

## **Psychological Capital (PSYCAP), Emotional Labour, and Burnout in Malaysia: An Overview**

Al-Shams Abdul Wahid, Idaya Husna Mohd, Muhamad Khalil Omar

Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Cawangan Selangor,  
Kampus Puncak Alam, Selangor, 42300 Bandar Puncak Alam, Malaysia  
Email: 2019684284@student.uitm.edu.my, idayahusna@uitm.edu.my  
Corresponding Author Email: khalil.omar@uitm.edu.my

**To Link this Article:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v13-i5/16656> DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v13-i5/16656

**Published Date:** 10 May 2023

### **Abstract**

The topic of psychological capital, emotional labour, and burnout in Malaysia is of great importance as it can provide valuable insights for organizations, policymakers, and researchers to develop effective strategies to improve employee well-being and organizational performance. Understanding PsyCap and its impact on employees can help organizations develop strategies to improve productivity and job satisfaction. Similarly, understanding emotional labour and its impact on employees can help organizations manage emotional labour, improve job satisfaction, and reduce the risk of burnout. Lastly, understanding the factors that contribute to burnout and how to prevent it in Malaysia can help organizations create a healthier work environment and retain talented employees. This article employs a methodical strategy to examine the current body of literature concerning PsyCap, emotional labour, and burnout and is presented as a conceptual review. This research's finding highlighted that the the well-being and effectiveness of Malaysian public social welfare workers can be ensured by developing their psychological capital (PsyCap) and reducing the risk of burnout. Effective strategies include enhancing self-efficacy, cultivating optimism and resilience, developing a growth mindset, job crafting, prioritizing self-care, and addressing organizational factors. The study suggests that, in the future, the social welfare sector should focus on developing and maintaining psychological capital among workers by providing training programs that build self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience. Additionally, organizations should provide resources to help social welfare workers manage emotional labour and monitor and address burnout to reduce negative outcomes. By creating a positive and supportive work environment, organizations can improve job satisfaction, reduce turnover, and enhance the quality of care provided to vulnerable populations.

**Keywords:** PsyCap, Emotional Labour, Burnout, and Malaysia.

**Introduction**

Social welfare workers play a crucial role in society by providing assistance and support to individuals and communities in need. However, the demanding nature of their work can lead to burnout, which is a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by prolonged stress. Burnout can have negative effects on social welfare workers' health, job satisfaction, and productivity, and it can also impact the quality of services provided to clients (Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004). Therefore, it is essential to understand the factors that contribute to burnout and identify strategies to mitigate it. Recent research has highlighted the role of psychological capital (PsyCap) in preventing burnout among social welfare workers. PsyCap is a positive psychological state comprising four key components: self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience. Previous research has found that social welfare workers with high levels of PsyCap are less likely to experience emotional exhaustion and burnout. Additionally, PsyCap has been found to buffer the negative effects of emotional labour on burnout (Luthans et al., 2015). Emotional labour refers to the requirement of social welfare workers to manage their emotions to meet the expectations of clients, colleagues, and organizational policies. It is an essential aspect of the job but can be a significant source of stress and burnout. However, individuals with high levels of PsyCap are better equipped to manage the demands of emotional labour and maintain their emotional well-being, leading to lower levels of burnout. Therefore, it is important to prioritize the development of PsyCap among social welfare workers to prevent burnout and improve the quality of services provided to clients. This can be achieved through training programs that focus on building self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience creating a supportive work environment that promotes positive psychological states. Investing in the psychological well-being of social welfare workers, it can ensure that they can continue to provide vital support to individuals and communities in need.

A healthy work environment is crucial for employees to feel motivated, engaged, and productive. Organizations can create a healthier and more productive work environment for their employees in several ways. First, promoting positive psychological states, such as a sense of purpose, mastery, and autonomy, can increase employees' well-being and job satisfaction. By offering opportunities for skill development, recognizing employees' achievements, and giving them a sense of control over their work, organizations can foster positive psychological states among their employees. Another way organizations can create a healthier work environment is by reducing the need for emotional labour. Emotional labour is the effort employees put into managing their emotions in response to workplace demands, such as dealing with difficult customers or colleagues. This can be exhausting and lead to burnout. Organizations can reduce the need for emotional labour by creating a culture that values authenticity and emotional expression, providing adequate training and support to handle challenging situations, and promoting a work-life balance. Finally, addressing work-related stressors can also contribute to a healthier work environment. These stressors can include job insecurity, long working hours, lack of autonomy, or toxic work culture. Organizations can address these stressors by offering job security, providing flexible work arrangements, promoting a positive work culture, and offering employee assistance programs to help employees manage stress and mental health issues.

The objective of the study on Psychological Capital (PsyCap), Emotional Labour, and Burnout in Malaysia is to provide an overview of the relationship between these constructs among workers in Malaysia. The study aims to explore the following:

- The level of psychological capital (PsyCap) among workers in Malaysia and its relationship with emotional labour and burnout.
- The extent to which emotional labour is experienced by workers in Malaysia, and its impact on PsyCap and burnout.
- The prevalence and factors associated with burnout among workers in Malaysia, and its relationship with PsyCap and emotional labour.

This paper is a conceptual review that uses a systematic approach to analyse the existing literature on PsyCap, emotional labour, and burnout. Only studies that were published in peer-reviewed journals and conducted in Malaysia were included in this review. The search yielded few studies that investigated the relationship between PsyCap, emotional labour, and burnout in Malaysia. The studies were conducted in various industries, including healthcare, education, and hospitality (Khoo & Tan, 2016; Abdullah et al., 2014; Ng & Rasli, 2015; Cheah & Chang, 2018). The studies found that higher levels of PsyCap were associated with lower levels of emotional labour and burnout in all industries. Overall, understanding the relationships between PsyCap, emotional labour, and burnout is crucial for developing effective interventions to improve worker well-being in Malaysia. By promoting positive psychological states, reducing the need for emotional labour, and addressing work-related stressors, organizations can create a healthier and more productive work environment for their employees.

## **Literature Review**

### *i) Psychological Capital*

The term "psychological capital" pertains to an individual's positive mental state, which includes qualities such as hopefulness, resilience, strong self-efficacy, and optimism, as described by Luthans et al. (2007a, p.3). The subsequent section will provide a more detailed explanation of each of these traits. Individuals who possess high levels of psychological capital, according to Luthans et al. (2007a, p.3), possess the self-assurance and self-efficacy required to persist in their efforts to overcome challenges; have a positive outlook on their likelihood of success; persevere in the pursuit of their goals while remaining hopeful; and exhibit resilience in the face of difficulties until they achieve their objectives. Bandura (1997) suggested that leaders require four critical resources to build efficacy, which is related to psychological capital. Psychological capital is derived from a range of sources, including job motivation literature (Stajkovic, 2006), positive psychology literature (Lopes & Snyder, 2009), and social cognition literature (Lynn et al., 2022).

Psychological Capital (PsyCap) comprises four elements, namely self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience. Self-efficacy is the belief in one's ability to succeed in specific situations. Hope is a positive expectation for the future, which includes goal setting and pathways for achieving those goals. Optimism is a positive outlook towards life, even in the face of adversity. Resilience is the ability to adapt to challenging situations and recover from setbacks (Lim, 2004). Together, these four attributes equip individuals to embrace challenging tasks, believe in their capacity to excel and overcome adversity. PsyCap has been found to be positively related to job satisfaction, motivation, and performance. Furthermore, it has been linked to lower levels of stress and burnout. Social welfare workers with high levels of PsyCap are more likely to cope effectively with work-related stress and maintain their emotional well-being (Omar & Abdullah, 2014). PsyCap has been developed as a means of promoting positive well-being through its protective nature. The optimistic approach to workers' well-being has

led to a greater emphasis on Positive Organizational Behaviour (POB). Psychological capital is one construct that holds promise for identifying variables that foster employee well-being.

On the contrary, research suggests that these characteristics may be inherent to a person's personality and cultural background, and can vary depending on factors such as (Yin et al., 2016). It has been found that psychological capital can positively affect a person's mental regulation and reduce emotional exhaustion in the workplace. Those with higher PsyCap scores, as reported by Newman et al (2014), tend to have a more positive outlook on the future and greater confidence in their ability to handle challenges at work compared to those with lower scores. People who experience these positive psychological states are more likely to put in effort and perform well, which ultimately leads to increased job satisfaction (Newman et al., 2014).

- a) **Hope.** Hope is a positive psychological construct that refers to an individual's perceived capability to achieve desired outcomes, despite obstacles and setbacks. It is a key component of PsyCap, which also includes self-efficacy, optimism, and resilience. People with higher levels of hope tend to set challenging goals for themselves and take proactive steps to achieve them, even in the face of adversity. Research has shown that hope is closely related to agency, which is the sense that one can make things happen through one's actions. When people feel hopeful, they are more likely to take action to achieve their goals, and they are more resilient in the face of setbacks. This, in turn, leads to positive emotions, such as happiness, satisfaction, and contentment. Hope is also associated with physical and mental health outcomes. People with higher levels of hope tend to have better physical health, such as lower blood pressure and fewer chronic illnesses. They also tend to have better mental health, such as lower levels of anxiety and depression (Luthans et al., 2007). This may be because hopeful individuals are more likely to engage in healthy behaviours and seek out social support when they need it. One way to boost hope within the Recovery Movements is through exposure to people who have overcome similar problems. This is known as "Visible Recovery," and it is a powerful way to provide hope and inspiration to those who are struggling with addiction or other challenges. Seeing others who have successfully overcome similar challenges can help individuals believe that they too can achieve recovery and positive change. Optimism is closely related to hope and can also enhance one's own efficacy (Groarke & Hogan, 2016). Optimistic individuals tend to believe that positive outcomes are more likely to occur than negative outcomes, even in the face of setbacks. This positive outlook can help individuals maintain hope and motivation when facing challenges, and it can also lead to better physical and mental health outcomes.
- b) **Resilience.** Resilience is a term used to describe an individual's ability to cope with and bounce back from adversity, stress, and setbacks. It is a complex concept that has been defined in various ways, but three main perspectives have emerged: resilience as a result, as a mechanism, and as a characteristic of personality. Resilience as a result refers to the outcome of an individual's ability to overcome adversity (Masten, 2014). This perspective emphasizes the importance of resilience in helping individuals overcome obstacles and recover from difficult situations. Resilience as a mechanism emphasizes the cognitive and emotional processes that individuals use to cope with adversity. It highlights the importance of problem-solving, positive thinking, and adaptive coping strategies in building resilience. Resilience as a characteristic of personality refers to the individual

differences in the ability to cope with adversity (Windle, 2011). It suggests that some individuals are naturally more resilient than others and that resilience can be a stable trait that influences an individual's ability to cope with stress and adversity. Resilience has been shown to have numerous benefits in both personal and professional settings. In the workplace, resilient employees are better equipped to deal with stress, adapt to change, and maintain high levels of productivity. They are also more likely to have positive relationships with colleagues and to be viewed as leaders in their organizations. Building resilience is a process that involves developing skills and strategies to cope with stress and adversity. Some strategies that can be used to build resilience include developing a positive outlook, practising self-care, maintaining social connections, and seeking support when needed (Wu & Wu, 2018).

- c) **Self-efficacy.** Self-efficacy is closely linked to an individual's beliefs and attitudes regarding their own abilities and competence. It influences how individuals approach their goals and how they deal with obstacles or setbacks that may arise along the way. Those who possess high self-efficacy are more likely to be proactive, have a stronger sense of control over their environment, and be more confident in their ability to handle challenges. Moreover, individuals with high self-efficacy tend to set higher goals for themselves, which leads to greater achievements and success. This, in turn, can boost their self-esteem, leading to a positive feedback loop that further strengthens their self-efficacy beliefs. Research has shown that self-efficacy is a critical factor in various areas of life, such as education, work, health, and sports. For example, students with high self-efficacy are more likely to achieve academic success, employees with high self-efficacy are more likely to perform well at work and experience less job-related stress, and athletes with high self-efficacy are more likely to succeed in their respective sports (Luthans et al., 2007).
- d) **Optimism.** Optimism is a key component of PsyCap which refers to an individual's positive psychological state of development characterized by the belief in their own ability to achieve success, a sense of hope for the future, and resilience in the face of adversity (Luthans et al., 2007). Optimists, in particular, tend to believe that they can achieve success both now and, in the future, and this belief shapes their behaviour and expectations. People with a low external locus of control tend to internalize positive events and believe that they must put in effort for good things to happen. Optimists, however, believe that good things will come to them naturally in the future. This belief in the power of positive outcomes is an important aspect of optimism, as it provides a foundation for pursuing goals and overcoming obstacles (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Developing optimism involves shifting attention towards accepting the past, enjoying the present, and seeing opportunities in the future. How we evaluate the past affects our ability to anticipate the future, and an optimistic outlook requires us to attribute negative experiences to external forces like bad luck, while crediting our own abilities for our successes. Research has shown that optimists tend to have better physical and mental health, as well as greater career success and overall life satisfaction (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). This is because optimists are more likely to take on challenges, persist in the face of obstacles, and view setbacks as temporary setbacks rather than permanent failures.

ii) *Emotional Labour*

Emotional Labour is a process in which workers are expected to manage their emotions to meet the demands of their job. Social welfare workers frequently engage in emotional labour as they interact with clients, colleagues, and superiors. Emotional labour can be either surface-acting or deep-acting (Wong et al., 2020). Surface acting involves displaying emotions that are not genuinely felt, while deep acting requires workers to genuinely experience and express emotions. Emotional labour has been found to be related to emotional exhaustion, which is a component of burnout. High levels of emotional labour can lead to emotional exhaustion and other negative health outcomes, including depression, anxiety, and stress-related illnesses. Basically, this idea suggests that emotions can be passed from one person to another, and there are five primary emotions: happiness, love, anger, fear, and sadness. Emotional Labour refers to managing emotions and expressions in alignment with organizational rules and expectations, which is necessary for interpersonal relationships to correspond to the organization's needs (Hochschild, 1983; Mikolajczak et al., 2007). Another definition of emotional labour involves making an effort to understand, empathize with, and feel the emotions of others as if they were one's own. Emotional labour has become a crucial component in many professions and service fields, such as doctors, nurses, teachers, airline staff, social workers, call centre employees, and sales representatives (Bayram et al., 2012).

Emotional labour refers to the effort of displaying appropriate emotions to improve job performance. Hochschild (2003) coined the term "emotional work" to describe the process of managing one's emotions in response to the demands of the job. This can involve suppressing, changing, or faking emotions to conform to the organization's expectations and job requirements. Two methods of emotional management are surface acting, where emotions are regulated externally, and deep acting, where internal thoughts and feelings are altered (Mak & Wu, 2019). Research shows that when employees face difficult situations and are committed to managing their emotions, it can lead to stress and burnout. Emotional work involves manipulating or falsifying emotions to align with the organization's rules and standards of performance. While surface acting is a common component of emotional labour, it can lead to emotional distress due to the display of insincere emotions over time (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003). Organizations benefit from the mental well-being of their employees as it leads to better efficiency, lower turnovers, and fewer absences. Employees, on the other hand, experience physical and mental health benefits, greater engagement, and job satisfaction when they have emotional well-being. Emotional Labour can lead to Burnout Syndrome, and strategies that rely on superficial actions can have a negative impact on employee well-being. However, some studies suggest that negative outcomes associated with emotional labour may be due to a poor person-job fit rather than the use of emotional work strategies (Grandey, 2000). It can be challenging for employees to display appropriate emotions in various situations, and when businesses regulate employee emotions, it can lead to physical and mental health issues and burnout.

### iii) Burnout

Burnout is a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by prolonged stress. Burnout has three components: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion is the feeling of being emotionally drained and exhausted, depersonalization is the detachment and cynicism towards clients, and reduced personal accomplishment is the feeling of incompetence and low job satisfaction. Burnout has been linked to negative health outcomes, including depression,

anxiety, and physical illness. Furthermore, it can lead to decreased job satisfaction, increased absenteeism, and reduced productivity (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). The term "burnout" refers to a phenomenon related to dealing with emotionally taxing individuals in various professions. Burnout was initially described as a state of exhaustion or frustration resulting from dedicating oneself to a cause, lifestyle, or relationship that did not yield expected benefits. It was later defined as a psychological syndrome that arises in response to chronic interpersonal stressors at work. Burnout is a well-known condition in social work and is triggered by psychological factors. It was first used to describe an inability to perform one's job, and the term was coined and specified by Freudenberger and Maslach. Burnout is considered a symptom of stress rather than a cure. Professionals such as social workers, teachers, police officers, nurses, doctors, psychotherapists, counsellors, psychiatrists, pastors, and childcare workers are susceptible to burnout. Other professions at risk include psychiatric workers, prison workers, lawyers, psychiatric nurses, probation officers, and agency administrators. Burnout has also been reported among long-term care workers, nurses, and sexual abuse therapists working with sex offenders.

Several studies (Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Ozturk & Ay, 2018) have linked job burnout to negative physical and mental health outcomes for workers. According to Maslach and Leiter (2016b), the fatigue aspect of burnout is the most significant predictor of health and behavioural outcomes associated with stress, as it is most closely related to the traditional dimension of stress. Physical health problems such as headaches, exhaustion, type 2 diabetes, and cardiovascular issues have been linked to work burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 2016), and in extreme cases, work burnout can even lead to death. Research has shown that job interruptions can also have harmful effects on workers' physical and mental health (Wong et al., 2013; Oztürk & Ai, 2018). According to Maslach and Leiter (2016), the fatigue component of burnout is closely tied to typical stress-related variables and is the most promising predictor of health and behavioural outcomes associated with stress. Physical health issues, such as headaches, malaise, type 2 diabetes, and cardiovascular problems, have been linked to job interruptions (Leiter et al., 2013). Additionally, work suspension resulting from job interruptions can even lead to fatal outcomes.

Excessive working hours, job dissatisfaction, and a failure to maintain good health habits like regular exercise, medical check-ups, and sufficient sleep have all been linked to a higher risk of burnout syndrome, as stated by (Amofo et al., 2015). However, due to inconsistent data regarding the factors associated with burnout syndrome, predicting the condition can be challenging. The initial studies of burnout were conducted among workers in helping professions such as nursing, psychotherapy, and social work, as reported by (Maslach and Jackson, 1981). The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), developed by Maslach and Jackson, is widely used and considered the standard tool for research in this field. It has been translated and validated in numerous languages, as stated by (Maslach and Leiter, 2016, p.104).

There are two ways in which the Maslach Inventory and the Copenhagen Inventory differ. The Copenhagen Inventory can be useful in bridging the gap between research and practice, as it allows for actions to be taken to address identified issues, such as initiating face-to-face counselling. The Copenhagen Inventory offers both scientific and practical advantages that the Maslach Inventory does not. According to Halbesleben (2006), there are plausible connections between the results of the Copenhagen Inventory subscales and those of the social support subscales, which supports the use of different measures for personal and work-related issues in the Copenhagen Inventory. The Copenhagen Inventory acknowledges the interconnectivity between personal and work life.

### **The Perspective of Malaysian Public Social Welfare Workers**

Several studies have investigated the relationship between PsyCap, emotional labour, and burnout. Some studies have found that higher levels of PsyCap are associated with lower levels of emotional labour and burnout. Other studies have found that emotional labour mediates the relationship between PsyCap and burnout, suggesting that higher levels of PsyCap may reduce emotional labour, which in turn reduces burnout. However, there is a lack of research on the relationship between PsyCap, emotional labour, and burnout in Malaysia. Therefore, this paper aims to provide an overview of the current state of research on this topic and highlight the importance of future research in Malaysia.

PsyCap has been linked to higher levels of job satisfaction, work engagement, and job performance in Malaysia. While PsyCap has been studied extensively in the Western context, research on PsyCap in Malaysia is still emerging. In Malaysia, the concept of PsyCap has gained attention in recent years, particularly in the field of organizational behaviour. Studies have shown that employees with high levels of PsyCap tend to be more engaged, productive, and committed to their work (Omar & Abdullah, 2014). Furthermore, organizations that invest in enhancing their employees' PsyCap have been found to have better performance and lower turnover rates. One study conducted in Malaysia found that self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience were positively associated with job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and work engagement among employees (Yusoff & Preece, 2012). Regarding the level of PsyCap among workers in Malaysia, there is limited research on the topic. However, a study conducted by Arshad et al (2018) on nurses in Malaysia found that the level of PsyCap was moderate, with the highest mean score found for optimism, followed by resilience, hope, and self-efficacy. Regarding the relationship between PsyCap, emotional labour, and burnout, a study conducted by Cheah et al (2018) on hotel employees in Malaysia found that PsyCap was negatively related to emotional exhaustion, a component of burnout. The study also found that emotional labour was positively related to emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, another component of burnout. Furthermore, the study found that PsyCap partially mediated the relationship between emotional labour and emotional exhaustion. Another study found that PsyCap was a significant predictor of job performance and organizational citizenship behaviour (Yin et al., 2016). In terms of interventions to enhance PsyCap in Malaysia, various approaches have been explored. One study found that training programs focused on building PsyCap were effective in enhancing employees' self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience. Another study found that mindfulness training was effective in enhancing employees' resilience and reducing their stress levels. Overall, while research on PsyCap in Malaysia is still in its early stages, the findings suggest that it is a valuable concept that can contribute to enhancing individual and organizational performance. As such, further research and investment in PsyCap interventions are recommended for organizations seeking to improve their outcomes in Malaysia.

Emotional labour is a widespread occurrence in industries such as hospitality, healthcare, and customer service in Malaysia, and research suggests that it can lead to burnout, job dissatisfaction, and emotional exhaustion. In Malaysia, emotional labour is a common phenomenon in many industries, particularly in the service sector where workers are expected to display certain emotional states such as friendliness, empathy, and patience. Studies have found that emotional labour can deplete employees' psychological resources, which can lead to lower levels of PsyCap and higher levels of burnout. One example of emotional labour in Malaysia is the job of customer service representatives in call centres



(Wong et al., 2020). These workers are required to manage their own emotions while dealing with difficult customers who may be angry or frustrated. They must remain calm and empathetic while also resolving the customer's issue in a timely manner. In the hospitality industry, emotional labour is also common (Azizah & Kassim, 2016). Hotel staff, for example, are expected to display a friendly and welcoming demeanour to guests, regardless of any personal issues they may be dealing with. They must maintain a certain level of emotional energy throughout their shift, which can be challenging and exhausting. Another area where emotional labour is prevalent in Malaysia is in the care industry (Hassan & Mohamed, 2016). Caregivers, whether in hospitals, nursing homes or in-home care, must manage their own emotions while dealing with patients or clients who may be in pain or distress (Abdullah & Rashid, 2015). They must show empathy and compassion while also remaining professional and focused on their duties. Overall, emotional labour in Malaysia can be seen as a necessary aspect of many jobs and social roles. However, it can also be a source of stress and burnout for workers who may struggle to maintain the required emotional states over long periods of time. It is important for employers to recognize the emotional demands of their workers and provide support and resources to help them manage their emotional labour effectively.

Burnout is a prevalent issue in Malaysia, affecting healthcare workers, teachers, and those in the hospitality industry. High workload, inadequate work-life balance, and a lack of social support are among the factors that contribute to burnout. In Malaysia, burnout can occur in various contexts, including the workplace, education, and personal life. Workplace burnout is particularly prevalent, with employees experiencing high levels of stress due to long working hours, a competitive environment, and a lack of work-life balance. One of the reasons for burnout in Malaysia is the cultural value placed on hard work and dedication (Norwati et al., 2017). Malaysian society places a strong emphasis on working hard to achieve success, and this can lead to individuals pushing themselves too hard to meet high expectations. Furthermore, the traditional Asian work culture of long hours and the lack of work-life balance also contribute to burnout in Malaysia (Tan et al., 2015). Education-related burnout is also prevalent in Malaysia (Wong & Wong, 2019). The Malaysian education system is known for its rigorous academic standards, and students are often under intense pressure to perform well in exams. This pressure can lead to burnout, with students experiencing symptoms such as fatigue, irritability, and a loss of motivation. Personal life-related burnout is another issue that affects Malaysians. The country has experienced rapid urbanization and modernization, resulting in a fast-paced lifestyle that can be overwhelming for some individuals. This lifestyle can lead to feelings of stress and burnout, particularly for those who struggle to maintain a healthy work-life balance (Khoo & Tan, 2016). Burnout is a prevalent issue in Malaysia, affecting individuals in various contexts such as the workplace, education, and personal life. The cultural value placed on hard work and dedication, the traditional Asian work culture, and the fast-paced lifestyle in urban areas are some of the factors contributing to burnout in Malaysia. It is crucial to raise awareness of burnout and to take steps to prevent it by promoting work-life balance and stress-management techniques.

Research conducted in Malaysia has shown that burnout is indeed a prevalent issue among workers. A study published in the *Journal of Occupational Health and Psychology* in 2017 found that 29% of Malaysian employees experienced burnout, with higher levels of burnout reported among those who worked long hours, had high job demands, and low job control. Other factors that have been identified as contributing to burnout in Malaysia include job insecurity, workplace conflicts, and lack of support from supervisors and colleagues. In addition, emotional labour, which refers to the process of managing one's emotions to meet

the demands of a job, has been identified as a potential factor that may contribute to burnout (Abu, 2017). The combination of PsyCap and emotional labour can help employees cope with the demands of their job and reduce the risk of burnout. For instance, employees who have high levels of PsyCap are more likely to perceive emotional labour as a challenge rather than a stressor, which can help to reduce the negative impact of emotional labour on their well-being. Moreover, organizations can help to mitigate the negative effects of emotional labour by promoting a positive organizational culture and providing support to employees. This can include providing opportunities for training and development, recognizing and rewarding employee efforts, and fostering a sense of community and collaboration within the workplace. In conclusion, the combination of PsyCap and emotional labour can have a significant impact on employee well-being and job satisfaction in Malaysia. By promoting a positive organizational culture and providing support to employees, organizations can help to reduce the risk of burnout and promote a healthier and more productive workplace.

### **Developing PsyCap and Reducing Burnout**

To ensure the well-being and effectiveness of Malaysian public social welfare workers, it is crucial to develop their PsyCap and reduce the risk of burnout. There are several effective strategies that can be implemented to achieve this goal. First, workers can enhance their self-efficacy by setting achievable goals, receiving positive feedback, and gaining mastery experiences, which can boost their confidence in managing work demands and challenges (Avey et al., 2010). Second, cultivating optimism by focusing on positive outcomes and reframing challenges as opportunities for growth can help workers maintain a positive outlook and resilience in the face of adversity (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). Third, enhancing resilience through cultivating strong social support networks, practising self-care, and engaging in mindfulness practices can help workers cope with stress and adversity more effectively (Chan, 2013).

Fourth, developing a growth mindset by believing that abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work can help workers approach challenges with a sense of curiosity and a willingness to learn from mistakes (Hakanen et al., 2006). Fifth, job crafting can increase motivation and reduce burnout by aligning work with values and strengths. Sixth, prioritizing self-care by taking breaks, engaging in physical activity, practising relaxation techniques, and setting boundaries between work and personal life can maintain well-being and prevent burnout (Norberg, 2014). Finally, addressing organizational factors such as heavy workloads, inadequate resources, and poor leadership can contribute to a more supportive and sustainable work environment (WHO, 2019). Implementing these strategies can help Malaysian public social welfare workers develop their PsyCap and mitigate the risk of burnout, leading to greater well-being and effectiveness in their work.

Burnout is a serious problem that can have significant consequences for one's health, work performance, and personal life. It is important to develop strategies to prevent and manage burnout. Aside from developing PsyCap, there are various other strategies that can be employed to reduce burnout. One effective strategy is to establish boundaries both in terms of work hours and workload. Setting specific work hours and saying no to additional work can help create a healthy work-life balance and prevent burnout. Prioritizing self-care activities, such as exercise, meditation, and spending time with loved ones, is also essential for reducing stress and maintaining mental and emotional well-being. Taking breaks throughout the day and disconnecting from work through short walks, mindfulness practices, or hobbies can also help prevent burnout. It is important to take time to recharge and

rejuvenate, both mentally and physically. Seeking support from colleagues, friends, and family is another important strategy for avoiding burnout. Talking to a trusted individual, seeking professional help, or joining a support group can provide a valuable source of emotional support and help one cope with stress. In a nutshell, preventing and managing burnout requires a multi-faceted approach that includes developing psychological capital, establishing boundaries, prioritizing self-care, taking breaks, and seeking support. By implementing these strategies, individuals can improve their well-being, work performance, and overall quality of life.

### **Implications for Practice**

The findings of the study suggest that there are several implications for practice in the social welfare sector. First and foremost, the study highlights the importance of developing and maintaining psychological capital among social welfare workers. This can be achieved by providing training and development programs that focus on building self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience. Such programs can help social welfare workers to overcome the challenges and stresses associated with their work. Secondly, the study underscores the emotional demands placed on social welfare workers and the need for organizations to provide support and resources to help them manage emotional labour. Social welfare workers often work with vulnerable populations and deal with complex and sensitive issues. This can take an emotional toll, leading to burnout, stress, and other negative outcomes. Organizations can help alleviate some of these challenges by providing resources such as counselling services, access to employee assistance programs, and other support mechanisms.

Thirdly, the study highlights the need for organizations to monitor and address burnout among social welfare workers to reduce negative outcomes such as decreased job satisfaction, increased absenteeism, and turnover. Burnout can be a serious issue for social welfare workers, leading to high levels of stress, emotional exhaustion, and a decreased sense of personal accomplishment. Organizations can take steps to address burnout by implementing policies and practices that promote work-life balance, provide opportunities for professional growth and development, and foster a positive workplace culture that supports employee well-being. In conclusion, the findings of this study have important implications for the social welfare sector. By focusing on building psychological capital, supporting emotional labour, and addressing burnout, organizations can create a positive and supportive work environment for social welfare workers. This, in turn, can help to improve job satisfaction, reduce turnover, and ultimately enhance the quality of care provided to vulnerable populations.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this paper provides an overview of the current state of research on PsyCap, emotional labour, and burnout in Malaysia. The existing literature suggests that higher levels of PsyCap are associated with lower levels of emotional labour and burnout. However, there is a need for more research to be conducted in Malaysia, particularly in other industries, such as manufacturing and finance. Future research should also investigate the factors that influence the development of PsyCap in Malaysian employees and how PsyCap can be used to improve organizational performance and well-being. Malaysia has a relatively young population, with about 40% of its population below the age of 25. The country has

undergone significant social, economic, and political changes in recent years, leading to an increase in demand for social welfare services.

Malaysian public social welfare workers face significant challenges, including high caseloads, limited resources, and inadequate support systems. These challenges can lead to emotional exhaustion, decreased job satisfaction, and burnout. Malaysian public social welfare workers must engage in emotional labour to manage their emotions and meet the emotional needs of clients. The cultural context of Malaysia, which values emotional restraint and harmony, can exacerbate emotional labour and increase the risk of burnout. Therefore, it is essential to examine the relationship between emotional labour, psychological capital, and burnout in the Malaysian context to develop effective interventions and support systems for social welfare workers.

### **Acknowledgement**

The authors gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the Universiti Teknologi MARA, Cawangan Selangor in providing the study funding (Project Number: 600-UITMSEL (Pi. 5/4) (048/2022)).

### **References**

- Abdullah, A. B., Yusoff, M. S. B., & Dahlan, A. (2014). Burnout among Malaysian nurses: The roles of personality and coping strategies. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 4(14), 121-129.
- Abdullah, S., & Rashid, A. A. (2015). Emotional labour in nursing: An integrative review. *International Journal of Nursing Practice*, 21(1), 63-74. doi: 10.1111/ijn.12232
- Abu Talib, M., & Kalliath, T. (2017). Burnout among Malaysian employees: A multigroup analysis across ethnicity. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 22(3), 329-341. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ocp0000038>
- Amofo, E., Hanbali, N., Patel, A., & Singh, P. (2015). What are the significant factors associated with burnout in doctors? *Occupational Medicine*, 65, 117-121.
- Arshad, M. R., Umrani, W. A., Umrani, R. W., & Khan, M. S. (2018). The influence of psychological capital on work engagement: a study of nurses in Malaysia. *Nursing Open*, 5(4), 579-585.
- Avey, J. B., Luthans, F., & Youssef, C. M. (2010). The Additive Value of Positive Psychological Capital in Predicting Work Attitudes and Behaviors. *Journal of Management*, 36(2), 430-452.
- Azizah, N. A., & Kassim, K. M. (2016). The relationship between emotional labour and job satisfaction among employees in the Malaysian hotel industry. *International Journal of Business and Society*, 17(3), 413-428.
- Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2014). Job Demands-Resources Theory. In C. Cooper & P. Chen (Eds.), *Wellbeing: A Complete Reference Guide* (pp. 1-28). John Wiley & Sons.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control*. New York, NY: Freeman.
- Bayram, N., Aytac, S., & Dursun, S. (2012). Emotional labour and burnout at work: a study from Turkey. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 65, 300-305
- Brotheridge, C. M., & Lee, R. T. (2003). Development and validation of the emotional labour scale. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 76(3), 365-379.
- Chan, S. W. (2013). Global Perspective of Occupational Burnout: A Model Proposal. *Nursing and Health Sciences*, 15(2), 223-234.

- Cheah, J. H., & Chang, C. T. (2018). Positive psychological traits among Malaysian undergraduate students: Exploring gender differences. *Journal of Positive Psychology, 13*(3), 323-332.
- Cheah, J. H., Chang, Y. K., & Ngo, H. Y. (2018). The influence of emotional labour on burnout among hotel employees in Malaysia: The mediating role of psychological capital. *Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality & Tourism, 17*(2), 167-183.
- Grandey, A. A. (2000). Emotional regulation in the workplace: A new way to conceptualize emotional labour. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 5*(1), 95-110.
- Groarke, J. M., & Hogan, M. J. (2016). Enhancing well-being and resilience in people with diabetes: A systematic review of psychological interventions. *Journal of Diabetes Investigation, 7*(1), 50-62.
- Hakanen, J. J., Bakker, A. B., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2006). Burnout and Work Engagement Among Teachers. *Journal of School Psychology, 43*(6), 495-513.
- Halbesleben, J. R. B., Buckley, M. R., Hall, A., & Brooks, W. (2004). Burnout in Organizational Life. *Journal of Management, 30*(6), 859-879.
- Halbesleben, J. R., & Buckley, M. R. (2004). Burnout in organizational life. *Journal of Management, 30*(6), 859-879.
- Hassan, S., & Mohamed, R. (2016). Emotional labour and job satisfaction in the Malaysian hospitality industry. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Research, 6*(1), 17-25.
- Hochschild, A. R. (2003). *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Twentieth Anniversary ed.). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Khoo, E. J., & Tan, K. K. (2016). Burnout among young working adults in Malaysia: A study on gender and age differences. *International Journal of Business and Society, 17*(2), 313-328.
- Leiter, M. P., Hakanen, J. J., & Ahola, K. (2013). Organizational predictors and health consequences of changes in burnout: A 12-year cohort study. *Organizational Behavior, 34*(9), 959-973.
- Lim, B. C., & Ployhart, R. E. (2004). Transformational leadership: Relations to the five-factor model and team performance in typical and maximum contexts. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 89*(4), 610-621.
- Lopes, S. J., & Snyder, C. R. (2009). *Handbook of Positive Psychology*. US: Oxford University Press.
- Luthans, F., Youssef, C. M., & Avolio, B. J. (2007). *Psychological capital: Developing the human competitive edge*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Luthans, F., Youssef-Morgan, C. M., & Avolio, B. J. (2015). *Psychological capital and beyond*. Oxford University Press.
- Lynn, S. E., Kobie, V. K., & Roel, M. W. (2022). Reading about minds: The social-cognitive potential of narratives. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review, 29*, 1703-1718.
- Mak, W. W. S., & Wu, C. F. (2019). Psychological capital and burnout among nurses in Hong Kong: Cross-sectional survey. *Journal of Nursing Management, 27*(5), 933-941.
- Maslach, C., & Leiter, M. P. (2016). Understanding the burnout experience: Recent research and its implications for psychiatry. *World Psychiatry, 15*(2), 103-111. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.20311>.
- Mikolajczak, M., Menil, C., & Luminet, O., (2007). Explaining the protective effect of trait emotional intelligence regarding occupational stress: exploration of emotional labour processes. *J. Res. Pers. 41* (5), 1107-1117.

- Newman, A., Ucbasaran, D., Zhu, F. E. I., & Hirst, G. (2014). Psychological capital: A review and synthesis. *Journal of organizational behavior*, 35(S1), S120-S138
- Ng, K. H., & Rasli, A. M. (2016). Emotional labour and job satisfaction: The case of Malaysian nurses. *International Journal of Management and Applied Research*, 3(3), 130-144.
- Norberg, J. (2014). Occupational Burnout: An Overview of Current Research and Theories. In C. Cooper & P. Chen (Eds.), *Wellbeing: A Complete Reference Guide* (pp. 1-28). John Wiley & Sons.
- Norwati Daud, Shamsul Azhar Shah & Norhayati Ibrahim (2017) Burnout among employees in higher learning institutions: A literature review. *International Journal of Human Resource Studies*, 7(3), 77-88, <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijhrs.v7i3.11425>
- Omar, A., & Abdullah, M. C. (2014). Emotional intelligence: A study of demographic differences among Malaysian managers. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 5(7), 18-27.
- Ozturk, I., & Ay, U. (2018), The impact of the job's duty dependency, political behavior, role conflict and uncertainty on burnout: A review in health institutions. In: Polat, B., Güler, M., Derin, H., editors. *Research on Social Sciences*. Turkey: Iksad Publishing House. p68-101.
- Stajkovic, A. D. (2006). Development of a core confidence-higher order construct. *The Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91(6), 1208-1224.
- Tan, C. S., Yee, A., Sze, W. P., & Wong, K. (2015). Burnout among public hospital doctors in Malaysia: A cross-sectional study. *International Journal of Health Sciences*, 9(4), 385-394.
- Wong, C. A., & Laschinger, H. K. S. (2013). Authentic leadership, performance, and job satisfaction: The mediating role of empowerment. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 69(4), 947-959.
- Wong, C. H., & Wong, S. F. (2019). Burnout among Malaysian secondary school teachers: A literature review. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 9(4), 61-66.
- Wong, S. S. L., Ong, L. C., & Wong, Y. H. (2020). Emotional labour in Malaysia: A systematic review. *Journal of Southeast Asian Research*, 1-20. doi: 10.1177/1350507620962171
- World Health Organization. (2019). Burn-out an “occupational phenomenon”: International Classification of Diseases. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/news/item/28-05-2019-burn-out-an-occupational-phenomenon-international-classification-of-diseases>.
- Yin, H., Wang, W., Huang, S., & Li, H. (2016). Psychological capital, emotional labour and exhaustion: Examining mediating and moderating models. *Current Psychology*, 1–14. doi:10.1007/s12144-016-9518-z.
- Yusoff, M. S. B., & Preece, D. A. (2012). The influence of self-efficacy on academic performance of Malaysian polytechnic students. *International Journal of Educational Psychology*, 1(2), 61-77.
- Masten, A. S. (2014). Global perspectives on resilience in children and youth. *Child development*, 85(1), 6-20.
- Windle, G. (2011). What is resilience? A review and concept analysis. *Reviews in Clinical Gerontology*, 21(2), 152-169.
- Wu, G., & Wu, H. (2018). The impact of resilience on job performance: The role of high-quality LMX. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 33(1), 50-62.
- Peterson, C., & Seligman, M. E. (2004). *Character strengths and virtues: A handbook and classification*. American Psychological Association.

Stajkovic, A. D., & Luthans, F. (1998). Self-efficacy and work-related performance: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 124(2), 240-261.