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Abstract

This paper proposed a conceptual framework and states valid propositions to be tested by future researchers empirically. The framework explicates the moderating effect of self-efficacy between physical activity (PA) and employee’s wellbeing (EW) during COVID-19 pandemic. In line with the Movement Control Order (MCO) announced due to COVID-19 pandemic, all offices throughout Malaysia will be closed and during this period, workers need to work on a work-from-home basis. In conjunction, physical Activity have important consequences for both the quality and length of life but influencing disease outcome. Throughout the current survey in 2019, it shows that workers in Malaysia physically inactive that lead to non-communicable disease (NCD). As employees are the major contributor to economic and social development of a country, this study tends to identify does physical activity influence employees wellbeing. This study suggested to measure the relationship by using the PLS-SEM. Being a conceptual paper, it reviewed scholarly articles on the variables of the past studies related to the physical activity and employee wellbeing. The proposed framework would have several significant implications for understanding, creating awareness and promoting employee wellbeing as well as contributes to existing.

Keywords: COVID-19, Physical Activity, Employee Well-Being, Malaysia, Mental Health.

1. INTRODUCTION

Physical Activity is important in critical times such as the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. This is vital as to make adjustment to life as people need to change their norms as to maintain survival due to the pandemic. Recent literature has shown evidence of immediate impact of the pandemic to the society in general. Wang (2020) highlights that the pandemic poses psychological challenges to the society. From a perspective of employees, physical activity is needed as employees need to stay healthy to perform their job tasks. Work is a primary determinant of socio-economic position and plays a critical role in mental and physical well-being (Davenport., et al, 2016). The influence of employee wellbeing at work has attracted increasing interest among researcher. In the modern world where there are rising dependencies on global market forces places an ever-greater burden on those of working age in the delivery of products and services and this in turn has had a negative effect on the health and wellbeing of workers (Baptiste, 2008). Given the importance of employee wellbeing to perform, organizations have increased their focus on understanding and managing the factors that contribute to wellbeing in the workplace.
Thus, the aim of this study to determine whether does physical activity influence employee’s wellbeing. Specifically, how the physical and mental health, the important element of wellbeing is influenced by physical activity. The paper is organized as follows. The next section explains the literature review, followed by methodology. Next, the conceptual theory is proposed and followed by conclusion.

2. Literature Review

Wellbeing is identified as a complex, multi-dimensional construct with significant cultural and contextual factors affecting it (Sandilya and Shahnawaz, 2018). Wellbeing is an example of the condition of households, society and the people of a nation generally. Wellbeing, in the modernized world is explained in various ways. It is a crucial issue for a household as it reflects towards the status of comfort for mankind. It includes whole living condition of a family such as shelter, food, clothing, safety and such. Although the concept of wellbeing is widely exposed, there still no common definition agreed. The term wellbeing and happiness and satisfaction are usually interchangeable (OECD, 2013). Various definitions of wellbeing are broadly divided into three main categories: (1) general definitions where’s there no possible detail of wellbeing components; (2) basic definitions that divide wellbeing into few parts which is essential part, dimensions or key characteristics that used to evaluate wellbeing; and (3) focused definitions that either internally or externally refer to just a few components of wellbeing (OECD, 2013). The definition of wellbeing is important as it determined the way how wellbeing is being measured. Laderchi et al., (2003) emphasized that by choosing different definitions, it is important as they used different measurements in terms of indicators. Therefore, different definitions of wellbeing describe different dimensions towards households.

Research on wellbeing had been measured by few scholars in the past time. It is not new but rather there has been a development in academic research on wellbeing since the mid-1970s, especially extending in the last decade (MacKerron, 2011; Abdallah et al., 2008). In addition, wellbeing is generally viewed as a condition of individuals’ life circumstances (McGillivray 2007). Various of wellbeing perception have been given at the same time but, as Gasper (2002), Travers and Richardson (1997) and others point out, the term ‘wellbeing’ is an idea used in order to evaluate a situation of a person life. Mohd Fadhil (2003) defines wellbeing as an attempt to improve the quality of life to a level that is safe, healthy and comfortable than the physical, social and psychological. Some indicators are often used to measure wellbeing which is the income, assets, expenses, the poverty line, the consumer price index, socio-economic status, occupation and education (Laily & Lokman, 2005). In addition, wellbeing can be measured by focusing on health, housing and family life (Laily et al. 1999). Table 2.1 shows different definition of wellbeing from different researchers.

Table 2.1: Definitions of Wellbeing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Definitions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Felce and Perry (1995)</td>
<td>Consist evaluation of physical, material, social and emotional wellbeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ryan and Deci (2001),</td>
<td>‘Ideal models for observational enquiry into wellbeing involving two philosophies which is firstly is hedonism and eudemonism (happiness). The second vies of wellbeing consist of more than happiness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huppert &amp; Baylis (2004)</td>
<td>Positive impact that allow individual and groups to thrive. It is a level that refers to psychological, physical and social express.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rahmatina &amp; Habib, (2014)</td>
<td>Responsibility for sorts of consumption goods/services such as shelter, medical and education as the essential needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axfordet al., (2014).</td>
<td>Self-acknowledgement and describe wellbeing in terms of the degree to which a person is completely working</td>
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In contemporary wellbeing studies, there are various approaches utilized towards the definitions and measurements of wellbeing which is it goes beyond the old economic measurement. It include responsibility for sorts of consumption goods/services such as shelter, medical and education as the essential needs (Rahmatina & Habib, 2014). While according to Ryan and Deci (2001), wellbeing is usually described as a situation of positive feeling (joy and fulfillment) and also positive functioning elements (engagement and self-acknowledgement).

2.1 Employees Wellbeing
Employee wellbeing is a key issue that companies are striving to address to ensure that their employee remain happy and motivated at work. Wellbeing is derived from an aggregate of the way a person presents experiences over a time period and how satisfied they may be with their life typical (Daniel, et al, 2006). Wellbeing at job also plays a vital role, not only for workers, however, also for organization, the economy and the social order confined (Mirabito and Berry, 2015). The recognition of the fact that employee’s wellbeing of an organization are valuable assets, which can be construed as primary intellectual capital. Organizations have realized the need to prioritize employee wellbeing for high productivity and simultaneously strive to work on the quality of life of every employee (Tandon,2019). The sign of its growing importance is demonstrated in its inclusion within the recently agreed sustainable development goals (SDG) (Goal 3: To ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at ages) (Department of Statistic, 2016). Despite the importance of healthy lives and wellbeing in SDG, current scenario in Malaysia shows that workers in Malaysia had physically inactive with 45.9% (AIA Validity Survey, 2019). In average, an organization lose an estimated cost of RM2.27 million per year (productivity loss at 73.1 days a year) due to ill-health related absence (employees’ absence from work due to health problems) and presenteeism (employees are present at work but are constrained by health problems from carrying out their daily activities). The ability of the workplace to prevent any sort of illness and promote wellbeing is beneficial for the organizations and society-at-large. Each facet of employee wellbeing consists of multiple elements, which contribute towards a holistic measurement of the concept and attention must be paid to all the dimensions as neglect of any one over a period of time will affect the overall wellbeing (Khatri and Gupta, 2019). In this study, there are two elements which is physical and mental health (see Fig.1).

Fig 1: Elements of Employee’s Wellbeing

Most of the employer’s focus is on addressing employee physical health seeking to address physical conditions like high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, smoking through initiatives like gym facilities, weight loss, exercise, nutrition, smoking cessation, etc. (Purcell, 2019). Another important aspect of employee wellbeing is mental health, which mitigate the harmful effects of stressful and lead to life satisfaction and mental health (Park,2010). Further discussion on physical and mental health are in the next sub-section.
2.1.1 Physical Health
Organization are beginning to realize the benefits of providing employees with supportive work environment, and in particular, of providing employees with supportive conditions that promote health as this support is evidenced in greater concern for the safety and physical health of employees, as well as increased emphasis on providing psychologically healthy workplace (Burton, 2010). Physical health problems have the potential to impact overall wellbeing and this classify physical health and wellbeing as comprised looking and feeling fit, being active and feeling energetic and happy, having a good attitude to life, socializing with family and friends, and having a sense of life balance (McCloughen., et al, 2015).

2.1.2 Mental Health
Mental health is a major issue in both low-and middle-income countries (Kopinak2015). Mental health problems make a substantial contribution to the global burden of disease (WHO,2017). Many governments across the globe are now measuring the wellbeing of their populations as a indicator of social progress and development (Durand,2018). Employee who experience positive mental health and greater psychological capital are more satisfied, committed and productive (Davenport., et al, 2016). Mental health problems comprise of a broad range of mental disorders including anxiety disorders, bipolar disorder, depression and eating disorders are generally characterized by some combination of abnormal thoughts, emotions, behavior and relationships with others (Frahangi., et al, 2018). Unhealthy eating behaviors are important determinants of mental health problems in adolescents (Lien., et al, 2006).

2.2 Physical Activity (Pa)
Physical activity is an international term and is an expression used to describe body movements using energy (Yildizhan&Aggon, 2020).Physical activity refers to any bodily movement that results in an increase in energy expenditure (Rhodes, Janssen, Bredin, Warburton, & Bauman, 2017). The personality of an individual can actually be expressed through physical activities that can be seen over a period of time (Mohd Udin, Omar, Khamis, & Yusoff, 2020). Other than that, physical activity causes many physiological changes in the body, as well as affecting the psychological structure of people (Yildizhan&Aggon, 2020). Strong evidence indicates that lack of physical activity (PA) is an important predictor of some chronic diseases, including obesity and cardiovascular disease (Lau, et al., 2019; Cheah & Poh, 2014). Law, Sulaiman, Gan, Adznam, and Mohd Taib, (2020) indicates that physical activity is one of a factors that found to be a predictor towards obesity among Orang Asli women. Physical inactivity has been growing to alarming rates in developed countries with 81% of the adolescents failing to meet the minimum amount of physical activity recommended by the World Health Organizations (Sanchez-Oliva, et al., 2020).

Meanwhile, there are some advantages of physical activities towards individual’s well-being. The advantages of regular physical activity include reduction in risk of cardiovascular events, reduction in obesity, diminished risk of hypertension and diabetes mellitus, improvement in blood lipid profile, reduction in risk of cancer and many others (Yildizhan&Aggon, 2020). There is strong evidence of a positive influence of physical activity on the proposed antecedents of quality of life and well-being, including self-related function, mood or psychological states, and cognitive function in older adults (Yildizhan&Aggon, 2020).

Following the guideline of Ministry of Health Malaysia, individual who spent at least 150 minutes/week in moderate or 60 minutes/week in vigorous physical activities were considered as physically active, otherwise they were considered as physically inactive (Cheah & Poh, 2014; Cai Lian, Bonn, Si Han, Chin Choo, & Chee Piau, 2016).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.2. Physical Activity Guideline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physically Active</td>
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Source: Ministry of Health Malaysia
2.3 Self-Related Function (Self-Efficacy)
Perceived self-efficacy is defined as people’s beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives (Bandura, 1977). In other words, self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave. According to (Janet Buckworth, 2017), self-efficacy is a belief in your capability to organize and execute actions that will lead to a specific outcome. Luszczynska and Gutierrez-Dona (2005) through their study indicates that people with high self-efficacy choose to perform more challenging tasks due to they set themselves higher goals and stick to them. High self-efficacy also allows people to select challenging setting and explore their environment or create a new one. Other than that, previous study shows that there was significant joint prediction of self-efficacy, life frustration, quality of health and meaning in life on suicidal ideation (Fagbenro & Olagundoye, 2019). Despite that, higher self-efficacy may lead to enhanced quality of life in multi-morbidity (Peters, Potter, Kelly, & Fitzpatrick, 2019).

3. Conceptual Framework: A Proposal
The proposed conceptual framework for this study were adapted from McAuley and Morris (2007) and Ehlers, Salerno, Aguinaga, & McAuley (2018). Through their study, the author has documented the benefits of physical activity to well-being and quality of life in older adults (refer Fig. 1). The QOL in the study focusing on the global wellbeing. Wellbeing has been thought of as a multidimensional set of construct that are not reducible to a single facet such as quality of life, it includes not only satisfaction with life, a cognitive appraisal of one’s life, but positive emotions and psychological resources, together with consideration of social inequality, environmental degradation, and political freedom (Lambert, et al., 2020). There are many reason why wellbeing matters such as, individuals with grater wellbeing are known to generate greater social good and are easier on the public purse, individuals with grater wellbeing also tend to be healthier and live longer, while workplace benefits with happier employees showing more productivity, engagement attitudes, and less sick time and absenteeism (Boehm and Lyubomirsky, 2018).

**Fig 2:** A conceptual model of the physical activity and quality-of-life relationship proposed by McAuley and Morris (2007) and (Ehlers, Salerno, Aguinaga, & McAuley, 2018.

![Conceptual Model](image.png)

**Note:** Physical function is presented in a grey as it is included in the original model proposed by McAuley and Morris (2007) and (Ehlers, Salerno, Aguinaga, & McAuley, 2018), but is not the focus of this study.
Meanwhile, in this current study will be focusing on the relationship between physical activity with employee’s wellbeing that consist of physical health and mental health (refer Fig.2). the conceptual framework for this study as illustrated in figure 2 below and it shows that is there any mediating effect of self-efficacy between physical activity (PA) with employee wellbeing that consists of physical health (PH) and mental health (MH).

Fig 2: The conceptual model of physical activity with employee’s wellbeing.

It is proposed that this research is based on primary data and it is collected through questionnaire. A questionnaire was constructed for the purpose of the study and collected through face to face interview. There are three sections in the structured questionnaire. The first section is the respondent profile that consists of respondent gender, age, marital status, income per month, level of education, and number of households. While the second section asked about the respondent well-being. Third section solicits respondent health behaviour which is physical activity. The questionnaire items as in Table 1 below. The data will be analysed using Partial Least Square (PLS-SEM). In PLS-SEM there are two stage of analysis. The first stage is measurement model that measure in the instruments and items of the construct. On the other hand, the second stage is to measure the construct. In second stage, the study will show the most effect or influence factors among the significant independent variables towards dependents variables.

Table 3.1: Items Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Response Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical Health</td>
<td>How often has your sleep been peaceful and undisturbed?</td>
<td>5 likert-scales (Never-Always)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How often have you suffered from an upset stomach?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>how often did you feel chess pain?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How often did you get a headache when you were frustrated when there was a lot of pressure on you to get things done?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health</td>
<td>Little interest or pleasure in doing things</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poor appetite or overeating</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feeling tired or having little energy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Activity</td>
<td>I do take part in some physical activity regularly at least 3 times/per week or 30 min/day</td>
<td>5 likert-scales (Strongly Disagree-Strongly Agree)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I am confident to change my physical activity, even if there is no one around to show me how to do it</td>
<td>5 likert-scales (Strongly Disagree-Strongly Agree)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I am confident to change my physical activity, even if I have never used it before</td>
<td>5 likert-scales (Strongly Disagree-Strongly Agree)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I am confident to change my physical activity, even if I have only the online instructions for references</td>
<td>5 likert-scales (Strongly Disagree-Strongly Agree)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If I wanted to change my physical activity, I could easily do it</td>
<td>5 likert-scales (Strongly Disagree-Strongly Agree)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I have enough resources to change my physical activity</td>
<td>5 likert-scales (Strongly Disagree-Strongly Agree)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. CONCLUSIONS
This paper proposed a conceptual framework and states valid propositions to be tested by future researchers empirically. The framework explicates the relationship between physical activity (independent variables) with employee well-being that include of physical and mental well-being (dependent variables). The proposed framework would have several significant implications for understanding, creating awareness and promoting employee well-being as well as contributes to existing works on well-being. Further researcher is recommended to test this conceptual framework and have an empirical outcome to test the validity and the relationship.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
The authors would like to extend their gratitude to UniversitiTeknologi MARA Melaka for funding this research through TEJA Grant 2020: GDT2020-10 which has funded this research project.

REFERENCES