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## Employees' Self-Worth: Psychological and sociological factors influencing job satisfaction

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### Abstract

This study aimed to examine whether individual self-worth influences job satisfaction through the mediating role of employee engagement at Kedai Ayam, a convenience food store chain. Data were collected from 120 employees from Kedai Ayam outlets throughout Malaysia. Questionnaires were developed and distributed via Google form link through emails. Perceived organizational support outperformed self-worth and value congruence in enhancing employee engagement and job satisfaction in convenience stores. Moreover, perceived organizational support makes employees feel accountable for the organization and helps it achieve its goals. The findings assist managers understand how employee engagement affects job satisfaction and view their personal traits.

Keywords: Convenience stores, employees' self-worth, sociological factors, job satisfaction

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### 1.0 Introduction

The growth of the foodservice and retailing industry globally and locally shows how this industry is essential to meet customers' demands. The penetration of modern grocery retail in Malaysia has also risen. Modern retail outlets are replacing Malaysia's traditional unorganized retail outlets for better wealth and lifestyle by focusing on quality goods and services and a more conducive retail environment. Besides, the growth of convenience stores has also played a vital role in the sales increment of food and beverages. Thus, convenience stores are acknowledged as essential in satisfying the customers' needs. In order to satisfy customers' needs and demands optimally, organizations need productive employees capable of achieving organizational goals. Employees will be productive if they are satisfied with their jobs and working environment. Job satisfaction is the significant outcome of numerous factors that play an essential role in the employment environment. Self-worth, value congruence, perceived organizational support, and employee engagement is believed to influence job satisfaction at convenience stores.

Employee satisfaction and value of self-worth individuals at work are crucial at any organizational level. Self-worth comes naturally to humans in terms of mind and inner self at work (Cherry, 2017). Chen (2017) asserted that highly perceived organizational support positively correlates with employees' proactive behaviors at work. Nevertheless, Noori (2018) affirmed that job satisfaction relies on variables such

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as personal, organizational, administrative, academic, professional, and economic factors. To date, only limited studies are available on convenience store employees' self-worth in the Malaysian food and beverage industry. Resultantly, the study aimed to determine the most crucial personal attributes in determining job satisfaction among convenience store (Kedai Ayamias) employees.

## 2.0 Literature Review

### 2.1 Employees Personal Attributes

Personal attributes are the characteristics or personality traits of an individual. Three personal attributes examined in this study include self-worth, value congruence, and perceived organisational support. The word self-esteem is used in psychology to describe an individual's overall sense of self-worth or personal importance. For instance, some people base their self-worth on appearance, while others on approval and competitive success. Consequently, a study conducted in Singapore by Nagpaul and Pang (2017) showed that the discrepancies in the foundations of personal worth might also be attributed to the degree to which people pursue materialism.

Nevertheless, the study of value congruence provides an opportunity to integrate the topics of individual and organisational values. The importance of meaning congruence is analysed differently from its significance in staffing (Vanderstukken, 2016), leadership (Brown, 2005), its effect on the creativity of employees (Spanjol, 2015), organisational results (Farazmand, 2018), or even the progress of organisation's improvements (Erkutlu, 2016). Employees will appreciate perceived organisational support because it satisfies their acceptance, confidence, and associated requirements and offers comfort during stressful periods. In correspondence, perceived organisational support has been described as the degree of employee confidence that an organisation appreciates the effort and cares about the employees' welfare (Robbins & Judge, 2015).

### 2.2 Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction

Employee engagement provides workers more incentive to perform well and raise the contribution to the company. In contrast, organizations with negative and poor cultures may undermine the employees' motivation to work and even cause poor employee performance (Brenyah & Darko, 2017; Namrita & Yoginder, 2017). Therefore, empowerment can contribute to productivity and engagement, increasing customer service levels (Ariza-Montes et al., 2018). Besides, high-performance hospitality employment practices, such as inspiring workers, motivating them to act and rewarding them, positively influence employee engagement (Guan et al., 2020).

Nonetheless, factors fulfilling an employee's satisfaction might not meet another employee's needs. Job satisfaction has the ability to minimize high turnover and encourage loyalty, hence positively influencing sustainable growth at the organizational level (Strenitzerová & Achimský, 2019). Thus, employee retention increases when job satisfaction is higher among employees at convenience food stores. Engaged workers want their managers to have excellent communication, work that inspires them, and positive relations within the working groups. Hence, in the convenience food store context, enhancing employee engagement and job satisfaction in the foodservice industry would be sufficient for improved organizational performance.

## 3.0 Methodology

The quantitative approach was utilized as the data collection method in this analysis. The researchers administered questionnaires to the selected lower-level employees (crew) attached to convenience food stores (Kedai Ayamias) throughout Malaysia. According to Ayamias Shoppe Sdn. Bhd. (2019), Kedai Ayamias has 51 outlets in Malaysia. Nonetheless, only 45 Kedai Ayamias outlets are recognized as convenience food stores, while the rest are known as kiosks. This study involved all Kedai Ayamias outlets in Malaysia because Ayamias organization has decided to acquire six employees for each outlet (Mohd Iswazi, Phone Interview, 1st December 2019). Then, it is calculated as 45 outlets multiply with 6 employees from each outlet. Therefore, the total population for this study is 270 as derived from 45 outlets.

The researchers used probability sampling in this study by applying stratified sampling. A letter of permission was sent to the outlet managers of all 45 outlets in Malaysia to conduct this study. After a few days, follow-up phone calls were made to the respective managers of 45 outlets to confirm the receipt of the letter and acquire their willingness to participate in the research. In addition, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic that spread in Malaysia and worldwide in early February 2020 and the Movement Control Order imposed by the government, the researchers could only reach the respondents by sharing the Google form link and phone call instead of face-to-face questionnaire distribution.

Once the researchers received the approval, the structured questionnaire based on five-point Likert scales, ranging from 1 - "Strongly Disagree", 2 - "Disagree" 3 - "Neutral", 4 - "Agree" and 5 - "Strongly Agree", was distributed to the respective outlet managers through emails in November 2020. With limited access, the researchers only managed to obtain 120 responses or returned questionnaires were usable with a response rate of 75.4% within two months from 1st November 2020 until 30th December 2020.

In addition, the researchers had an opportunity to review the entire questionnaire during the pilot study to determine if the questionnaires required adjustments in terms of design and instrumentation. Moreover, the pilot study helped to ensure the respondents' comprehension by omitting any inappropriate language. Finally, 42 sets of questionnaires were distributed to the respondents, namely Kedai Ayamias employees across all Malaysian regions, for reliability analysis. In addition, the data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software version 22 for descriptive statistics and inferential statistics (multiple regression analysis).

#### 4.0 Results

A descriptive analysis was used to analyse the respondents' profiles. Concisely, all information on respondents' profiles is outlined in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Respondents Profile

Items	Frequencies (N = 120)	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	35	29.2
Female	85	70.8
<b>Age</b>		
21 - 30	70	58.3
20 - below	40	33.3
31 - 40	10	8.3
<b>Education level</b>		
Secondary School	21	17.5
Certificate (in related field)	12	10.0
Diploma	43	35.8
Degree	44	36.7
<b>Type of employee</b>		
Full time	92	76.7
Part-time	28	23.3
<b>Type of current region</b>		
Central region	85	70.8
Northern region	17	14.2
East Coast region	9	7.5
Southern region	9	7.4

#### 4.1 Self-Worth

Table 4.2 Mean and Standard Deviation for Self-Worth

No.	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	120	3.90	0.666
2.	I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	120	2.29	0.873
3.	I certainly feel useless at times.	120	2.65	0.857
4.	I feel I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	120	3.53	0.978
5.	I wish I could have more respect for myself.	120	4.03	0.961
6.	I take a positive attitude toward myself.	120	3.91	1.012
7.	I feel worthwhile when I perform better than others on a task or skill.	120	3.97	0.819
8.	I don't care if other people have a negative opinion about me.	120	3.43	1.097
9.	What others think of me has no effect on what I think about myself.	120	3.41	1.049
10.	My self-worth is affected by how well I do when I am competing with others.	120	3.62	0.821

Based on the pattern of the mean scores in Table 4.5, the item "I wish I could have more respect for myself" (Mean = 4.03, SD = 0.961) has the highest mean score. The respondents were also slightly pleased with their worthwhile feeling when they performed better than others on a task or skill (M = 3.97; SD = 0.819). The results lead to a possible assumption that self-worth factors allow the respondents to have more respect for themselves and feel worthwhile when they perform better than others when undertaking a task or skill. Although they may feel helpless at times, the respondents take a positive attitude towards themselves.

#### 4.2 Value Congruence

Table 4.3 Mean and Standard Deviation for Value Congruence

No.	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	I am inspired to meet my goals at work.	120	4.08	0.630
2.	I am often so involved in my work that the day goes by very quickly.	120	3.84	0.970
3.	<b>I am determined to give my best effort at work each day.</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>4.22</b>	<b>0.611</b>
4.	When at work, I am completely focused on my job duties.	120	3.78	0.909
5.	Employees proactively identify future challenges and opportunities.	120	4.13	0.693

6.	Employees in my organization take the initiative to help other employees when the need arises.	120	3.98	0.991
7.	The mission or purpose of my employer makes me feel my job is important.	120	3.95	0.732
8.	I don't care what my co-workers think of me.	120	2.45	1.114
9.	When I don't perform well, I feel like a failure.	120	3.31	1.121
10.	I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	120	3.39	0.882
11.	At times, I think I am not good at all.	120	2.89	1.151

As shown in Table 4.3, the item "I am determined to give my best effort at work each day has the highest mean score" (Mean = 4.22, SD = 0.611). In addition, the respondents were also marginally satisfied with their involvement by proactively identifying future challenges and opportunities (Mean = 4.13, SD = 0.693). The findings indicate that the value congruence variables imply that the respondents feel determined to have the best daily work effort and proactively recognise potential obstacles and opportunities. They were also pleased with other employees in their organisation who take the initiative to help other employees when the need arises (Mean = 3.98, SD = 0.991).

Furthermore, the mission or purpose of their employers makes them feel that the job is important (Mean = 3.95, SD = 0.732). Although the two results did not exceed the fourth point on the scale, they are sufficiently relevant to indicate that the respondents, in general, are slightly satisfied. Nevertheless, the findings denote that the item "At times, I think I am not good at all" has the lowest score (Mean = 2.89, SD = 1.151). From the observation and viewpoint of the researchers, this finding reflects that the employees did not have confidence in their value congruence, which makes them feel not good at all, possibly due to burnout feeling.

### 4.3 Perceived Organisational Support

Table 4.4 Mean and Standard Deviation for Perceived Organisational Support

No.	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	Communication between senior leaders and employees is good in my organization.	120	4.02	0.799
2.	I am able to make decisions affecting my work.	120	3.62	0.891
3.	Management within my organization recognizes a strong job performance.	120	3.67	0.892
4.	My supervisor and I have a good working relationship.	120	3.97	0.943
5.	<b>My co-workers and I have a good working relationship.</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>4.13</b>	<b>0.840</b>
6.	Senior management and employees trust each other.	120	3.91	0.987
7.	My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.	120	3.83	0.982
8.	There is someone at work who encourages and supports my development.	120	3.63	1.013

Most employees agreed that they have a good working relationship with their co-workers (Mean = 4.13, SD = 0.840). Furthermore, the participants were also relatively happy with the communication between senior leaders and employees, which is good in their organisation (Mean = 4.02, SD = 0.799). Besides, they were also pleased with their supervisor, who has a good relationship with them (Mean = 3.97, SD = 0.943). Thus, the work environment in their outlets is positive, and concurrently, the supervisor has successfully played their good roles with the employees.

### 4.4 Employee Engagement

Table 4.5 Mean and Standard Deviation for Employee Engagement

No.	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	In the morning when I get up, I look forward to going to work.	120	3.33	0.771
2.	In my work, I always persevere even when things do not go well.	120	3.73	0.837
3.	I find my work full of meaning.	120	3.65	0.895
4.	I am enthusiastic about my job.	120	3.69	0.828
5.	For me, my job is rewarding.	120	3.82	0.847
6.	<b>When at work, I am always engaged in what I am doing.</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>4.02</b>	<b>0.667</b>
7.	I am consumed in my work.	120	3.53	0.934
8.	I consider my co-workers as my friends.	120	3.99	0.704

The item, "When at work, I am always engaged in what I am doing" (Mean = 4.02, SD = 0.667), has the highest mean score. The employees were also pleased to consider their co-workers as friends (Mean = 3.99, SD = 0.704). Thus, the findings signify that respondents' engagement in the outlets is favourable, and they can work in a team.

#### 4.5 Job Satisfaction

Table 4.6 Mean and Standard Deviation for Job Satisfaction

No.	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	Considering my skills and level of education that I have, I feel that I am paid fairly.	120	3.31	0.942
2.	<b>I feel a sense of pride and accomplishment as a result of the work I do.</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>3.71</b>	<b>0.749</b>
3.	I like the type of work I am doing very much.	120	3.57	0.950
4.	I never thought to leave this organization even the condition of this company is not stable.	120	3.08	0.958
5.	<b>All in all, I am satisfied with my job now.</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>3.71</b>	<b>0.893</b>

As shown in Table 4.6, the item “I feel a sense of pride and accomplishment as a result of the work I do” (Mean = 3.71, SD = 0.749) has the highest mean score. In addition, the respondents were also pleased with everything as they were satisfied with their current job (Mean = 3.71, SD = 0.893). The results suggest that job satisfaction factors allow the respondents to feel satisfied with the job scope in the outlets. The influence of independent variables, including self-worth, value congruence, and perceived organisational support towards the dependent variable (job satisfaction), was analysed using multiple regressions analysis.

Table 4.7 Hypotheses Summary

Indicators	Hypotheses	Standard Coefficient	Sig.	Remarks
		Beta		
H1a	Self-worth has a significant relationship toward employee engagement.	0.076	0.343	Not supported
H1b	Value congruence has a significant relationship toward employee engagement.	0.243	0.004	Supported
H1c	Perceived organizational support has a significant relationship toward employee engagement	0.552	0.000	Supported

According to Table 4.7, self-worth (p-value = 0.343) was insignificant as the p-value was more than 0.05. From these observations, these variables did not significantly contribute to the prediction of employee engagement. On the other hand, the results also showed that value congruence (p-value = 0.004) and perceived organisational support (p-value = 0.000) were significant as the p-value was less than 0.01. The hypotheses explain that value congruence and perceived organisational support had significant contributions to the prediction of employee engagement. Nevertheless, self-worth was not significant towards employee engagement. Therefore, H1a was not supported, while H1b and H1c were supported.

#### 5.0 Discussion

Multiple regression analyses were undertaken based on self-worth, value congruence, and perceived organisational support influence on job satisfaction, as shown in Table 4.7. The finding showed that perceived organisational support was significant as the value of 0.000 was less than 0.01. Hence, perceived organisational support influences job satisfaction and does not correlate with the other two constructs. The basic idea was derived from human service workers’ environment, while this research was performed in the area of foodservice management. The employees in convenience food stores rely highly on corporate strategy because they have to survive with unpredictable working conditions, long working hours, antisocial job shifts, repetitive routine jobs, and low wages due to the precarious employment in the nature of the industry (Ariza-Montes, Arjona-Fuentes, Han & Law (2018).

The findings demonstrate that convenience food store employees’ perception of perceived organisational support correlates significantly with their job satisfaction. Receiving perceived organisational support makes the workers feel responsible for the organisation and help the organisation accomplish its objectives. However, there was no significant difference between self-worth and employee engagement.

Hence, convenience food store employees exhibited negative attitudes and had a limited understanding of the terminologies of self-worth.

Furthermore, self-worth and employee engagement are challenging to accomplish due to the workload among convenience food store employees. Until today, the salary issue is not acceptable to them, especially in Malaysia. Additionally, a significant difference is observable between value congruence and employee engagement. This research included two fundamental questions that helped determine the effect of value congruence and the influence on employee engagement. When asked about the item “I am inspired to meet my goals at work” in the positive response statistics, the respondents provided different opinions where 62.4% agreed, 22% strongly agreed, and 15.6% were neutral. Likewise, when asked about the item, “I am determined to give my best effort at work each day”, 90% of the respondents agreed with the statement.

In addition, a significant difference exists between perceived organisational support and employee engagement. Several studies have

shown that acknowledging workers as important sources are essential for organisations. Nevertheless, an employee's perception that the company supports his or her job efforts has been shown to have a significant difference between perceived organisational support and employee engagement in this study. Therefore, workers who obtained an adequate supply of value congruence and perceived organisational support tend to perform better in their job.

A significant difference was also found between the influence of employee engagement and job satisfaction. This finding is considered consistent and aligned with the findings of previous literature. For instance, Guan et al. (2020) reported that high-performance hospitality employment practices, such as inspiring workers by motivating them to take action and rewarding them, positively affect employee engagement and job satisfaction. A significant difference was also discovered between employee engagement that mediates the relationship between the effects of personal attributes (self-worth, value congruence, perceived organisational support) and job satisfaction. The findings show that the mediating impact of employee engagement between personal attributes and job satisfaction was significantly related.

## 6.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

In general, self-worth is a behaviour trait that contributes to employee satisfaction towards the organisation. Nonetheless, evaluating the whole facets of self-worth without a precise bearing is difficult. Therefore, the principal predictors of this study were self-worth, value congruence, and perceived organisational support. The decision was made as an effort to enhance employee engagement and job satisfaction among employees. The results of the hypotheses testing showed that Hypothesis 1a was not significant, indicating that individual self-worth did not affect job satisfaction. The information gathered showed that the employees did not allow their self-worth to assess their job satisfaction level. Top executives should identify and incorporate resources that can boost the employees' happiness if they want their employees to be satisfied and active when working. In general, organisation management should prioritise understanding the influence individual sociological self-worth has on employee engagement.

Moreover, the research findings concerning Hypothesis 1c showed that perceived organisational support had a substantial positive effect on job satisfaction as assessed by the mediating variable of employee engagement. Thus, concern for introducing work protection systems, such as pension schemes and management insurance policies, may attribute self-worth to the workers, especially to longer-tenured employees. Companies providing long-term benefits to motivate and keep employees happy are deemed more productive, and employees are less likely to leave their jobs. In conclusion, this study showed the value of organisational support for employee job outcomes, arising from both internal and external judgments, such as gratitude, pride and self-worth. This research and its findings include multiple contributions and consequences.

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## Limitations and directions for future research

Apart from its contributions to the body of knowledge, the current study is constrained in a number of ways that should be addressed in future research. Further research may include variables such as organizational engagement, organizational culture, and organizational environment influencing employees job satisfaction. Thus, the researcher advocated a mixed approach that often includes qualitative methods like interviews or focus group reviews. Considering the growing popularity of fast food restaurants in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor, future research should include such areas

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