

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter illustrates the background of the study from the elements that exist in psychological capital (PsyCap), work engagement, and the situation from the global views and within the Malaysian context. The explanation leads to a development of problem statement and proof of the relevancies of this study to be examined. Throughout this chapter, the research objectives and research questions will be developed. From this objectives and questions, the research significance and hopes will be elaborated before the chapter ends with several operational terms.

1.2 Background of the Study

In the modern, fast-paced and challenging world today, organizations are under pressure to attain the highest possible work standard quality and to attract proactive, energetic, and motivated employees who are enthusiastic about their jobs and the working environment. Employees are one of the most vital elements and primary factors that can ensure organizational success (Norhayati, 2012), and good employee's performance is considered the main quality that the organization should focus on. According to Haenisch (2012), labour productivity is still a key factor in the success

of businesses, including those in the government sector. Understanding the factors that influence the productivity boosters and work quality aspects is a prerequisite for improving organizational productivity and as it happens today, it has now become a crucial work requirement. Over the decade, the meaning of employee's roles and job performance has shifted from a single task-driven to a multi-tasking driven (Griffin, Neal & Parker, 2007).

Conventionally, performance was rated based on individual job description and it was a single direction process. The importance of employees' performance in every organization had set a benchmark in each organization, whereby it was developed to ensure that every aspect involving job performance is given utmost priority at the workplace.

Previous research has found that a variety of factors contribute to the successful implementation of work performance; Byrnes (2006) emphasised the importance of compensation-based performance, Saudi (2014) encompassed the connection of performance with employee's attitude, Muhammad et.al. (2010) looked into the relationship of the performance and organizational commitment and the early study by Fleishman (1973) that emphasized the leadership behavior. The enhancement and consciousness regarding job performance capability and quality have created an interest and attention from the researcher around the globe to study the existing issues related to job performance. Numerous cross-sectional dimensions such as stress and psychological well-being (Jasmani & Abdul, 2011), performance appraisal and commitment (Munir et. al., 2012), workplace environment (Nur & Narehan, 2015) and work motivation (Mahazril et. al., 2012) were explored and

deliberated. Job performance has been established as a global issue that has not only plagued organizations all over the world but has also driven a lot of research in the fields of management, occupational health, work, and organizational psychology (Koopmans et al., 2011).

The definition of performance has been expanded in recent years that included extra-role performance (Mackenzie, Podsakoff & Ahearne, 1998) because it has a huge impact with organizational success and effectiveness (George & Battenhausen, 1990; Zhu, 2015). However, the in-role concept as proposed by Katz & Kahn as mentioned in Zhu (2012), believed that in-role was a kind of behavior that reflected the employees in many ways in organizations, and this concept can assist people to understand the social behavior and individual personality towards their job scope. Thus, both of the performance factors are undeniably reflecting upon the job performance issues in any organizations.

According to Bakker (2009), motivated individuals perform better at work because they maintain a balance between the energy they offer and the energy they get. Positive working environments and positive approaches to dealing with employees, stakeholders, and the organization as a whole tend to develop an understanding and implementation of the organization as a dynamic, approachable conduct. In today's organizational practice, it is critical and has become a vital aspect of corporate success. Employees that are more satisfied are more likely to go above and beyond in their role performances and additional role performances (Wong, 2019).

Job performance always captures the organizational attitude because it is one of the most important components in maintaining employees' commitment to the organization, which can have a direct impact on the organization's success (Pushpakumari, 2008). Employee work performance quality will be enhanced by the enjoyment and satisfaction of each and every individual in the firm (Chang et.al, 2014). Employees that are psychologically attached to their work, are willing and able to invest fully in their usual job duties, are proactive and devoted to achieving high job quality standards required in today's world of work challenges and organization competitiveness to become the best among the best. All of this can only be realised in a positive and supportive work environment (Gorgievski et.al. 2010).

In the Malaysian context, job performance issues have been studied several times by the local or foreign researcher (Chin, Anantharaman & Tong, 2011; Mafuzah & Juraifa, 2016). The topics were varied, and the respondents were chosen from multiple backgrounds of civil servants. As reported by Datuk Johari Abdul Ghani, Malaysia Second Finance Minister (The Star, 2017), currently, the size of Malaysian civil servants is calculated to 1.6 million and makes the country the world's largest proportion of civil service; 1:20 people to be compared for several other countries (example): Singapore (1:71), Indonesia (1:110), China (1:108) and South Korea (1:50). Our civil sector is bloated, yet the government is not planning to reduce the number as long as this number can perform to their maximum level and give their best performance in order to survive in their career.

Alex Iskandar Liew from Performance Management and Delivery Unit (Pemandu), stated in one press release in 2017, that the civil service must be lauded up in taking up the daunting challenge of setting impossible targets with clear transparency and accountability. Malaysia is a country that has sought and achieved economic development, using the civil service to achieve their national objectives (Ali, 2018). To survive and develop in the competitive advantage, the public sector organization needs to expand and do some adjustment.

Despite the revolutionary policies, procedures, and many aspects of management, worldwide changes in managing human capital have emerged, and the importance of multi-level employees to be a part of the transition has become a priority. It is a challenging task due to the fact that most of the public sector employees are in their comfort zone, and they feel the stability of their career. Parallel to this, the government had launched several programs to inculcate value to increase the efficiency and development of public servants. Among all civil services in Malaysia such as armed forces, police, employees in the fields of education, health, governance and administration, the researcher is interested to study the job performance attained by one serving in the public university, namely the assistant registrars.

In the Malaysian higher education context, it comprises public and private universities. The latest statistics in 2017 provided by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), there is a total of 20 public universities located all over Malaysia (by assuming that UiTM is one organization with all the branches) and more than 100 private universities established around Malaysia.

Table 1.1 List of Public Universities in Malaysia (MOHW, 2020)

No.	University	Year Established	Location
1.	Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM)	1956	Shah Alam
2.	Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM)	1969	Penang
3.	Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT)	2007	Kuala Terengganu
4.	Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS)	1992	Kota Samarahan, Sarawak
5.	Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS)	1994	Kota Kinabalu, Sabah
6.	Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UNIMAP)	2001	Arau
7.	Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP)	2002	Pekan
8.	Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (UMK)	2007	Pengkalan Chepa
9.	Universiti Malaya (UM)	1905	Kuala Lumpur
10.	Universiti Tun Hussein Onn (UTHM)	2007	Batu Pahat
11.	Universiti Teknikal Malaysia (UTEM)	2000	Durian Tunggal, Malacca
12.	Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UNISZA)	2005	Kuala Terengganu
13.	Universiti Perguruan Sultan Idris (UPSI)	1997	Tg. Malim, Perak
14.	Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM)	1971	Serdang, Selangor
15.	University Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM)	1970	Bangi, Selangor
16.	Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM)	1984	Sintok, Kedah
17.	Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM)	1975	Skudai (Johor) and Kuala Lumpur
18.	Universiti Pertahanan Malaysia (UPNM)	2006	Kuala Lumpur
19.	Universiti Islam Antarabangsa (UIA/IIUM)	1983	Gombak, Selangor
20.	Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia	1997	Nilai, Negeri Sembilan

The employees who work for public universities are considered as part of the civil servants because public universities are managed by Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) and the recruitment process still needs to go through the Civil Service Department or *Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam* in Bahasa Malaysia. The seven (7) chosen public universities are in the Klang Valley area. As mentioned by Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur (DBKL) web page, Klang Valley is defined a city that is located in the heart of Kuala Lumpur which includes its adjoining cities and several

towns of Selangor Darul Ehsan. Some of the federal territories included are Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur, Federal Territory of Putrajaya, Selangor District of Petaling, Selangor District of Klang, Selangor District of Gombak and Selangor District of Hulu Langat. Located in the centered location, the majority of the public universities are located nearby to each other here, rather than other areas throughout Malaysia.

This study focuses on all seven (7) public universities located in Klang Valley namely UiTM (Selangor), UIA, UKM, UPM, UTM (KL), UPNM and UM. (Please refer to above table for full name of each university). All these 7 universities are managed and controlled by MOHE, even though each of the universities has the power to run and manage their respective organization. Both the academics and non-academics play a vital role in enhancing the organization and achieve the university's mission and vision. The commitment of every employee will reflect upon the organization's performance and the achievement of the target of development policy such as TN50.

A study done in Robert Gordon University in 2014 found the distinctions between those who are working with academic and non academic tasks. Without doubting the academic roles and functions towards the establishment of university as a whole, the importance of non-academic staff (administrator and middle management) as a key member should be emphasized as many researchers including Cankir (2017) is interested to study the academicians engagement and performance at the university, also the impact towards non academicians (administrators).

In every organization, the functions and responsibilities of the administrators are crucial towards the effectiveness and efficiency of the operational and managerial aspects. The criticality of this middle management functions, including their multitasking roles, leads to a proper study regarding the job functions as many people and also organization fail to recognize the importance of excellent administrators towards the enhancement and excellence of powerful organizations.

Professional recruiters, Irishjobs.ie (2014) listed several numbers of categories and levels in the administrator's job functions, and the multiple categories explain the relevance of administrator in every organization. Among the job functions are as follows:

- i. Admin assistant
- ii. Office manager
- iii. Executive personnel/assistant
- iv. Record / filing officer
- v. Receptionist

As there are many different roles of administrators, the performance and engagement expectations are arising parallel with their task structure. From the listed job functions, it was aligned with the listed job functions of university assistant registrar especially when it involves the administration duties, operational responsibilities, record management and many more (hr.uconn.edu, 2017). Despite the listing of job functions, a human resource division in Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) from their websites, [www. registrar.utm.my](http://www.registrar.utm.my), also listed registrar job

functions such as human resource divisions (selection, recruitment, appraisal and many more), financial and monetary management, facilities management, faculty development management, inventory management.

Assistant registrars have been classified as being under the Management and Professional Services Scheme under public government job scheme. The positions start at Grade 41 and above. Assistant registrar is the individual appointed by the University's authority to manage various forms of management and administration affairs at the center of responsibility (PTJ) where they are placed.

In terms of academic qualification, assistant registrar must possess at least a bachelor's degree recognized by the Government from local institutions of higher learning or other recognized qualifications. The position is an authentic position held by an appointed individual to carry out administrative and management duties in accordance with the prescribed rules, and in accordance with the direction of the University's Upper Management. Generally, the grades are as follows:

- N41 Assistant Registrar / Executive (starting appointment)
- N44 Senior Assistant Registrar / Senior Executive
- N48 Principal Assistant Registrar / Manager
- N52 Senior Assistant Registrar / Senior Manager
- N54 Deputy Registrar / Deputy Director
- Jusa C Senior Deputy Registrar / Senior Deputy Director
- Jusa B Registrar / Executive Director of Administration

Starting from 2015, several universities such as UKM and IIUM have changed the position title, that is more in line with the corporate world today, such as executive, senior executive, manager, senior manager, deputy director, senior deputy director and executive director.

Kahn (1990) stated that employee engagement refers to individual behaviour and represents their personal and self-achievement in terms of work performance. According to Simon and Buitendach (2013), employees' who are more involved at work showed greater social functioning and affective commitment. As Malaysia has a bold intention to be an advanced nation in 2050, the public service holds the key as they are the primary connector in achieving what has been planned by the government. Public servants are handling a responsibility contrary to private institutions, whereby profit loss is not their major worries. However, they are dealing with more important issues such as national competitiveness, human capital development, income equity and many more.

In the current academic literature, work engagement has been determined to be the most discussed and empirically confirmed type of employee engagement, yet it is not without criticisms (Yalabik et al., 2013). Work engagement is a term that has emerged in recent years and has become a debate in every firm that strives for excellent employee performance. The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) was established by Schaufeli, et al. (2002), and it classifies work engagement into three subpoints linked to the quality of staff performance in the business. Vigor, devotion, and absorption are the three sub-scales.

These scales highlight the importance of an engaged staff in the organization and they are expected to be more enthusiastic, dynamic and determined towards their jobs and more committed than others. Furthermore, it is a cure to job burnout. Work engagements need to be seriously improved in any organization, and the idea of having happy employees in the workplace needs to be embedded carefully into the corporate culture (Mann & Harter, 2016)

Rather than focusing on the negative aspects of organizational behaviour, psychological capital (PsyCap) has evolved into a new idea that encourages managers and leaders to focus on people's strengths rather than their flaws. It is the study and application of positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement in today's workplace, according to Luthans (2002), who introduced the concept of positive organization behaviour. Furthermore, Luthans and Youssef (2007) proposed self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resiliency as four essential psychological resource capacities that best fulfil the inclusion requirements for PsyCap, which improves management effectiveness and organizational performance.

The evolution of this concept is fast in drawing the researcher's interest to adapt and adopt the concept to managerial and organizational needs' condition. PsyCap has been studied globally regarding OCB (extra role performance) and emotional intelligence (EI) by Pradhan, Jena and Bhattarya (2016); job burnout by Estiri et.al. (2016). Quality of Work Life by Dharmija, Gupta & Bag, 2019); work attitudes by Sahoo et.al (2015) and the one being focused which is the adaptation of work engagement as done by Karatepe and Karadas (2014) and Chen et al. (2015).

The PsyCap, as it defines and emphasizes on the establishment and the development of staff towards improving work performance, should be adapted by modern management styles. This is strengthened by Peterson (2006) who quotes “*what is good about life is as genuine as what is bad and therefore deserves equal attention*”.

Although current practices have stressed traditional human resource implementation in the business, top management must adapt to and comprehend the modern notion of PsyCap in order to use it in the organization. PsyCap is indeed a blend of psychological and human resource relationships that emphasizes the grooming of positive well-being and attractive personality in employees. In reviewing the theoretical and empirical evidence, the researcher is interested to study PsyCap as the factors that can affect job performance. Therefore, it is a greater need for more studies to examine the impact of PsyCap by using the famous four (4) constructs such as efficacy, resilience, hope and optimism and work engagement criteria namely vigor, absorption and dedication towards the capabilities of job performance in the organization rated from the in-role and extra role (OCB) performance of each employee.

1.3 Problem Statement

The issue of public service performance in Malaysia involving the staff is broadly discussed in the previous literature. Among the relevant and popular topics to be studied involving public officers are job satisfaction, motivation, morale, work engagement, lack of communication, commitment and bureaucracy. The results from the studies are varied. Johari, Shamsudin, Yean, yahya and Adnan (2018) found that

the majority of the employees in public sector reported a low level of skill variety, while they perceived that their job allowed them to have a sense of knowledge of what they were doing, the employee seemed to feel that their job did not give them the opportunity to use different sets of skill and it is not surprising that job performance is affected. With the challenges of globalisation and rapid technological advancements, employees in every organization must be on top of the competition and demonstrate that there is a critical need for the highest level of job performance quality achieved by every individual in the organization, particularly in the public sector.

Hence, One of Malaysia's leading news outlets, Utusan Malaysia (2015) reported that the job performance of public sector workers has become an issue for employers in the country. Focus on personal business, high absenteeism rates (over 200 days a year), and punctuality issues divert attention and productivity from work. Due to this ongoing issue, the Chief Secretary to the Government and the Malaysian Congress of Public and Civil Service Employees Union Congress (CUEPACS) have issued a statement that reasonable action should be taken for those employees who still exhibit the same performance issues after receiving it. More suitable performance enhancement and career development courses. As such, this official government statement confirms that the issue of job performance of public sector workers is an important issue that requires further study, especially in the context of Malaysia. These constraints are much more critical in the context of Malaysia, as the country strives for maximum performance and achievement through its employees. According to Johari and Yahya (2019), the Malaysian public service has long been criticized for ineffective job performance, a lack of responsibility, and a lack of communication

among officers. Whilst it was a 10- year story behind and the government has the highest awareness to promote the best services with all the policy and planning to the rationalization and full utilization of human resources, the public services need to ensure that a pragmatic and systematic agenda is in plan and it is more structured.

Malaysian public service continues to have a poor reputation in terms of the overall performance (Ahmad, Nabila, Ambad, Jamal, Nasir, Lajuni & Kajuni, 2021). Numerous studies have been carried out to identify issues regarding public sector staff's job satisfaction, motivation and many of the researchers also touched on job performance, but only few studies examined the relationship among psychological capital resources with the capabilities of job performance in the aspects of in-role and extra performance.

Since the implementation of the Malaysian Incorporated Policy in 1983, the civil service has introduced numerous approaches to make the approach succeed and fulfil the realization of long-term national economic goals (Sirag, Mohamed Nor, Adamu & Thinn, 2016). According to Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said (The Star, 2017) between 2010-2016, a total of 31,230 civil servants had disciplinary actions taken to them and from the total 5778 had their services terminated. This is a serious issue when involving a huge number of termination of staff. However, the number of discipline cases are still high. The problem is when the figures are increasing by year and with the salary and benefit improvement, are these employers having a disciplinary issues because of the working conditions? Or job dissatisfaction? Are they not happy with their working situations?

According to the Malaysia Co-operative Societies Commission (MCC), a government organization, as reported, employee's behavioural attitude will affect their job performance. All the symptoms of disciplinary problems such as low motivation, uncooperative supporting staff, unreachable deadlines and low of in role and OCB behaviour; will contribute to other attitude, discipline and performance problems such as high absenteeism, cyber loafing, low self-esteem, high emergency and sick leave which might affect the overall employee's performance.

The research regarding PsyCap have fluctuated widely over the past 10 years, with little relationship combining the PsyCap components with work engagement and job performance. Despite the growing research involving PsyCap, research into the Malaysian context specifically, or Asian context largely are still very few. In his review, Kappagoda et al., (2014) stated that the majority of PsyCap research has been undertaken by Luthans and other researchers in the United States and China, and that there is a favorable link between PsyCap and job performance. However, few empirical studies on PsyCap have been conducted in Asia, and the association has yet to be tested in the Malaysian setting. It was proven that the effectiveness of testing the result in Malaysia still needs to be examined due to the culture and language differences.

Moreover, many research has been done worldwide to examine the impact of PsyCap towards many aspects such as work conflict and job burnout (Wang et. al., 2012), organizational commitment (Peng et. al., 2013) and additionally PsyCap has been identified as a mediator in the organizational climate and a performance study by Luthans et.al., (2008), Roemer and Harris (2018) and Liu, Chang , Fu, Wang and

Wang (2012) showed that the roles of PsyCap solely have not been examined together with work engagement and performance among public universities administrators, to our knowledge.

While work engagement has received so much attention lately, only few studies are related to the Malaysian context and research done by Othman et al (2021) shows that less than half of the public staff are fully engaged in their job. Aon Hewitt, a well known talent organization in their “2017 Trends in Global Engagement Report” stated that employees in Malaysia are the second least engaged among major Asian countries, with only 59 percent of employees engaged (www.aonhewitt.com). Sorenson (2013) found that only 11 percent of people in the 94 nations studied were engaged, while the remaining 81 percent were not involved and another 8% were actively disengaged.

Among the Asian countries involved in the survey, Malaysia is proven to be lagging behind. Even though both studies have represented all sectors of employment, research done by Gallup (2012) found that only 58% public sector employees are fully engaged in their jobs and surprisingly private sector employees were 18% more satisfied and engaged than their public sector cohorts. Again, the relevance to study the engagement level in the Malaysian context is uprising due to the lack of research regarding this issue.

Work engagement is crucial in the workplace since it is linked to a wide range of job titles and lifestyles. Prior study has looked at the factors that influence employee work engagement, but little is known about the impact of psychological capital in this regard. This study examined the impact of a PsyCap resource

conservation process model on job performance, which is mediated through employee work engagement. This research helped to improve our grasp of the theoretical underpinnings of both the performance and engagement capital.

The proposed study explored the extent to which work engagement developed by Schaufeli et. Al., (2002) can moderate the PsyCap and job performance factors. Human capital should be emphasized and examined in the workplace to improve and enhance job performance (Luthans & Peterson, 2002) by combining theory with work engagement that can directly improve job performance from the In role and OCB perspectives. Luthans (2002) also underlined the need for positive research and understanding the good in individuals in all aspects of their lives, both at work and at home. PsyCap can become one of the organization's primary strategies and make up some excellent steps to cherish, because human capital has an endless power if handled properly.

Rich, LePine and Crawford (2010), highlighted the strong relationship between work engagement and performance of the staff. However, with the difference of target population studied, and job scope, the need to embrace the adapted research into local study is required. Poor worker engagement, according to the study, can be harmful to firms because it leads to a decline in employees' well-being and productivity. The philosophy concept of PsyCap is to build people's strengths and enhance their work performance rather than fixing weaknesses after glitches happen.

Even though organizations in Malaysia, particularly in the public sector, have been transformed and performed multiple work demands that can easily lead to a lifestyle of extra working hours, it is critical to recognize the importance of PsyCap in

the workplace by promoting work engagement that can lead to job performance satisfaction. Few research on PsyCap and work engagement have been published to date, such as Bakker and Albrecht (2018), Bakker and Schaufeli (2008), and Xanthopoulou et. Al., (2007). As a result, this study will examine the PsyCap constructs of hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy in relation to the use of work engagement as a mediator in determining whether or not it is related to the job performance of assistant registrars in Malaysian public universities. As Bakker (2011) pointed out that interventions aimed at harnessing the positive power of work engagement must focus on individuals.

1.4 Research Questions of the Study

The following questions are addressed in this research:

- a) Does PsyCap (hope, optimism, resilience, self-efficacy) affect job performance?
- b) Does PsyCap (hope, optimism, resilience, self-efficacy) affect work engagement?
- c) Does work engagement affect job performance?
- d) Does work engagement mediate the effects between PsyCap (hope, optimism, resilience, self-efficacy) and job performance?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The overall objective of this study was to investigate the mediating effect of work engagement towards the relationship between PsyCap elements (i.e. hope, optimism, resilience and self-efficacy) and job performance capability among assistant registrars in the Malaysian public universities. Specifically, this study is designed to:

- i. To determine the effect of PsyCap (hope, optimism, resilience, self-efficacy) on job performance.
- ii. To determine the effect of PsyCap (hope, optimism, resilience, self-efficacy) on work engagement.
- iii. To identify the effect of work engagement on job performance.
- iv. To assess the work engagement that mediates the effects between PsyCap (hope, optimism, resilience, self-efficacy) and job performance

1.6 Hypotheses Development

The research hypotheses are presented as the hypothesis statements. Based on the first research objective, the research hypotheses are presented as hypothesis statement below.

- H1: There is a significant positive effect of hope on job performance
- H2: There is a significant positive effect of optimism on job performance
- H3: There is a significant positive effect of resilience on job performance
- H4: There is a significant positive effect of self-efficacy on job performance

Based on the second research objective, the research hypotheses are presented as follows:

- H5: There is a significant positive effect of hope on work engagement
- H6: There is a significant positive effect of optimism on work engagement
- H7: There is a significant positive effect of resilience on work engagement
- H8: There is a significant positive effect of self-efficacy on work engagement

Based on the third research objective, the research hypotheses are presented as follows:

- H9: There is a significant positive effect of work engagement on job performance

Based on the fourth research objective, the research hypotheses are presented as follows:

- H10: Work engagement is a mediator in the relationship between hopes and job performance
- H11: Work engagement is a mediator in the relationship between optimism and job performance
- H12: Work engagement is a mediator in the relationship between resilience and job performance
- H13: Work engagement is a mediator in the relationship between self-efficacy and job performance

1.7 Significance of Study

This study is important in many ways since it will immediately affect the quality of the staff's performance and well-being. Workplace revolutions have evolved from 8-hour sessions to extended periods of time with additional job duties and tasks. Apparently, it is one of the first few attempts to investigate the implementation of psychological capital (PsyCap) concepts introduced by Luthans and Youssef (2007) into the workplace in Malaysian public sector agencies with the aid of work engagement (Schaufeli et al. 2012) as the mediating factor in order to enhance the job performance capabilities which specifically shed light on the in-role and extra role behavior (OCB) developed by Maxham et.al., (2008).

Additionally, the awareness and adaptation of mental health has become one of the major issues that has been debated lately. Humans are no longer treated as a robot or machine as the knowledge of good psychological traits have been absorbed into their work lifestyle. Previously, employees are becoming too restricted with the office and job nature and sometimes the job makes themselves feel burdened and leads to depression and any other social and discipline problems. It is very important if the organizations are able to proactively seek and understand their employee's well-being and mental conditions if they want them to become more productive and happier in their workplace. This research is significant for the organizations to really know about their employees and how they can find a solution to provide a happy workplace that can lead to happy workforce. Happiness is the key to any success and productivity because a happy worker will lead a to happier organization. With the roles of PsyCap elements, it can assist the public universities to explore into the

elements of hope, optimism, self-efficacy, and optimism level of their officers and at the same time giving the win-win situation to both parties.

Moreover, the elements of work engagement such as vigor, absorption and dedication might give a different significance as it gives a better perspective of how the elements of PsyCap can relate with how good the employees will engage with their jobs. Some of the organizations might never be involved with problematic or undisciplined workers, and they might conclude that their employees are good. In Malaysia, generally, the terms of work engagement and performance always refer to the job performance rating scale and how good the employed is in handling the task. However, they sometimes forget about the mental and psychological traits of their employees. They only focus on physical and not the psychological side of a human being. This new viewpoint and concepts will assist the organization to go into a new direction.

Additionally, besides work engagement level, job performance productivity can be improved when the organization fulfils the individuals' psychological traits. The employees will feel that the organization cares for them, not only in terms of rewards but also love them and give attention to small details such as "how are you doing today?"; "Are you good?"; "Is your children okay"? This simple question will lead to a huge impact on the employee's life and happiness. Moreover, when it comes to job performance, the organization might as well notice if their workers are willing to do job overtime or if they are forced to do so. Again, this study gives so much impact for the organization in uncovering the truth about the employee's psychological well-being.

Therefore, the identification of the specific productivity and job quality limiters in the public sector agencies will provide a useful launching pad for further research in this area with the aid from the new framework which highlights the elements that can be investigated and tested to enhance job performance quality in the selected organization. It could also emphasize human capital that needs to be adapted and recognized with the suggestion that all organizations should foster the elements of PsyCap and work engagement if they want to increase the job performance among their employees. Consequently, it is very important to understand the needs and suitable approaches of positive organizational behavior perspective and deviate from the traditional method to a proactive and positive approach that focuses on strength rather than enduring the negativity aspect of their staff. The results and findings should be able to assist the universities administrators to explore into the relationship of PsyCap elements with the work engagement factor and job performance factors.

1.8 Definition of Terms

The definitions of terms below are divided into conceptual definitions and operational definitions which are based on the variables that are identified in this study to ensure a mutual understanding and exact definition of its context are fully explained. A conceptual definition explains what to measure or to observe and an operational definition defines how to measure or observe it. Psychological Capital (PsyCap) elements such as hope, optimism, self-efficacy and resilience; work engagement factor such as vigor, absorption and dedication; job performance factors

such as in role and extra role performance are the terms used for the variables throughout the study.

1.8.1 Conceptual Definition

1.8.1.1 Psychological capital (PsyCap)

PsyCap is defined as the officer's personal description towards four (4) elements of positive psychology's focusing on the mental well-being and happiness constructed by Luthan, Youssef and Avolio, 2007. These four elements are precisely called hope, optimism, resilience and self-efficacy. Psychological capital has a favorable impact on long-term competitiveness, and it is predicted that its positive effects will lower costs and offset negative influences in an organization (Cavus & Gokcen, 2014).

i. Hope

Hope is the ability to determine, illustrate and adhere to the best way to succeed. Employees with high degrees of hope have the capability to deal with all the situations (Sarwar et. al., 2017). Top management can nurture hope in individuals they lead by seeing them as an individual, allowing them to set their own goals (rather than just top-down communication), and recognizing and rewarding unique and creative ways of achieving them; not just advocating typical methods. It is also defined as the officer's overall perception of their job behavior implemented by Malaysia Public Universities administration towards them as individuals.

ii. Optimism

Optimism is defined as the officer's level of positivity and expectations that the results will be good and worth the effort. It is a kind of positive outcomes that might derive from their hardwork in job. Employees with optimistic mindset will believe that everything will go well even when they face difficulties and think things will turn out fine in the end. Schneider (2001) stated that optimism can detect how the individual can be supported emotionally and be assisted so they can seek for other better opportunities in future. The level of optimism might comprehend their job pattern implemented by Malaysia Public Universities.

iii. Resilience

Resilience is the ability to rebound from any difficulties, challenges, risks, hardships and failures. Resilient employees can successfully adapt to challenging and overwhelming situations. By definition, the term resilience refers to a rising state that allows people to keep striving and doing their best as they confront failures, disasters, life paradoxes, and even favorable occurrences, advancements, or increased responsibilities (Larson & Luthan, 2006). In this study, it will be defined as the officer's level of ability to bounce back, and the adversity towards their action and mindset.

iv. Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy refers to a person's self-confidence in their capability to maneuver the outcomes and overcome arduous challenges. Hence, someone with high

level of self-efficacy thinks that they can control what happens to them. Self-efficacy is a subtle way of showing confidence in an individual's ability to perform a particular task. The trust is very personal; it is about how we perceive ourselves to be capable of dealing with life's obstacles. It is also a belief in one's ability to put one's skills to use in diverse demanding situations (Nwanzu & Babalola, 2019). In this study, the officer's confidence level and self trust issues in handling their task as instructed by Malaysia Public Universities will be ascertained.

1.8.1.2 Work engagement

Work engagement refers to the employees' psychological connection with their work. According to Bakker and Leiter (2010), in today's world of work, organizations must not only acquire top-notch talent, but also motivate and allow people to apply their full talents to their work in order to compete effectively. Employees who are psychologically engaged to their work, who are willing and able to invest fully in their positions, and who are proactive and devoted to high quality performance requirements are required by organizations. In this study, it refers to the officer's perception towards their positive mindset and fulfilling work-related matters. It is characterized by Schaufelli et. al., (2002) terms; vigor, dedication and absorption.

- i. **Vigor** is characterized by high levels of dynamism and psychological resilience while working, the commitment to invest effort in one's work and dedication in the face of difficulty. It will determine the officer's level of dynamism towards their job.

- ii. **Dedication** is an individual sense of passion, inspiration, pride and challenge that will define the officer's level of enthusiasm whether or not they are serious in doing their job .
- iii. **Absortion** refers to the state in which an individual is highly determined and happily immersed in work so that they feel that time passes quickly and it is difficult to separate himself from work. Thus, it is defined as the officer's adaptation towards their job.
- a) 'Universities' means a higher educational institution having the status of a University or University College (Universities and University Colleges Act, 1971). This study refers to the public universities located in Malaysia, funded by the Government and governed as self-managed institutions.
- b) 'Assistant registrars' means an Assistant Registrar of Educational Institutions or Assistant Registrar of Teachers (Malaysian Education Act, 1996). This study assistant registrar refers to N41 administrative officer who is holding several positions in the university department and becomes the head of certain units.

1.8.2 Operational Definition

1.8.2.1 Job Performance

Job performance is defined as the officer's act and approach to reach career goals and rate their own performance. It is defined as the total expected value to the organization of an individual's distinct behavioural events over a given time period (Motowidlo & Kell, 2012). In this study, the level of employees PsyCap and work engagement will be measured on their job performance capabilities namely;

i) In role performance

In role performance is defined as the officer's rating of agreement regarding their overall core task behavior pattern and activities performance (MacKenzie, Podsakoff, & Ahearne, 1998).

ii) Extra role performance

Extra role performance is defined as the officer's rating agreement that describes their willingness and perception towards the job that is beyond their job scope and normal working hours (MacKenzie, Podsakoff, & Ahearne, 1998).