

Perceived Organizational Support and Work Engagement in Malaysian Banking Industry

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Abstract

This study focuses on the predictive effect of Perceived Organizational Support (POS) to Work Engagement (WE) in the Malaysian Banking Industry, Peninsular Malaysia. The population in this study were all employees employed in Malaysian banking industry. The method used in this research is quantitative descriptive studies using a simple descriptive approach and Structural Equation Modelling- Partial Least Squared (SMART PLS-3) analysis to test the study hypotheses. This study found that the hypotheses is supported which show the direct relationship between the perceived organizational support and work engagement. Perceived organizational support is the belief of employees that if managers are concerned about their employees' commitment to the organisation, employees will be concerned about the organization's commitment to them. The implication of this study is that employers should ensure the employees knows that they are getting support in workplace from organization as this will affect their work engagement at workplace as this may affect their performance.

Keywords: *Work Engagement (WE), Perceived Organisational Support (POS), Banking, SMART PLS.*

Introduction

Management of human resources is considered as the main backbone and source of competitive advantage of an organization. Individuals are seen as strategic and valuable assets to be developed inside an organisation, and this function focuses on recruiting, managing, and providing direction for those people who work in the organisation. It is the function that is known as human resource management. Basically, compensation, performance appraisal, and training and development are at the heart of human resource management practises because they lay the groundwork for attracting and retaining top personnel in a business, which in turn boosts its productivity (Al-Hamdan & Bani Issa, 2022). Nowadays, as a result of recent shifts in both the social and economic landscape in Malaysia, the administration of human resources in modern times has grown complex and increasingly difficult (Chan, 2017). Organizations needs to deal with human resource issues such as commitment of employees in order to influence them to commit to change. Malaysian managers realise that human resource management has to be effective to bring about organisational stability and harmony (Shah Alam, 2009) since it plays a vital role in the success of organizational performance. In order to increase organizational performance, management must ensure the employees are committed and engaged in their workplace. Engagement must be expressly incorporated into a comprehensive system of human resource management policies, practises, and processes (Guest, 2014). Organization needs a workforce that is willing to contribute physically, cognitively, emotionally and ready to go the extra mile (Narula, 2016).

According to Truss et al. (2013), employee engagement is the key to understanding how successful human resource management strategies may lead to improved individual and organisational performance (Nauman et al., n.d.). The discussion regarding the connection between human resource management and employee engagement as well as the outcomes of organisations has reached an interesting crossroad, which begs the question of whether it should be formulated and implemented as integral component of organizational strategy (Mubashar & Harzer, 2023). In order to understand how engagement influence business performance, an organization must understand the fundamental drivers influencing an employee's ability to enhance their work performance (Goh et al., 2022). Human resource management promotes employee

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commitment as engaged employees feel supported from their organisations and have a good working relationship with their superior (Mukaihata et al., 2020).

According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (2017), the percentage of the population in Malaysia who are employed increased by 1% from 14.5 million in 2015 to 14.7 million in 2016, moving up from a previous high of 14.5 million in 2015. Additionally, the number of employed people increased from 14.1 million in 2015 to 14.2 million in 2016, representing a rise of 1%. However, based on the number, not all employees are engaged. According to (Obuma & Worlu, 2017), only 15% of employees are engaged at work and the majority of employees are “not engaged” or “actively disengaged” at work, implying they are emotionally disconnected from their workplace. Employees nowadays face a struggle to stay engaged at their workplace. The organizational knowledge on the engaged employees allows the organization to stay competitive (Gezhi & Xiang, 2022). Industry reports also suggest that only 20% of employees are engaged in their work, and the engagement levels are steadily declining and costing countries to lose in productivity (Ghadi et al., 2013). *Perceived organizational support* refers to employees' "global beliefs concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being" (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

Rising wages, new labor policies and evolution of employee and customer expectations have caused the service sectors to hit a brick wall (Mahmood et al., 2021). In the realm of the service sectors, as upheavals and disturbances exert their influence, employees need to find ways to manage employees' engagement in the organization as engaged employees can play a critical role in solving crisis in the service industry (Ostrega, 2016). However, fostering engagement amid a turbulent time is easier said than done. With upheavals and disruptions raging, businesses in the service industry, particularly banks must increase workforce engagement to optimize their operations. They need to maintain their adaptability and constantly look for innovative approaches to engagement to effectively address the growing number of challenges (Sahni, n.d.).

Empowered employees are more likely to find purpose in the work that they do, believe that they are capable of fulfilling the requirements to accomplish their work, intent to perform their job tasks, and feel that they have the ability to influence the results of their jobs (López-Cabarcos et al., 2023). *Perceived organizational support* refers to employees' "global beliefs concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being" (Eisenberger et al., 1986). The antecedents of perceived supervisor supports are divided into three such as “fairness, supervisor support and organizational rewards and job conditions” (Prayogi et al., 2022). Procedural justice addresses the fairness of the methods used to decide the distribution of resources among employees (Greenberg, 1990). *Supervisors support* is the global perceptions concerning how one is valued by the organization and the extent to which supervisors value their efforts and care about their well-being (Kottke & Sharafinski, 1988). The positive treatment that an employee receives from a supervisor should be able to contribute to their overall POS because supervisors serve as organisational agents. *Organizational rewards and job conditions* are the human resources practices in an organization. According to Shore and Shore (1995), as cited in Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002), POS has been linked to many different rewards and job conditions, including pay, promotions, job security, autonomy, role stressors, and training (Greenberg, 1990). It was also mentioned that good reward opportunities show employees that their work is valued, which in turn increases POS. These elements will help employees feel more psychologically empowered, which will in turn lead to increased levels of engagement in their work (Ugwu et al., 2014). This study seeks to address this knowledge gap by investigating the relationship between perceived organisational support and employee engagement in the workplace. Hence, the primary objective of this study is to provide fresh empirical and theoretical perspectives on this pivotal concept, with a focus on exploring the impact of Perceived Organisational Support (POS) on work engagement. More specifically, our researchers aim to delve into the connection between perceived organisational support and an individual's level of work engagement.

An organisation in a certain service industry must face the problems of operating under continual exertion to maintain its competitive advantage by producing maximum output with minimal input in competitive business climate. This is a challenge that needs to be conquered by the organisation in order to be successful. Employees who are engaged are committed, dedicated, and invest cognitively, mentally, and behaviorally in their professional duties (Al-Hamdan & Bani Issa, 2022). Considering the low levels of engagement that

are prevalent among workers in a variety of countries, it is abundantly obvious that engagement is important, and that additional study is required in order to increase our understanding of the primary elements influencing employee engagement (Rana et al., 2014). Boosting employee participation at work is an issue that must be addressed not only by individual companies but also by national governments. Therefore, there is still a need for a study of work engagement in determining the level of work engagement in a different country not only focusing on the individual level (Schaufeli, 2017). Considering the importance of employees feeling supported by their supervisor (Penning de Vries et al., 2022), and knowing why some employees perceive the support will lead to work engagement or not, this study hopes to contribute to the work engagement literature in the field study of banking employees by investigating the effect of perceived organisational support on work engagement. Additionally, it will enable the organization to stimulate and inculcate the work engagement culture in their organizations and further contribute to the organizational growth.

Objectives

The research objectives that were identified are as follows:

To examine the predictive effect of perceived organizational support on work engagement in the banking industry in peninsular Malaysia.

Underpinning Theory

Social Exchange Theory

The most commonly used theory in studying work engagement are self-determination theory (Green et al., 2017; Hanif et al., 2015; Kenneth, 2017; Van den Broeck et al., 2008) and social exchange theory (Bakker et al., 2011; Detnakin & Rurkkhum, 2016; Dutta & Sharma, 2016; Hassan. O, 2015; Narula, 2016; Schaufeli, 2013), as compared to the other theories. The Social Exchange Theory was utilised in this study to investigate the influence that perceived organisational support had on work engagement exhibited by banking sector employees. Social Exchange Theory and the principle of reciprocity both have the potential to be viable explanations for perceived organisational support (Wang et al., 2022). Social exchange relationships establish between two people through a sequence of mutual, although not necessarily contemporaneous, exchanges that result in a pattern of reciprocal obligation for each side (Masterson et al., 2015). The social exchange paradigm may best be represented by the concept of perceived organizational support (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Masterson et al., 2015; Stamper & Masterson, 2002). According to Eisenberger et al. (1986), the two-way character of social interaction fosters the development of behavioural expectations for contribution, that by providing support, in exchange for its attention to employees' socio-emotional needs, the business expects excellent levels of productivity (Nazir & Islam, 2020).

The employee's perception of the organization's appreciation for him or her will also play a significant role in influencing whether any attitudes or actions that are beneficial to the organisation are adopted (Moorman et al., 1998). This study proposed and tested a research model based on social exchange theory as the theoretical foundation in exploring relationship between perceived organizational support and work engagement. It was shown to be consistent with the social exchange theory, when the organization or supervisor give a good treatment to employees, it establishes a general obligation for employees to care about their organisation and treat it well in return, based on the reciprocity norm (Eisenberger et al., 2001). They are also linked to strong emotional attachments, as well as informal, intimate, and more transparent commitments. Individuals who build social exchange ties with their organisations are more likely to support them and become engaged in their work (Saad et al., 2022).

Materials and Methods

This study uses a quantitative method to investigate the engagement at work and perceived support provided by the organisation. This study used SMART PLS3 for data analysis. The determination on the

number of respondents in a sample size should be established with the model and data characteristics in mind (Hair et al., 2014). According to the Cohen Table in Hair et al. (2014), the minimum sample size required for this study is 65 respondents. This is determined by the number of arrows that pointing from the independent variables to the dependent variables. The participants in the study were drawn from 169 employees from different banking institutions in Malaysia, including both domestic and international banks. As a result, the size of the sample is adequate for validating the research model used in the study.

Sampling

This study was conducted in the form of a survey research. Data was systematically gathered from respondents with the use of standardized questionnaires. The survey questionnaires were then distributed to all major banks in Malaysia after getting verbal consent from their management. The questionnaires were distributed to a person-in-charge from the banks. The cover letter of the survey questionnaires clearly stated that employees could choose not to take part in the study and data provided would be kept private. Aside from the participants' demographic information, no other information that may be used to identify them was recorded.

Research Instruments

The variables were measured by utilising previously validated measuring scales scored on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from never (1) to always (7). The higher the score on a scale, the higher would be the level of the variable being measured. Table 1 exhibits the sources for construct of the measurement. The participant was required to complete three sections of the survey booklet. Section A measures work engagement and section B measures, perceived organizational support. Section C contained questions concerning demographic information.

Table 1. Sources for Construct Measurement

Constructs		Number of items	Sources
1.	Work engagement	9	Schaufeli and Bakker (2003)
2.	Perceived organizational support	16	(Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002), p. 699)
	Total	25	

Measurement of Variables

Work Engagement

The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale -9 was used to measure work engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2006). This measurement includes a subscale for each of the three engagement dimensions: vigor, dedication and absorption. The UWES has been validated in several countries in Europe and in North America, Africa, Asia, and Australia (Bakker, 2009). It is a brief, valid and reliable questionnaire that is based on the definition of work engagement as a combination of vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli, 2013). Respondents were required to indicate their response on a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1= never to 7=always. Sample items reflecting vigor, dedication and absorption, respectively, are “When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work”, “I am proud of the work I do” and “I get carried away when I am working”. Confirmatory factor analysis results from past studies provide justifications for using a single composite work engagement score (W. B. Schaufeli et al., 2006).

Perceived Organizational Support

POS was measured with an abbreviated by using 8 items version of perceived organizational support recommendation from (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002), p. 699). This is because of the recommendations of (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002) who note “because the original scale is unidimensional and has high

internal reliability, the use of shorter versions does not appear problematic”. Many studies employ fewer items for practical reasons. In spite of this, sound judgement indicates that both aspects of the definition of POS (valuation of employees’ contribution and care about employees’ well-being) be reflected in short versions of the questionnaire (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002) & (Filippi et al., 2023). Respondents were required to indicate their response on a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1= never to 7=always. A typical item was “my organization really cares about my well-being”.

Data Analysis

In this study, employed Partial Least Squares (PLS) path modeling to test research hypotheses. The rationale behind choosing PLS path modeling lies in the exploratory nature of our research. PLS-SEM (Structural Equation Modeling) is a preferred method for exploratory research as it facilitates the development of new theories. The evaluation process consisted of two distinct phases, as articulated by Hair et al. (2011); first, the assessment of the measurement model (outer model), and second, the examination of the structural model (inner model).

When scrutinizing the measurement model, we considered several key aspects. This included evaluating its internal consistency through measures like composite reliability, assessing the reliability of individual indicators, examining convergent validity through metrics such as Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and factor loadings, and ensuring discriminant validity. As delineated by Hair et al. (2014), the assessment of reflective measurement models mainly centers around convergent and discriminant validity. Convergent validity was gauged through AVE and indicator reliability (also referred to as outer loadings), while discriminant validity was evaluated using three methods: the Fornell–Larcker criterion, cross-loadings, and the novel Heterotrait Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) approach.

The subsequent phase of our analysis focused on the structural model of the PLS path model. This facet of our study allowed us to determine the degree to which empirical data supported our theoretical concepts. In essence, it served as a means to empirically confirm the underlying theory or concept, as expounded by Hair et al. in 2014. Our assessment of the structural model encompassed several elements, including examining collinearity using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), assessing the significance and relevance of relationships via bootstrapping, and calculating R^2 values. Additionally, we utilized the f^2 , effect size as a measure of the impact of specific predictor constructs on endogenous constructs. This effect size provides insights into whether an effect is small, medium, or large, with corresponding values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35, in accordance to guidelines by (Cohen, 1988).

Finding and Discussion

Demographic Profile

A total number of 169 respondents answered the questionnaires. The demographic information requested in the questionnaires includes age, gender, marital status, tenure in the company, type of service, and education level. According to the descriptive data, the majority gender of participants is female which is 50.9% from the sample. The age distribution revealed that most respondents, 45% of the sample are between the ages of 21 and 29. In terms of marital status, the majority of the sample, 51.5% is married, while 47.9% are single. The majority of participants, 48% had less than 5 years of experience working in the service business.

Measurement Model Result

According to Table 2, the measurement model exhibited a high level of internal consistency reliability. The composite reliability values high values which 0.957 (Work Engagement) and 0.956 (Perceived Organizational Support). In addition, the findings of convergent validity as indicated by the average variance extracted (AVE) values are also presented in Table 2. The AVE values for both variables were greater than 0.50, indicating that the latent variable explained more than half of the variance in the relevant indicators.

Table 2. Result Summary for the Reflective Measurement Model

Latent Variable	Indicator	Loading	Indicator Reliability	Composite Reliability	AVE	Discriminant Analysis
POS	POS1	0.818	0.669	0.956	0.732	Yes
	POS2	0.877	0.769			
	POS3	0.863	0.745			
	POS4	0.860	0.740			
	POS5	0.884	0.781			
	POS6	0.881	0.776			
	POS7	0.821	0.674			
	POS8	0.839	0.704			
WE	WE1	0.859	0.738	0.957	0.761	Yes
	WE2	0.911	0.830			
	WE3	0.905	0.819			
	WE4	0.910	0.828			
	WE5	0.853	0.728			
	WE6	0.867	0.752			
	WE7	0.796	0.634			

The results presented in Table 2 reveal that all indicator loadings exceed the 0.70 threshold, affirming the reliability of these indicators. To assess discriminant validity at the construct level, we employed the Fornell-Larcker criterion, cross-loadings, and the Heterotrait Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). The consistent indicator loadings, as displayed in Table 2, confirm the reliability of the indicators and indicate that each latent variable demonstrates greater variance with its assigned indicators than with other latent variables. This underscores the existence of discriminant validity at the construct level.

Table 3. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	Perceived Support	Organizational Support	Work Engagement
Perceived Support	0.856		
Work Engagement	0.700		0.872

Table 4. Cross Loading

Cross Loadings	Perceived Support	Organizational Support	Work Engagement
POS1	0.818		0.623
POS2	0.877		0.677
POS3	0.863		0.670
POS4	0.860		0.576
POS5	0.884		0.591
POS6	0.881		0.533
POS7	0.821		0.540

POS8	0.839	0.546
WE1	0.534	0.859
WE2	0.645	0.911
WE3	0.606	0.905
WE4	0.634	0.910
WE5	0.592	0.853
WE6	0.658	0.867
WE7	0.591	0.796

Table 4 reinforces the notion that each indicator's loading on its respective latent variable, as highlighted by bold numbers, surpasses its loadings on other latent variables. This compellingly supports the presence of discriminant validity at the indicator level.

Additionally, a novel method, the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT), was employed to assess discriminant validity. Table 5 illustrates that the calculated ratios are notably below the threshold value of 0.9, indicating clear evidence of discriminant validity.

Table 5. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	Perceived Support	Organizational Support	Work Engagement
Perceived Support			
Organizational Support			
Work Engagement	0.730		

Structural Model Results

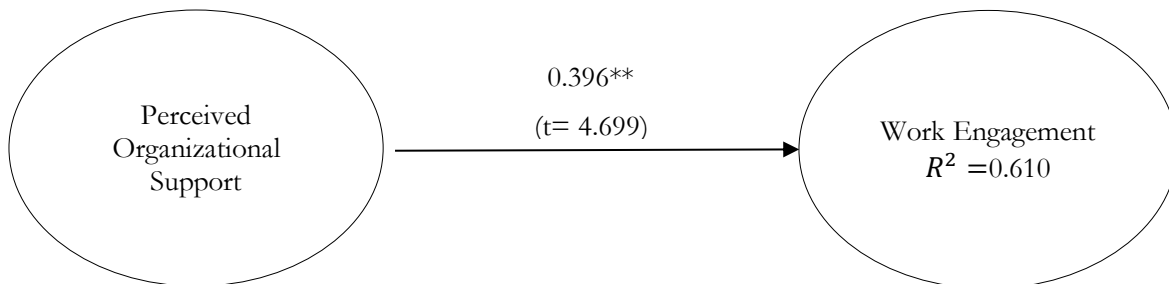


Figure 1. Results of the Structural Model.

The structural model was assessed using a robust and dependable measurement model. Figure 1 illustrates the outcomes of this structural model employed in our study. The R^2 value for work engagement amounted to 0.610, indicating a moderate explanation of variance in the endogenous latent variables, in line with previous research (Chin 1998; Henseler et al., 2009).

To gauge the effect size (f^2) of the predictors, we computed the changes in R^2 values. Our findings show that the effect sizes (f^2) range from 0.048 to 0.305, denoting small to medium effects, consistent with prior research (cf. Chin, 2010; Henseler et al., 2009). Specifically, these results highlight that perceived organizational support yields a medium effect size ($f^2 = 0.227$) on work engagement.

Furthermore, as portrayed in Figure 1, the research model proficiently accounts for a significant 61.0% of the variability in the work engagement construct. This concurs with our theoretical expectations, signifying robust support for all theoretical hypotheses. To assess the statistical significance of the path coefficients, we conducted a bootstrapping procedure (utilizing 169 cases and 5000 resamples). The bootstrapping results, presented in Table 6, validate the statistical significance of the structural paths.

Table 6. Significant Testing Results of the Structural Model

Path coefficients	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	Significance level	P Values
POS → WE	4.699	**	0.000

The model's predictive performance was evaluated using a blindfolding procedure with an omission distance of six. This process yielded two critical metrics: the cross-validated communality index, which assesses the quality of the measurement model for each set of indicators, and the cross-validated redundancy index, which evaluates the precision of each structural equation. It's important to note that both of these metrics are variations of Stone-Geisser's Q^2 .

More specifically, we employed the cross-validated redundancy index, following the methodology outlined by Chin (2010), to measure the structural model's ability to make accurate predictions. The results of this blindfolding procedure can be found in Table 7. The cross-validated redundancy for work engagement indicated as 0.414 ($Q^2=0.414$), signifies that the structural model possesses predictive relevance, as these values exceed zero. Additionally, according to collinearity analysis, both the inner and outer variance inflation factor (VIF) values remain below 5, indicating the absence of collinearity.

Table 7. Cross-Validated Communality and Cross-Validated Redundancy

Construct	Cross-validated communality	Cross-validated redundancy
Work engagement	0.603	0.414
Perceived Organizational Support	0.634	-

Hypothesis Testing Results

As can be seen in Table 8, the overall results of the hypothesis testing indicate that the path is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. The path coefficients showed that there was a statistically significant link between perceived organizational support and work engagement. The result of the study showed that the path coefficient between perceived organizational support and work engagement was statistically significant ($\beta= 0.396, p < 0.5$). Therefore, the hypothesis was supported.

Table 8. Significant Testing Results of the Structural Model

Hypotheses	Path Coefficients	t value	Significance level	p value	95% Confidence Intervals
H4	POS → WE	4.787	**	0.000	(0.228, 0.555)

Contribution and Limitation

There are theoretical and managerial implications that can be drawn from the study's results. Theoretically, this research (a) contributes to the pool of knowledge on work engagement (b) Utilized social exchange theory to construct the conceptual framework and (c) through the findings, suggests the

significance of analysing the factors that will influence the work engagement. Among the drawbacks of the study are its cross-sectional design and convenient sampling. This study could be expanded by looking at the relationship between perceived organisational support and work engagement using other potential moderating and mediating variables and repeating it in different work settings. The findings from this study will contribute to the development and expansion of further theory and managerial comprehension concerning work engagement.

Practically, the findings indicate that the appropriate managerial interventions and action are needed in supporting employees and work engagement environment to increase the performance in organization. In addition, the findings suggest that employers should ensure the employees know that they are getting support in workplace from organization as this will affect their work engagement at workplace as this may affect their performance.

Conclusion

The main objective of this study is to examine the link between perceived organizational support and work engagement. Based on the social exchange theory, a framework was developed and tested to answer the research question: What is the relationship between the perceived organisational support and work engagement? Data was collected from 169 local and international bank employees in Peninsular Malaysia. The data were analysed using a partial least square structural equation modelling approach. As predicted, hypotheses regarding the relationship between researched variables were supported in accordance with the theory of social exchange; when one party treats the other well, mutuality norms oblige the rewarded party to reciprocate the favour (Gouldner, 1960). When employees know that the organisation supports them in various human resource functions, they tend to respond to the benefits and opportunities provided by the business by maintaining an effective performance (Karatepe, 2012; Salehzadeh et al., 2014). As a result, if a company provides proper managerial support, employees are more likely to desire their organisation to thrive and they will engage in their work which further leads to better work performance.

As highlighted in the research limitations, the current study gathered data from employees using a cross-sectional design, which allows for data collection at a single point in time but doesn't establish causal relationships among the study variables. To thoroughly explore the directionality of the correlations under examination, future research looking to replicate this study should contemplate the use of a longitudinal design encompassing multiple data collection waves or an experimental approach. Data collection in this study involved the use of convenience sampling, comprising 169 employees from both local and international banks in Malaysia. The generalizability of the study's findings may be limited by the sample size. Nevertheless, given that the hypotheses align with both social exchange theory and empirical evidence, there is no compelling reason to exclude the possibility that these conclusions could be relevant to other organizational settings. Therefore, researchers are encouraged to corroborate these findings across diverse organizational contexts and with a broader range of employee populations

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Disclosure Statement

We confirmed that this work is original and has not been previously published or is under consideration for publication elsewhere. Furthermore, we have no conflicts of interest to report. We appreciate your time reviewing this manuscript and look forward to working with the journal.

Availability of Data and Material

The data utilized in this study is kept in a database owned by the corresponding authors and available upon reasonable request. It is important to note that, due to the license constraints associated with SMART PLS-3, access to the data is limited to the raw dataset and the analytical outputs generated during the analysis phase. As the original license validity is limited to one month, resuming access to the SMART PLS-3 data involves the payment of fees for reapplication of the license.

Contributions Statement

The formulation and refinement of the abstract was prepared by Dr Abidah Saad. The abstract was meticulously summarized, created the essence of the study into a concise and informative summary. The preparation of comprehensive Literature Review and curated by all three authors, Dr Nor Asiah Mahmood, Dr Abidah Saad and Miss Suhaida Ishak. In terms of method and methodology, the draft was prepared by Miss Suhaida Ishak. Analysis run by Dr Abidah Saad. Data collection was conducted by all three authors. The major finding section was prepared in collaborating with Dr Nor Asiah and Dr Abidah. Miss Suhaida helps in organising the finding based on analysis. Discussion crafted by Dr Nor Asiah and Conclusion was the collaboration between Dr Nor Asiah and Dr Abidah. Finally, after the paper have been converted into journal's format, authors sit down together for final review before submission to the journal.

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