

AcE-Bs2022Cherating

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10th Asian Conference on Environment-Behaviour Studies
Holiday Villa Beach Resort, Cherating, Malaysia, 08-09 Jun 2022



Employers Practice towards Managing Psychosocial Risk in the Workplace: IMAGE Star Rating System

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Abstract

The management of employee mental health in the workplace is essential. Good leadership by employers can increase employees' productivity and directly improve their quality of life. This study explores the use of more objective evaluators in formulating employers' action plans on workplace psychosocial risks. This survey was conducted using an employer practice evaluation form (*Amalan Majikan: AM*). Seventy-seven employers have filled out this survey voluntarily. Seven employers (9.1%) received an excellent result equivalent to five stars rating. This rating can be used as a reference for employers' practice managing psychosocial risk in the workplace.

Keywords: Psychosocial risk; Workplace management; Employers practice; SKIPP

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21834/ebpj.v7i20.3511>

1.0 Introduction

Mental health issues, in general, are a global issue that requires due attention from all parties. Every human being can go through disturbing situations and emotional discomfort. These stresses and situations can be positive stimuli to motivate a person. However, failure to control this stress will harm their lives and productivity. There are many adverse effects of the effects of failure to control emotions. For example, there are many reports in the media of the time about out-of-control actions committed by these individuals. Even sadder when it involves the loss of human life. Emotional control and early detection can prevent these unwanted things from happening. The first step in addressing this issue is to identify the root cause. Among the leading causes of psychosocial risk can be seen two conditions, namely work-related and non-work-related. In general, each working individual will spend 1/3 of their daily time working and being at work. The 8-hour period is very long and dramatically affects the other 2/3 of the time. Anything that happens in the workplace can directly impact life

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outside the workplace. According to the study, there are seven leading causes of mental illness in the workplace, and the causes are as follows (ILO, 2000):

1. Extreme workload
2. The long working period
3. Lack of control
4. routine work
5. conflict between individuals
6. lack of reward
7. Organizational problems.

Concerning the seven causes above, it is highly relevant for employers to play a proactive role in curbing this before it worsens. The management of employee mental health in the workplace is essential. Employers' good governance can increase employees' productivity and directly improve their quality of life. Regarding sources in today's electronic media, employee mental health issues such as stress and depression are particularly concerned. Some of the employee complaints refer to the lack of support by employers, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. Accordingly, this study is critical to look at the current state of employers' practices on the psychosocial issues of their employees. Undeniably, some employers are sensitive, proactive, and genuinely concerned about the mental health status of their employees. However, there is no doubt that some employers have difficulty identifying this issue due to the lack of straightforward methods to use. In addition, some employers stated that their employees were susceptible to sharing matters related to mental health. They worry about being labeled as 'crazy' and so on. The noble efforts of this employer should be appreciated, and a solution should be sought. Accordingly, this study has developed a measurement instrument to see and suggest what actions employers can take to overcome this problem. This study explores the use of more objective evaluators in formulating employers' action plans on workplace psychosocial risks. The first objective is to identify the level of employer practices in Malaysia on managing workplace psychosocial risk, followed by determining the base value of these employers' existing practice ratings.

1.1 Impact on employee health, safety, and well-being

Constant stress does indeed have a detrimental effect on employees and individuals. These effects can vary according to individual responses. High pressure can contribute to mental health and behavioral disorders. Among the common examples of its products are such as fatigue, tiredness, restlessness, and depression. In addition, there are also other adverse effects such as physical disorders, cardiovascular disease, and musculoskeletal disorders. In addition to this, it can also lead to behaviors such as alcohol and drug abuse, smoking, unhealthy diet practices, irregular sleep, increased rates of accidents at work, and non -communicable diseases. Today many studies show that human error plays a role in accidents at work. In addition, unsafe behavior can also lead to unwanted things. There are many studies conducted on the relationship between work environment and psychosocial risk leading to increased risk of accidents in the workplace. The evidence clearly suggests that factors such as high workload and job demands, lack of organizational support, and conflicts with supervisors and colleagues are associated with a higher likelihood of injury in occupational accidents. The findings also show that mental health (particularly fatigue) is negatively related to safe work practices. It increases the possibility of accidents in the workplace (Hilton, Whiteford, 2010; Nahrgang, Morgeson, Hofmann, 2011).

ISO45003: 2021 Occupational health and safety management.

Guidelines for managing psychosocial risk in OSH management systems based on ISO 45001 (ISO, 2021). It allows organizations to prevent employee-related injuries and improve the health of their employees. It can also help employers promote well-being in the workplace. This responsibility includes actions to protect the physical and psychological health of employees. Psychosocial hazards relate to how work is organized, social factors in the workplace, and aspects of the work environment, equipment, and hazardous tasks. Psychosocial hazards can occur in all organizations and sectors and from all functions, equipment, and work arrangements. Psychosocial risk affects psychological health and safety, and health, safety, and well-being in the workplace more broadly. Psychosocial risk is also associated with economic costs to organizations and society. Several terms are used, including; "psychological health" and "mental health."

3.0 Method

This survey was conducted using an employer practice evaluation form developed under a grant from the Department of Occupational Safety & Health (DOSH) Malaysia. This form contains two sections: employer information and 25 questions related to employer practices. This form is distributed online for two months to all employers in Malaysia using the official DOSH website. Given the limited time, the researchers also included these ads in social opponents as well as specific occupational health and safety groups. This study aims to get

at least 30 employers. These employers must fall into any of the ten categories recommended by DOSH. This value is selected based on the minimum value for statistical analysis.

The employer practice evaluation (*Amalan Majikan: AM*) form contains 25 questions. The process of formation and development of AM instruments uses the method described by Crawford 1990. This study cross-references to three primary sources: employee experience, field expert views, and past data such as - International Labor Organization (ILO). Employers were asked to fill in the value of their practice according to the 1-5 Likert Scale. This AM form has been developed and goes through an independent panel evaluation process. The 25 questions formed were questions formed from interviews, publications, and cross-references with industry practitioners.

In contrast, an employer reverse practice (R-AM) form has also been developed but is not presented in this paper. Previous studies have used AM and SKiPP to identify employees' psychosocial risks in their workplaces (Masuri 2021). However, a full assessment and analysis could not be performed as confidential data were not supplied at this phase. This description will be explained in the limitations section of the study. The development of this star rating is also similar to the previous research conducted by Masuri (2020).

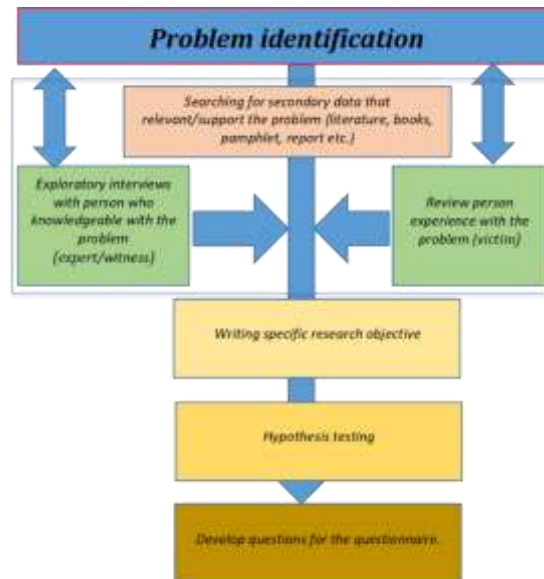


Figure 1. The process of AM formation is adapted from Crawford 1990.

4.0 Result

After obtaining permission, the survey was conducted online. The initial planning of the study was to use a hybrid platform where a combination of online and face-to-face interviews. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic situation persisted, so face-to-face activities could not be carried out. All the data obtained are stored in the drive of the researcher to facilitate the process of data analysis. There are 77 employers who have filled out this survey voluntarily. There were 20 employers (27%) who earned only one star. There were 21 employers (27.3%) who made two stars, followed by 18 employers (23.4%) three stars, 11 employers (14.3%) four stars, and seven employers (9.1%) five stars. This star rating translates to IMAGE, where one to five stars carry the meaning of Inadequate-I, followed by Moderate-M, Average-A, Good-G, and Excellent-E.

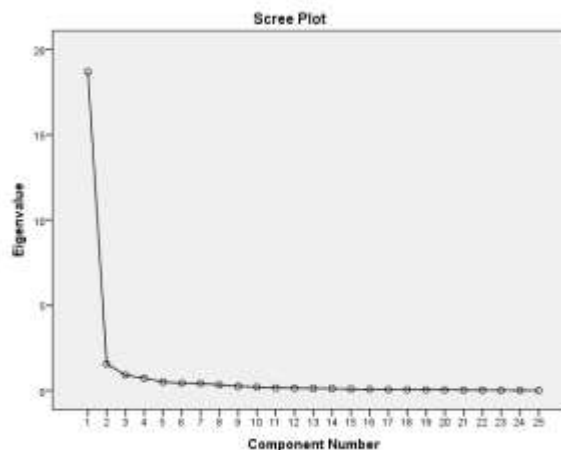


Figure 2. Scree plot of 25 items

In multivariate statistics, a scree plot is a line plot of the eigenvalues of factors or principal components in an analysis. The scree plot is used to determine the number of factors to retain in exploratory factor analysis (FA) or main elements to keep in a principal component analysis (PCA). The scree plot shows one component that the AM tried to analyze. This can be used as a reference where 25 items of AM only study one single factor. This scree plot analysis is essential to show the extent to which an instrument measures the phenomenon to be measured. Accordingly, there is no hesitation in using AM as a measurement instrument to measure a single phenomenon related to employment practice.

Table 1 shows the employer's brief demographic. The majority of employers were from the public service sector (36.6%), followed by the manufacturing sector (31.2%), the construction sector (13%), and the utility sector (9.1%). Unfortunately, none of the employers representing the hospitality sector filled out this survey. The majority of employers are based in Sarawak, followed by Kuala Lumpur, Penang, and Johor.

Table 1. Distribution of employers by 10 sector breakdown.

Sectors	Frequency	%
Manufacture	24	(31.2)
Mining & quarrying	1	(1.3)
Construction	10	(13.0)
Hotels & restaurants	0	0
Agriculture, forestry & fisheries	3	(3.9)
Transportation, storage, & communication	1	(1.3)
Public services & PBT	28	(36.4)
Utilities	7	(9.1)
Finance, insurance, real estate, & business services	1	(1.3)
Wholesale & retail trade	2	(2.6)
Employer location		
Kedah	3	5.2
Pulau Pinang	9	15.5
Perak	5	8.6
Kuala Lumpur	10	17.2
Negeri Sembilan	1	1.7
Melaka	1	1.7
Johor	6	10.3
Pahang	2	3.4
Terengganu	1	1.7
Kelantan	2	3.4
Sarawak	17	29.3
Labuan	1	1.7
Type of employer		
Federal	3	5.2
States	1	1.7
Private	3	5.2
Statutory	5	8.6
Individual	3	5.2
Others	43	74.1

Table 2 shows the values obtained to form the cut-off value of the star value setting and the employer IMAGE. This cut-off value is developed based on percentile analysis. This study decided that the value of 1 was between the score of 25 to 55 (25 is the minimum score that the employer may obtain). The value of 2 was between the score of 56 to 75. The value of 3 was between 76 to 98, which is equivalent to the 50th percentile. A value of 4 is between 98 to 108, and a value of 5 stars is a score between 109 and above.

Table 2. Table of 5 Employer Practice (AM) scales - IMAGE Star rating.

Percentiles		Percentiles					
Employer score		5	10	25	50	75	95
		26.8	47.0	56.0	76.0	98.0	125.
				56.0	76.0	98.0	
		1		2	3	4	5
		25-55		56-75	76-98	98-108	>108

Table 3 shows the final score of AM. More than 50% of employers interpret them as not and rarely practice the 25 things contained in the AM. 23.4% of employers are in the moderate category. At the same time, 14.3% are in the excellent category. Seven employers rated themselves as good and earned five full stars. Please be informed that all employers do not know the cut-off value for each of these IMAGE scores. This study believes that the assessments performed are genuine and reliable. This cut-off value is a guide based on the group of employers collected. Researchers do not rule out the possibility that with the addition of data, this value will change. However, this value can be used as a fundamental value to determine the star value and ranking of employers on their existing practices in facing the challenges of psychosocial risk in the workplace.

Table 3. Employer IMAGE Star rating score

AM	Frequency	%	Indicator	Star rating
No	20	26.0	I – Inadequate	★
Rarely	21	27.3	M – Moderate	★★
Once in a while	18	23.4	A – Average	★★★
Frequent	11	14.3	G – Good	★★★★
Very often	7	9.1	E – Excellent	★★★★★

Table 4 shows the action priority table based on the AM score. In general, these recommendations have been arranged in order of priority 1 to 25. Employers can check any score less than 4. This indicates a lack of attention and the need for change at the employer level. For example, the first priority is to ensure that the mental state of the employee is in good condition. Among the strategies that can be taken by employers is to hold talk sessions and ongoing partnerships with employees. Employers can also provide programs in the form of education and emotional control. Employees who get information early will probably be able to prevent themselves from more serious mental problems. In comparison, the final score is to allow for social interaction between employees. From the observation, we can conclude that the situation of employees and employers in Malaysia does not hinder this communication, so it is in the final order of action of the employer. The priority of this action can also be divided into five tiers. Each tier represents five action plans. This is to make it easier for employers to plan and prioritize. This will also be able to help employers complete early actions more quickly. Financial planning, employment, and related preparations can be prepared in advance. All 25 of these questions were formulated and agreed upon from a panel point of view, and statistical analysis was capable of measuring employer practices. The alpha value obtained was also high and significant. For example, items 1 through 4 received scores above .9. Scores for items 5 to 23 were in the range of .8. Only items 24 and 25 had slightly lower scores of .7 and .6. However, these two items still have a reasonable and reliable value. In conclusion, these values indicate that the items in the AM are relevant to measuring employers' practices in dealing with psychosocial risk issues in the workplace.

Table 4. List of action plan priorities on AM scores with alpha values

Component of analysis	Priority-based on the IMAGE Star rating.
.934	1. Keep the mental health of my employees in good condition.
.933	2. Ensure transparency and fairness in the procedure for handling complaints.
.912	3. Ensure tasks are clearly defined.
.906	4. Provide adequate pay for the work done.
.899	5. Provide appropriate lighting, equipment, air quality, and noise levels in the workplace.
.890	6. Assign tasks according to experience and competence.
.888	7. Strengthen motivation by emphasizing the positive and useful aspects of the job.
.886	8. Set clear roles, and avoid role conflicts and ambiguity.
.886	9. Provide job security as far as possible.
.885	10. Provide an infrastructure where supervisory staff is accountable to other employees and there is an appropriate level of contact.
.879	11. Ensure adequate level of human resources & staff.
.878	12. Take into account ergonomic aspects to limit stress on employees.
.877	13. Ensure there is a supportive relationship between supervisors and employees.
.876	14. Ensure proper use of skills.
.873	15. Encourage employees to discuss any conflicting claims between work and home.
.871	16. Provide information on psychosocial risks and work-related stress and how to prevent them.
.856	17. Match the job to the employee's physical and psychological skills and abilities.
.855	18. Assess the time requirements of a job on a regular basis and set reasonable deadlines.
.837	19. Allow employees to state how their work is carried out.
.835	20. Provide adequate training to ensure appropriate skills and employment of employees.
.827	21. Avoid exposure to harmful agents.
.826	22. Keep the workplace free from physical and psychological violence.
.824	23. Provide support services for employees with mental health problems in the workplace.
.770	24. Ensure working hours are predictable and reasonable.
.691	25. Allow for social contact between employees.

5.0 Limitations

The study was conducted in a limited time, and the response from employers was also small. This primary survey still requires some comparison in terms of employer practices globally. Moreover, the correlation between SKiPP, R-AM, and AM scores could not be carried out because the personal data of the respondents were not disclosed. This information requires filtering at different levels and is unlikely to be available for this study. The research team has taken this into account and will make improvements in the future where the use of codes (blind) will be used to maintain the confidentiality of the personal data of respondents and employers.

Acknowledgments

The highest appreciation goes to the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia (MoHE), Royal Malaysia Police, Research Management Centre (RMC), Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), CoRe Management Science, OPERA RIG, to all panel experts as well as respondents who had participated in this study for their kind cooperation and to all staff of the Faculty of Health Sciences UiTM Puncak Alam for continuous support in staff research and development. Thank you to our local and international collaborators, Ministry of Health Malaysia, PERKESO, PETRONAS, MIROS Malaysia, The Robert Gordon University, UK, Tokyo University of Technology, Japan, Honam University, South Korea, Kolej Laksamana, Brunei, and Universiti Indonesia, Indonesia. This study was funded by DOSH Malaysia- JKPP/07/2021/MD.

Paper Contribution to Related Field of Study

The main effect to be shared from this study is the star rating, which can be a measure of employers' practice towards managing psychosocial risk in the Workplace in Malaysia. This assessment can help employers to be more transparent with action plans that they can frame in dealing with psychosocial hazards in the workplace. In addition, this star value can be used for future recognition reference locally and internationally. In addition, this assessment can be done simultaneously using the *Skala Kemungkinan Pekerjaan & Persekitaran terhadap status kesihatan mental pekerja (SKiPP)* form (Masuri et.al. 2021). However, a validation process needs to be done to validate the results obtained. Finally, the findings of the study will undoubtedly provide stimulation and understanding of fundamental issues related to psychosocial risk factors in the workplace in Malaysia. The proposed star ratings are also still open to any constructive comments and criticism. It is the desire of researchers and the DOSH, Malaysia, to see the positive effects of the results of this study. Employers, employees, and the community need to provide helpful input in ensuring that this is better for the future. There is always room for improvement for the next edition, and the start is here for the entire Malaysian industry.

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