IMPACT OF CHANGING WORKING ENVIRONMENT ON MENTAL HEALTH AMONG EDUCATORS DUE TO PANDEMIC COVID-19: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

The SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) pandemic has resulted in changes to the working arrangements especially for education sector in the country. From primary school up to tertiary level, education sector has to shifted temporarily from traditional teaching and learning process to online teaching and learning process. Many educators were struggling to continue with their new routine and try to be mentally strong with the new adjustment. Some of them have little knowledge and were unable to cope with the changes. Even though Malaysia has move to the endemic phase, the education industry has started to shifted the delivery

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method to adapt with Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity (VUCA) environment which surrounding the education landscape as well as to accelerate the transition towards education Industrial Revolution 4.0. In order to maintain the quality of teaching and learning process, it is important to discuss the impact of changing work environment on mental health among educators. This research tries to explore the impact of changing working environment on mental health among educators through literature review. Findings on this research can be used by education sector in designing the best method that can minimize the impact of changing working environment on mental health among educators.

Keywords: Educators, Working Environment, Mental Health, COVID-19

INTRODUCTION

The SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) pandemic has affected the education sector in the country. During the early phase of the Movement Control Order (MCO), all face-to-face teaching and learning activities is prohibited. Due to the Movement Control Order (MCO) announced by former prime minister on 18th March 2020, most sectors of the economy including education sector is not allowed to be operate, thus, educators had to work from home until further announcement (New Straits Times, 2020). Education sector has been greatly affected by the pandemic COVID-19 in terms of operations when it comes to teaching and learning process. All level of education had to switch from traditional teaching and learning process to online teaching and learning process. Many educators were struggling to continue with their new routine and try to cope with the new work environment. Some have little knowledge and were unable to cope with the changes (Manja et. al., 2020). EMIR Research has stated that, on the 3rd quarter in 2020 where 72% of Malaysians are worried over their mental health (Jamari Mokhtar & Tam,2020). The Movement Control Order and social distancing is important to curb the spread of COVID-19, however, the nature of humans who need to be in social contact and interaction with others cannot be ignored (Toscano et.al., 2020). Furthermore, Vander Elst et al. (2017) has found that those who work more from home experience greater emotional exhaustion and cognitive stress which is linked to less social support from colleagues. It is important to address the issue as deteriorating mental health will lead to absenteeism, negative impact on productivity and profit, and cost related to solving the issues (Kumar, 2021). Bakker et. al. (2017) found that job demands associated with increased stress and exhaustion, which in turn will lead to a reduction in job performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are three points that will be discussed which are the change in working environment in the education sector, the impact of changing working

environment on mental health among educators and factors that contributes to poor mental health during changing working environment.

Changing in Education Sector Working Environment

The Movement Control Order (MCO) and social distancing is important to curb the spread of COVID-19. Hence, this had forced most of the service sector especially educational sector to adopt working from home (WFH) as an alternative working method by adapting with online and teaching learning activities. These abrupt changes had forced educators to adopt this new method of teaching and learning with limited preparation. Educators were struggling to continue with their new norm and try to cope with the new work environment. Symonds (2020) shows that 50% professionals in higher education in universities across the globe had some of their courses shifted to an online method of delivery. Some educators have little knowledge and were unable to cope with the changes (Manja et. al.,2020). Shifted from traditional teaching method to online teaching method in such a short time have required strong digital and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills. Thus, due to unprecedented situation teachers experience high level of stress and anxiety (UNESCO, 2020). It is clear that this mental health crisis will have a great impact on education industry in the future, thus, it is important that every responsible party collaborate to redesign the curriculum, teaching and learning process, and method to aid in the students' learning while ensuring readiness of all parties involved in the process physically and mentally.

Even though, Malaysia has entered the "Transition to Endemic" phase of Covid-19 on 1st of April 2022, online teaching and learning process will continue to be of relevance in the current situation and the education industry has transitioning the delivery method to adapt with Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity (VUCA) environment surrounding the education landscape as well as to accelerate the transition towards education Industrial Revolution 4.0.

The Impact of Changing Working Environment on Mental Health Among Educators

Besser et.al (2020) pointed out that educators experienced high level of stress in adapting with the new situation and providing online class. This has resulted a high percentage of anxiety, depression and stress symptoms among educators during the pandemic (Exteberria et.al, 2021). This situation is more alarming when EMIR Research has proved that on the 3rd quarter in 2020 where 72% of Malaysians are worried over their mental health (Jamari Mokhtar & Tam, 2020). Marimuthu and Vasudevan (2020) indicated that, WFH has psychological impact on employee which can be seen from feeling of depressed, frustrated and sleep disturbances.

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The same result was found in research by Al Lily et. al. (2020), which posits that due to the pandemic, educators faced problems such as anxiety, depression, stress, sleep disturbance and other pandemic related outcome which eventually limit their ability to teach properly and reduced their job Impact of Changing Working Environment on Mental Health Among Educators due to Pandemic Covid-19 - A Literature Review performance. Julian et. al. (2021) further highlighted that the anxiety, depression, stress and loneliness is worsening for individuals who work from home fully as compared to those who work as usual or work from home partially.

Working from home is also associated with increasing the risk of burnout among educators. Burnout which consists of personal burnout, work related burnout and student-related burnout. Miguel et.al. (2021) explained that burnout may lead to life dissatisfaction, sleep routine disruption or in worse case insomnia and stress which are determinants for personal burnout and student related burnout. Whereas, stress and resilience are determinants for work related burnout. They also point out that pedagogical innovation as an advantage of work from home for educators while limitation for practical lessons and social interactions as main disadvantages of work from home for educators.

Table 1: Impact of Changing Working Environment on Mental Health Among Educators

References	References
High level of stress	Besser et.al (2020), Al Lily et. al. (2020), Exteberria et.al (2021)
Anxiety	Al Lily et. al. (2020),Exteberria et.al (2021)
Depression	Al Lily et. al. (2020),Exteberria et.al (2021)
Sleep Disturbance	Al Lily et. al. (2020), Julian et. al. (2021)
Frustrated	Marimuthu and Vasudevan (2020)
Burnout	Miguel et. al. (2021)

Factors Contribute to Poor Mental Health During Changing Working Environment

Education Youth Policy Analysis Unit (2020) highlighted that, teacher are not well trained for elearning programs and activities since this is not included in the curriculum. Aperribai et.al (2020) showed that teachers have experienced higher levels of distress caused by the workload generated during the lockdown. Besides that, due to the pandemic, many educators experiencing difficulties in adapting

new teaching method and as well as with increased workloads and uncertainty, hence raising mental health problem (Sudibjo and Manihuruk, 2022).

Lizana et.al (2021) conducted a study to evaluate the impact on quality of life for teachers before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. The result of the study highlights the differences in quality of life among Chilean teachers that has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The result of the study can attribute to work overload due to teleworking or feeling of uncertainty, loneliness and fear of pandemic.in addition, Xiao (2020) posits that during the pandemic, the isolation and limitation social interaction caused loneliness and eventually lead to higher stress and depression. Molino et. al., (2020) found that the need to deal with technologies during work remotely which are complex and at some point, overloaded and caused adverse outcome to the employee wellbeing.

Table 2: Factors Contribute to Poor Mental Health During Changing Working Environment

References	References
Lack of Training	Education Youth Policy Analysis Unit in the Education Audiovisual Culture Executive Agency (2020)
Workload	Aperribai et.al (2020), Lizana et.al (2021), Sudibjo and Manihuruk (2022)
Loneliness & Limitation of Social Interaction	Lizana et.al (2021), Xiao (2020)
Uncertainty	Lizana et.al (2021),
Complexity of Technologies	Molino (2020), UNESCO (2020)

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

As Malaysia has transitioned to the endemic phases, the online teaching and learning process has become more important in order to cope with the Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity (VUCA) environment surrounding the education landscape globally. Thus, it is important to identify the impact of changing working environment on mental health among educators. The result of this study can be used to design the best method in ensuring readiness of educators while keeping their mental well-being in check and eventually maintaining the quality of teaching and learning process. From the literature review, it can be concluded that most of the previous research had highlighted the impact of changing working environment on educators' mental health namely

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high level of stress, anxiety, depression, sleep troubles, frustrated and burnout. These situations are further explained caused by lack of training, increase workload, lack of social interaction, loneliness, uncertainty condition and complexity of technology. In order to minimize these impacts, it is important to provide continuous support to educators by providing assistance for example professional training on online teaching and learning and mental health support to ensure that educators are equipped with adequate knowledge in delivering effective online learning. The educational institutions also must ensure that educators have access to proper facilities such as good internet connection and efficient learning management system. Besides that, it is best for the management to develop formal Work from Home Policies which take into consideration the role clarity, work life balance as well as social support. Based on the literature review it is found that there is a lack of fundamental research that focus on the impact of changing working environment on mental health among educators in Malaysia. Thus, it is best to conduct further research based on previous findings which focus on educators in Malaysia.

ETHICS STATEMENTS

This paper does not involve any respondent and is based on literature review from the listed resources only.

AUTHOR STATEMENTS

Nurul Atiqah binti Zulkifle, Siti Sarah binti Mat Isa and Mohd Fazli bin Mohd Sam wrote the introduction and literature review. Fazdlina binti Jamaludin, Norhasimah binti Shari and Siti Nur Afiza binti Zuraidi wrote conclusion and recommendation.

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DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this article.

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