In other words, when lecturers received sufficient job resources from the management, their engagement will be strengthened with their universities. Employees can engage and commit to the organization at maximum capacity when working in a high PSC environment (Idris and Dollard, 2011). Lecturers will decrease their work engagement if they face an overload of work (Shams *et al.*, 2020). With job resources' support, work engagement will become more obvious and enhance their motivational potential (Borst *et al.*, 2019). This will help lecturers overcome high job demands as job resources can help them achieve their tasks. Besides that, job resources can increase lecturers' work engagement and be keener to assist each other (Bakker *et al.*, 2004). With sufficient job resources, it will boost employees' organizational commitment (De Neve *et al.*, 2015; Bakker and Demerouti, 2007; Bakker *et al.*, 2003). Researchers would also like to examine how job resources can mediate the relationship between PSC and work engagement and organizational commitment.

In this study, the underline theory applied the COR theory (Hobfoll and Freedy, 2018) to form the framework. Cavanaugh *et al.* (2000) had suggested in their study that the COR theory is the most suitable theory for the present framework. COR theory plays a vital role in comprising the net gain or loss of resources (Hobfoll, 2001). According to COR theory, an employee will be evaluated based on his or her personal effort to construct, protect and maintain his or her personal interest to overcome the job demands. Nevertheless, if the individuals cannot cope with the job demands, there will be a possibility of affecting their resources. It will lead employees to become burnout (Hobfoll, 1989). If the individuals incline to ensure their physical and psychological well-being, they will distract their focus from other resources that serve as essential variables as their burnout reaction. Therefore, implementing the PSC in an organization will reduce employee adverse working effects and protect the employee (Dollard and Bakker, 2010). Based on the COR theory, PSC is being conducted as a resource caravan passageway. In other words, lecturers are forced to maintain their current resources and overcome their high job demands.

Furthermore, job demands may lead to gaining net resources. When the job resources are insufficient to support lecturers, it will decrease the lecturers' productivity. In addition, individuals can recharge themselves with their limited resources and protect themselves against the overloaded. Therefore, it is explained via COR theory that a high level of PSC can lower job demands and increase the work engagement organizational commitment among lecturers in research universities (RUs). Thus, in the present study, PSC can consider this as one type of job resource. This study investigates the impact of PSC on work engagement and organizational commitment among lecturers working in the Malaysian RUs through job resources' mediating roles. Thus, the researchers suggested the following hypotheses:

H1. PSC is positively associated with work engagement.

H2. Job resources are positively associated with work engagement.

H3. PSC is positively associated with organizational commitment.

H4. Job resources are positively associated with organizational commitment.

H5. PSC is positively associated with job resources.

H6. Job resources mediate the relationship between PSC and work engagement.

H7. Job resources mediate the relationship between PSC and organizational commitment.

3. Research methodology

3.1 Data collection method

The questionnaire in the present study was adopted from previous studies. The questionnaires were emailed to the lecturers who work in 5 Malaysian RUs. The questionnaires using Google Forms were sent to the respondents' official email addresses. After the due date was set, the researchers closed the Google Forms link. In the email and the first page of the questionnaire, the researchers had mentioned that the purpose and lecturers must have worked at least one year to take part in the present study as a control measure. It is due to employees' intention to engage in work engagement and organizational commitment (Filstad, 2004). In other words, new employees in the current university with less than one year of experience are excluded from participating in this study. This study employed purposive sampling. The respondents must fulfill the criteria: respondents must be Malaysian; and respondents must be a lecturer who has worked for the current RUs for at least one year. A total of 2,000 sets of questionnaires were sent to the lecturers who work in Malaysian RUs.

3.2 Questionnaire development

The research instruments used a five-point and seven-point Likert Scale, and the questionnaire was a mix of positive and negative items. These mixed questionnaires prevent respondents from answering the questionnaire (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). The questionnaire was composed of two parts. The first part consists of PSC questions, job resources, work engagement and organizational commitment. The second part of the questionnaire was collecting the respondents' demographic. The items to measure Psychosocial Safety Climate were adopted from Dollard and Bakker (2010). The PSC-12 items covered management commitment and support, priority for psychological health, organizational participation and communication. This section was measured using a 5-point Likert scale, where 5 refers to "strongly agree" and 1 refers to "strongly disagree." For example, items include "The management considers the psychological health of lecturers to be of great importance.". In the present study, the questions that measured job resources were adopted from Bakker and Demerouti (2014). These questionnaires were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, where 5 refers to "very often" and 1 refers to "never." An example question for job resources is "I receive sufficient information about my work objectives.". Meanwhile, the questionnaire for work engagement that was adopted from Schaufeli *et al.* (2017). This section was also measured using a 5-point Likert scale, where 5 refers to "always" and 1 refers to "never". For example, items include "I am immersed in my work.". The organizational commitment was adopted from Allen and Meyer (1990). These questionnaires were measured using a 7-point Likert scale, where 7 refers to "strongly agree," and 1 refers to "strongly disagree." An example question for job resources is "This university has a great deal of personal meaning for me.".

3.3 Respondent profiles

Table 1 presents a summary of the respondents' profiles. The respondents were lecturers who work in the Malaysian RUs. Of 2,000 questionnaires were distributed, only 484 were returned, with a response rate of 24.2%. Over half of the respondents were female (64 per cent). 40.7% were between 36–45 years old. About three quarters were Malay (73.1%), followed by Chinese (18.8%) and Indian (4.3%). 82.6% were married. Over half were senior lecturers (55.0%), and 28.1% were Associate Professors. A total of 93.4% were doctorate. A total of 57.5% had worked with RU for more than ten years.

4. Results

4.1 Data analysis

The researchers applied partial least square (PLS) modeling using the SmartPLS 3.2.8 to investigate the measurement and structural model in the present study (Ringle *et al.*, 2015).

4.2 Measurement model

The instruments' validity and reliability were investigated based on the guidelines suggested by Hair *et al.* (2019) and Ramayah *et al.* (2018), and followed the structural model to run a test on the hypotheses developed.

Table 1 Profiles of respondents

Demographic variable	*Category*	*Frequency*	*(%)*
Gender	Male	174	36.00
	Female	310	64.00
Age	21 – 25	2	0.40
	26 – 30	7	1.40
	31 – 35	69	14.30
	36 – 40	99	20.50
	41 – 45	98	20.20
	46 – 50	95	19.60
	51 – 55	65	13.40
	56 – 60	39	8.10
	60 and above	10	2.10
Race	Malay	354	73.10
	Chinese	91	18.80
	Indian	21	4.30
	Others	18	3.70
Position	Lecturer	32	6.60
	Senior Lecturer	266	55.00
	Associate Professor	136	28.10
	Professor	43	8.90
	Others	7	1.40
Level of Education	Bachelor's Degree	1	0.20
	Master's Degree	31	6.40
	Doctorate's Degree	452	93.40
Organizational Tenure	1 – 3 years	76	15.70
	4 – 5 years	43	8.90
	6 – 10 years	87	18.00
	11 – 15 years	104	21.50
	16 – 20 years	70	14.50
	More than 20 years	104	21.50
Research Universities	Universiti Malaya (UM)	90	18.60
	Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM)	85	17.60
	Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM)	87	18.00
	UniversitiSains Malaysia (USM)	139	28.70
	Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM)	83	17.10

We assessed the loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), and the composite reliability (CR) for the measurement model. According to Hair *et al.* (2019), the loadings' values should be ≥ 0.5, the AVE should be ≥ 0.5 and the CR should be ≥ 0.7. Table 2 showed that the AVEs were greater than 0.5, and the CRs were greater than 0.7. The loadings were also acceptable. Only one item of organizational commitment was deleted due to low loading.

The following presents the discriminant validity using the HTMT criterion (Henseler *et al.*, 2015). The value of HTMT should be ≤ 0.85 for the stricter criterion, while it should be ≤ 0.90 for the more lenient criterion. Table 3 presented HTMT values were all lesser than the stricter criterion of ≤ 0.85. Thus, we can conclude that the respondents understood that the 4 constructs were different. Based on the validity test above, the results showed that the measurement models are valid and reliable.

Table 2 Measurement model

Constructs	*Items*	*Loadings*	*AVE*	*CR*
Psychosocial Safety Climate	PSC1	0.843	0.715	0.968
	PSC2	0.839		
	PSC3	0.866		
	PSC4	0.835		
	PSC5	0.891		
	PSC6	0.887		
	PSC7	0.897		
	PSC8	0.830		
	PSC9	0.808		
	PSC10	0.807		
	PSC11	0.808		
	PSC12	0.826		
Job Resources	Collaboration	0.693	0.717	0.910
	Feedback	0.884		
	Supervisor	0.876		
	Opportunity	0.917		
Work Engagement	WE1	0.783	0.691	0.870
	WE2	0.904		
	WE3	0.801		
Organizational Commitment	OC1	0.839	0.715	0.968
	OC2	0.823		
	OC3	0.742		
	OC5R	0.666		
	OC6R	0.676		
	OC7	0.665		
	OC8R	0.686		

Note: OC4 deleted due to low loadings

Table 3 Discriminant validity (HTMT)

	*1**	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*
1. *Job Resources**								
2. Feedback	–							
3. Cooperative	–	0.952						
4. Opportunity	–	0.811	0.917					
5. Organizational Commitment	0.461	0.581	0.634	0.610				
6. Psychology Safety Climate	0.407	0.442	0.523	0.442	0.554			
7. Support	–	0.787	0.973	0.746	0.573	0.517		
8. Work Engagement	0.377	0.545	0.540	0.582	0.516	0.347	0.431	

Note: Italics used for higher-order construct values

4.3 Structural model

We report the path coefficients, the standard errors, *t*-values and *p*-values for the structural model using a 5,000-sample re-sample bootstrapping procedure (Hair *et al.*, 2019; Ramayah *et al.*, 2018). Furthermore, to ensure good criteria for testing the significance of the hypotheses, we used integration of criteria, such as *p*-values, confidence intervals and effect sizes (Hahn and Ang, 2017). Tables 4 and 5 showed the summary of the criteria the researchers had used to test the hypotheses developed.

First, researchers assessed the effect of the two predictors on work engagement, and the $R2$ was 0.253, which showed that all the two predictors explained 25.3% of the variance in work engagement. Job resources ($\beta = 0.091$, $p < 0.05$) was positively related to work engagement. Thus, *H2* was supported. However, PSC ($\beta = 0.091$, $p > 0.05$) was not significantly related to work engagement; thus, *H1* was not supported. Next, the hypothesis tested the effect on organizational commitment, with an $R2$ of 0.438, which showed that all the two predictors explained 43.8% of the variance in organizational commitment. PSC ($\beta = 0.300$, $p < 0.05$) Job resources ($\beta = 0.461$, $p < 0.05$) was positively related to organizational commitment. Hence, *H3* and *H4* were both supported. Next, the hypothesis testing was the effect on job resources; the $R2$ was 0.240, which showed that PSC explained 24% of the variance in job resources. *H5* was supported since PSC ($\beta = 0.490$, $p < 0.05$) was significant with job resources.

This part will evaluate the mediation hypotheses. The researchers used bootstrapping to test the indirect effect upon recommendation by Preacher and Hayes (2004, 2008). The results concluded that the mediation is significant when the confidence interval did not straddle a 0. The Table 6 showed that, PSC → JR → WE ($\beta = 0.222$, $p < 0.05$) and, PSC → JR → OC ($\beta = 0.226$, $p < 0.05$) were significant since its confidence interval bias-corrected was 95% and did not straddle a 0, hence, *H6* and *H7* were supported.

The following presents the PLS-Predict. Shmueli *et al.* (2019) suggested PLS-Predict, a holdout sample-based procedure that generates case-level predictions on an item or a construct level using the PLS-Predict with a 10-fold procedure to check for predictive relevance. In addition, Shmueli *et al.* (2019) mentioned that if all the item differences (PLS-LM) were lower than predictive relevance, then there is strong predictive power; however, if all are higher than predictive relevance, then the predictive power is not confirmed. According to Table 6, the majority of the errors of the PLS model were lower than the LM

Table 4 Hypothesis testing direct effects

Hypothesis	*Relationship*	*Std Beta*	*Std Error*	*t-values*	*p-values*	*BCI LL*	*BCI UL*	*Decision*
H1	PSC → WE	0.091	0.048	1.911	0.057	−0.002	0.184	Not Supported
H2	JR → WE	0.452	0.046	9.861	0	0.362	0.533	Supported
H3	PSC → OC	0.300	0.039	7.720	0	0.216	0.372	Supported
H4	JR → OC	0.461	0.041	11.182	0	0.384	0.537	Supported
H5	PSC → JR	0.490	0.039	12.691	0	0.414	0.558	Supported

Note: We use a 95% confidence interval with a bootstrapping of 5,000

Table 5 Hypothesis testing indirect effects

Hypothesis	*Relationship*	*Std Beta*	*Std Error*	*t-values*	*p-values*	*BCI LL*	*BCI UL*	*Decision*
H6	PSC → JR → WE	0.222	0.030	7.346	0	0.164	0.275	Supported
H7	PSC → JR → OC	0.226	0.028	8.185	0	0.173	0.279	Supported

Note: We use a 95% confidence interval with a bootstrapping of 5,000

Table 6 PLS-Predict

Item	*PLS RMSE*	*LM RMSE*	*PLS-SEM*	*Q^2_predict*
OC1	1.311	1.312	−0.001	−0.005
OC3	1.333	1.351	−0.018	0.022
OC6R	1.588	1.590	−0.002	0.003
OC5R	1.612	1.624	−0.012	0.012
OC8R	1.672	1.688	−0.016	0.018
OC2	1.310	1.303	0.007	−0.008
OC7	1.423	1.437	−0.014	0.017
WE2	0.745	0.752	−0.007	0.018
WE3	0.800	0.807	−0.007	0.016
WE1	0.828	0.839	−0.011	0.025

model. Hence, we concluded that the model in the present study has strong predictive power.

5. Implications and recommendations

The present study's objective is to examine PSC's effect, job resources on work engagement and organizational commitment. The study also aims to test the mediating roles of job resources on PSC's relationship, work engagement and organizational commitment. The relationship between job resources and work engagement was positively significant in the study, and *H2* was supported. This significant relationship indicates that higher levels of job resources can increase lecturers' work engagement among Malaysian RUs. This finding is consistent with the previous study, where job resources, such as support and opportunity, were positively related to work engagement (Borst *et al.*, 2019). This scenario can be understood since job resources enable lecturers to be engaged in the university they are attached to. Hence, it is recommended that Malaysian RUs provide sufficient job resources to lecturers to increase their work engagement.

It is interesting to note that the relationship between PSC and work engagement was not significant. This finding is inconsistent with the previous research that PSC is positively related to work engagement (Xanthopoulou *et al.*, 2009; Schaufeli an Bakker, 2004). Interestingly, over half of Malaysian RUs lecturers were between 36–50 years old (54.1%). Bakker (2011) emphasized that work engagement is the combination of high work pleasure (dedication) with high activation (vigor and absorption). University lecturers may have been less engaged, especially in COVID-19, where every lecture is conducted online. There are 36% of the lecturers were working with the RUs for more than ten years. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, lecturers were required to work from home. One Malaysian RUs requires every employee, including lecturers, to clock in for attendance purposes. The practice of "clock in" creates dissatisfaction among lecturers as the majority of the lecturers were also asked to deliver significant outputs and work long hours. Could the practice of "clock in" reflect that the management did not trust their lecturers? We argue that trust is a workplace currency, and it is a two-way street via exchange – it is given and received. When there is more trust, employees are more likely to be engaged. Even though the relationship between PSC and work engagement is not significant, the finding reveals that job resources mediate the relationship between PSC and work engagement. In other words, PSC can lead to work engagement via job resources. The finding provides empirical evidence that increases in job resources can achieve work engagement.

We found that PSC has a significant relationship with organizational commitment. Hence, *H3* was supported. PSC is an indication of the priority of the well-being of employees (Idris *et al.*, 2015). If the university can apply higher PSC, it can alert the university's management to notice the lecturers' needs, enhancing the lecturers' organizational commitment in RUs.

Therefore, the university management is advised to take this advice to apply PSC in their university to identify and improve the level of lecturers' commitment.

On the other hand, job resources were significantly related to organizational commitment in this study, where *H4* was supported. This result indicates that job resources can heighten the lecturers' organizational commitment. This is in line with Joiner and Bakalis (2006), who claimed that adequate job resources could improve the employees' commitment. Furthermore, it is signified that job resources are important to the employees in the organization. During the current pandemic, the management is advised to provide more job resources such as support in training for the lecturers to use the latest technology to conduct their works, especially the lecturers aged 41 to 60 not familiar with the technology.

There was a significant relationship between PSC and job resources, which shows that Malaysian RUs with high PSC levels can enhance lecturers and have more resources to support them during the current pandemic. This finding is consistent with the prior studies that PSC increased job resources (Loh *et al.*, 2018; Idris and Dollard, 2011). Based on Dollard *et al.* (2012), organizational working environment with a high PSC, the management is more alert to their employees' needs and resources. In other words, lecturers will feel that they are working in a safe environment from the psychological threats and support with sufficient resources. Thus, *H5* was supported. The management of the Malaysian RUs is recommended to apply PSC in their university and work policies, procedures and practices (Dollard *et al.*, 2012) because lecturers can feel safe and protected in their working university.

We found that job resources can mediate the relationship between PSC and work engagement. Thus, the *H6* was supported. Job resources are a backbone to support lecturers to be more engaged with the university they are attached to. This significant indirect relationship again highlights that PSC reflects management commitment to promoting employee well-being in Malaysian RUs, leading to work engagement via job resources. PSC can act as a resource to support lecturers to have better performance. The present study's finding presented that the indirect relationship between PSC and organizational commitment is significant via job resources, and *H7* was supported. This significant indirect relationship highlights that PSC in Malaysian RUs can increase and support the job resources, leading to commitment among lecturers. Therefore, the university is suggested to pay attention to job design and support for PSC to allow the university management to explore more ways to increase the adequate job resources to support lecturers in RUs and improve their work engagement (Gan and Kee, 2020b) and organizational commitment (Geisler *et al.*, 2019).

6. Conclusion

Although the present study had contributed to the existing literature, the present study's result cannot be generalized. Suggestions for future research include conducting a study over 3-time points that looks at both the employee's perspective, managerial perspective and organizational perspective within a workplace. All correlation and cross-sectional studies identified the need for a comprehensive three-wave study to accurately examine the model's longitudinal effects. Our findings have shown support for PSC's existence as a predicting factor for work engagement and organizational commitment via job resources. Further longitudinal research should be conducted over three waves to assess whether these variables relate independently over time. For the theoretical implication, researchers had extent the COR theory by developing the different variables in this present study. The practical implication, policymakers should consider the PSC element before have a new policy. The result of the study showed that PSC elements could minimize the gap between policymaker and their employees. The policy suggested for the policymaker is to provide technology training support, especially during this pandemic. In this pandemic, technology training support from the universities is essential. Through the support, the university can show their concern (PSC) and provide essential training in using technology (resources) to

support lecturers and indirectly they will be more grateful indirectly. Therefore, lecturers' engagement and commitment can in enhanced.

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