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**Makna, Pengukuran dan Domain Kepuasan Hidup daripada
Pelbagai Perspektif: Analisis Literatur**
*Meaning, Measurement and Domain of Life Satisfaction from
Different Perspectives: Literature Review*

SITI MARZIAH ZAKARIA, NOR BA'YAH ABDUL KADIR,
NASRUDIN SUBHI & KHAIDZIR ISMAIL
Pusat Kesejahteraan Manusia dan Masyarakat, FSSK, UKM.
marziah@ukm.edu.my

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ABSTRAK

Kepuasan hidup adalah persepsi seseorang tentang kehidupan yang sedang dan telah dilalui, serta kehidupan yang bakal dilaluinya pada masa hadapan. Ia merupakan penilaian seseorang terhadap kehidupannya secara keseluruhan. Kajian-kajian lepas ke atas kepuasan hidup mendapati kecenderungan kebanyakan pengkaji untuk mengukur kepuasan hidup secara umum. Namun begitu, kepuasan hidup juga boleh dikaji dengan melihat kepada domain-domain atau elemen-elemen kepuasan hidup. Kertas konsep ini akan menilai makna kepuasan hidup dan mengenalpasti pengukuran serta domain kepuasan hidup daripada pelbagai perspektif. Makna kepuasan hidup didapati sangat berkait rapat dengan makna hidup yang dipegang seseorang. Secara keseluruhan, dapatan-dapatan lepas menunjukkan bahawa kepuasan hidup selalu ditafsirkan sebagai perasaan syukur, redha, optimis dan gembira. Makna kepuasan hidup berbeza mengikut peringkat umur yang dikaji. Dewasa pertengahan usia dan lanjut usia mentafsirkan kepuasan hidup lebih kepada elemen spiritual dan kekeluargaan.

Kata kunci: makna kepuasan hidup, domain kepuasan hidup, pengukuran kepuasan hidup, perspektif, makna hidup

ABSTRACT

Life satisfaction is one's perception about their current and past life, and their life in future. It is one's review of their life as a whole. Past studies on life satisfaction showed the tendency of most of researchers to measure life satisfaction in general. Nevertheless, life satisfaction can also be studied by examining the domains and elements of life satisfaction. This concept paper will assess the meanings of life satisfaction and identify the measurements and domains of life satisfaction from different perspectives. The meaning of life satisfaction was found to be closely related to the meaning of life that one embrace. Generally, past findings showed that life satisfaction has been defined as the sense of gratitude, acceptance, optimism, and happiness. The meaning of life satisfaction is different according to the age level. Middle-aged adults and ageing defined life satisfaction more to the spiritual elements and family relationship.

Key words: *the meaning of life satisfaction, domain of life satisfaction, measurement of life satisfaction, perspective, meaning of life*

PENGENALAN

Kepuasan hidup telah kerap dikaji di beberapa negara seperti Australia (NATSEM 2010), Amerika Syarikat (Meeks & Murrell 2001), Netherlands (Kapteyn et al. 2009), Kanada (Gee & Veevers 1990), Sweden (Berg et al. 2009; Borg et al. 2005), Jepun (Yamawaki et al. 2011), China (Leung et al. 2005; Song & Appleton 2008), India (Hasnain et al. 2011) dan sebagainya. Kajian ke atas kepuasan hidup telah dijalankan kepada pelbagai sampel yang terdiri daripada warga tua (Ramachandran & Radhika 2012; Sener 2011; Song 1992), dewasa awal hingga akhir (Hutchinson et al. 2004), remaja (Kong & You 2013), pelajar universiti (Mahanta & Aggarwal 2013), wanita (Jan & Masood 2008) dan pekerja di pelbagai sektor (Adams et al. 1996; Jessica et al. 2008). Di Malaysia, kajian kepuasan hidup telah dijalankan ke atas jururawat wanita (Wan Edura et al. 2011), warga tua (Guzman 2012; Kooshair et al. 2014) dan golongan asnaf (Hairunnizam et al. 2010). Kajian mengenai kepuasan hidup wanita bekerjaya pertengahan usia masih kurang diterokai di Malaysia.

Kepuasan hidup telah diterima sebagai aspek utama dalam kebajikan manusia (Jan & Masood 2008). Kepuasan hidup adalah ukuran kesejahteraan psikologi yang paling popular, di samping ukuran yang lain seperti kesejahteraan subjektif dan kegembiraan (Tariq 2012). Ia boleh dinilai secara spesifik kepada domain tertentu kehidupan atau secara umum. Kepuasan hidup bukan hanya penilaian seseorang tentang kehidupan, tetapi, ia juga melibatkan pengiktirafan, keyakinan, kesyukuran dan penghargaan seseorang akan kehidupannya. Ia adalah persepsi seseorang tentang kehidupan yang sedang dan telah dilalui, serta kehidupan yang bakal dilaluinya pada masa hadapan. Kesimpulannya, ia merupakan penilaian seseorang terhadap kehidupannya secara keseluruhan (Jan & Masood 2008).

Kepuasan hidup menggambarkan pengalaman-pengalaman yang memberi kesan kepada persepsi seseorang tentang kepuasan hidupnya. Pengalaman-pengalaman hidup yang positif akan memotivasikan individu untuk terus mencapai matlamat hidupnya (Bailey et al. 2007). Pengalaman-pengalaman positif yang telah dilalui tentunya memberi kesan yang positif kepada penghargaan sendiri. Seterusnya, penghargaan sendiri, mood dan emosi, personaliti, persekitaran, nilai, budaya serta pandangan seseorang tentang kehidupan akan memberi kesan kepada kepuasan hidup (Bailey et al. 2007). Kepuasan hidup umum datang daripada nilai peribadi seseorang dan apa yang dianggapnya penting dalam hidup. Contohnya, keluarga mungkin aspek yang paling penting bagi kebanyakan individu. Namun, ada juga yang menganggap nilai material dan wang lebih penting daripada keluarga, terutamanya dalam kalangan golongan yang sering ditindas daripada segi ekonomi (Georgellis et al. 2009).

Kepuasan hidup ialah satu konstruk subjektif yang berubah mengikut jantina, tahap pendidikan, umur, pendapatan, status perkahwinan dan faktor demografi yang lain (Zhang et al. 2011). Sebagai contoh, Chipperfield dan Havens (2001) mendapati bahawa wanita dan lelaki yang mengalami kegagalan dalam rumahtangga melaporkan kepuasan hidup yang rendah.

Shichman dan Cooper (2004) pula mendapati tahap pendidikan, pendapatan dan perkahwinan sebagai faktor utama kepuasan hidup. Manakala dalam kalangan warga tua, aspek kewangan dan fizikal lebih signifikan dalam mempengaruhi kepuasan hidup. Umur juga berkaitan dengan kepuasan hidup, sebagaimana yang dibuktikan oleh Jan dan Masood (2008). Dengan peningkatan umur, kepuasan hidup didapati menurun sebanyak 40%. Kertas konsep ini akan menilai makna kepuasan hidup dan mengenalpasti pengukuran serta domain kepuasan hidup.

METODOLOGI

Pangkalan data seperti PsycINFO, Scopus, Google Scholar, Mycite dan Sagepub telah digunakan untuk mencari artikel terkini. Artikel yang diperolehi diterbitkan daripada jurnal saintifik berbahasa Inggeris dan Bahasa Malaysia. Kata kunci yang digunakan adalah *meaning of life satisfaction/makna kepuasan hidup, measurement of life satisfaction/pengukuran kepuasan hidup, dan domains of life satisfaction/domain kepuasan hidup*. Carian dalam PsycINFO, Scopus, Google Scholar, Mycite dan Sagepub juga menggunakan perkataan tambahan seperti “age, gender, and perspectives”.

Jumlah keseluruhan artikel yang dikumpulkan bagi mengkaji makna, domain dan pengukuran kepuasan hidup ialah 80 artikel. Selepas disaring berdasarkan kriteria inklusif, hanya sebanyak 56 artikel terpilih untuk dianalisis. Kriteria pertama ialah kajian empirikal tentang kepuasan hidup berdasarkan umur. Kajian-kajian yang meneliti makna kepuasan hidup, domain serta kriteria kepuasan hidup dikeluarkan. Pengkaji menganalisis pengukuran kepuasan hidup yang digunakan dalam kajian-kajian yang lepas. Kriteria kedua ialah artikel yang diterbitkan selepas tahun 2000, kecuali bagi teori-teori klasik. Keutamaan diberikan kepada artikel-artikel terkini, terutamanya yang diterbitkan selepas tahun 2010.

DAPATAN

Hasil carian dan analisis literatur mendapati beberapa makna bagi kepuasan hidup. Makna kepuasan hidup dilihat dalam perspektif yang berbeza, daripada pelbagai negara dan konteks. Ia juga mempunyai makna yang subjektif mengikut rekabentuk penyelidikan yang dijalankan samada secara kualitatif atau kuantitatif. Makna kepuasan hidup selalu dikaitkan dengan makna hidup dalam kebanyakan kajian yang telah dijalankan. Ia juga boleh dilihat secara objektif dan subjektif mengikut kriteria yang diletakkan oleh responden. Kepuasan hidup juga telah diukur dalam pelbagai skala dan instrument yang berlainan. Ia boleh diukur secara umum atau melihat kepada elemen-elemen atau domain-domain kepuasan hidup itu sendiri. Kebanyakan pengkaji cenderung untuk mengukurnya secara umum, yang bergantung kepada penilaian seseorang terhadap kehidupan yang sedang dilaluinya kini. Dapatan-dapatan penting daripada analisis literatur dihuraikan dalam sub-topik di bawah

Makna kepuasan hidup

Diener mencadangkan bahawa kepuasan hidup adalah satu penilaian umum tentang perasaan dan sikap seseorang terhadap kehidupan pada masa tersebut, yang mana ia boleh dinilai dalam

persepsi negatif atau positif (Buetell, 2006). Manakala Veenhoven (1996) pula menegaskan bahawa kepuasan hidup adalah tahap penilaian positif seseorang tentang kualiti keseluruhan hidupnya. Dalam erti kata lain, sejauh mana seseorang individu suka kepada kehidupan yang sedang dijalaninya. Ellison et al. (1989) pula memberikan pendirian yang lebih spesifik kepada kepuasan hidup. Mereka berpandangan bahawa kepuasan hidup adalah penilaian kognitif tentang kehidupan, yang bersifat konsisten dan dipengaruhi oleh faktor sosial.

Kajian-kajian lepas telah cuba meneroka makna hidup dan persepsi kepuasan hidup dalam konteks dan perspektif yang berbeza. Kepuasan hidup ternyata melibatkan perbandingan antara kehidupan yang sedang dilalui sekarang dengan kehidupan yang dirasakan patut dilalui atau yang dirasakan ideal (kehidupan yang baik). Kajian tentang kepuasan hidup di pelbagai negara menunjukkan bahawa keadaan hidup memberi pengaruh yang kuat kepada kepuasan hidup secara umum. Negara yang mempunyai prospek kerjaya yang lebih baik didapati mempunyai kepuasan hidup yang lebih baik (Helliwell, Layard, & Sachs, 2017). Pada masa yang sama, kepuasan hidup didapati sangat berkait dengan pendapatan, terutamanya di negara-negara yang miskin. Ini menunjukkan bahawa pendapatan menyumbang kepada kepuasan hidup dan memberi makna yang signifikan kepada kehidupan.

Pendidikan juga memberi makna yang penting kepada kepuasan hidup. Negara yang lebih tinggi taraf pendidikan penduduknya melaporkan kepuasan hidup yang lebih tinggi. Kesan pendidikan kepada kepuasan hidup lebih tinggi apabila hanya segelintir sahaja individu di negara tersebut yang memiliki tahap pendidikan tersebut, seperti sarjana muda, sarjana, atau Phd (Salinas-Jiménez, Artés, & Salinas-Jiménez, 2011). Kesihatan fizikal juga sering kali berkait dengan kepuasan hidup. Begitu juga dengan kesihatan mental dan emosi. Kesihatan fizikal dan mental boleh menjadi penyumbang juga sebagai hasil atau kesan daripada kepuasan hidup. Kajian telah menunjukkan bahawa kepuasan hidup berkait dengan kebimbangan, kegemukan, gangguan tidur, malah penyakit kronik (Strine, Chapman, Balluz, Moriarty, & Mokdad, 2008).

Dalam dunia hari ini, pencarian kehidupan yang bermakna selalunya disifatkan sebagai salah satu cara untuk mencapai kepuasan hidup. Sebagaimana yang dicadangkan oleh Rogers (1951) sebagai individu yang berperanan sepenuhnya (fully-functioning person). Maslow (1970) pula mencadangkan konsep realisasi diri (self-actualization) dan Ryff dan Singer (1998) dengan konsep kesejahteraan psikologi. Secara umumnya, mereka mencadangkan bahawa individu patut mengembangkan kekuatan dan kelebihan diri dan menggunakannya untuk manfaat orang lain juga. Justeru, penilaian mengenai kepuasan hidup selalunya akan mengambil kira sejauh mana individu tersebut telah mengembangkan potensi dan kebolehannya. Penilaian kepuasan hidup juga memberi perhatian kepada peranan dan sumbangannya kepada kehidupan orang lain.

Santos et al. (2012) mendalami makna kepuasan hidup dengan mengkaji perkaitan antara makna dalam hidup dan kepuasan hidup. Kajian dijalankan ke atas 969 pelajar kolej di Filipina. Kajian menggunakan instrumen standard, iaitu *Meaning in Life Questionnaire*, *Satisfaction with Life Scale* dan *Positive Affect and Negative Affect Schedule*. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa makna dalam hidup dan kepuasan hidup mempunyai perkaitan yang positif. Makna dalam hidup berdasarkan kepada *Steger's Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ)* boleh dibahagikan kepada 2 komponen iaitu kewujudan makna dan pencarian makna. Ho et al. (2010)

juga turut membuktikan bahawa makna dalam hidup mempunyai perkaitan yang kuat dan positif dengan kepuasan hidup.

Fave et al. (2013) mengkaji dengan lebih intensif sumber dan motif makna hidup dalam kalangan dewasa di tujuh negara Barat. Pengkaji menggunakan kaedah campuran untuk mendapatkan tema bagi sumber-sumber makna hidup. Antara sumber yang penting adalah kehidupan peribadi dan keluarga, kesejahteraan, harmoni dan realisasi diri. Kajian juga mendapati bahawa tahap umur yang berbeza meletakkan keutamaan yang berbeza kepada sumber atau domain tersebut. Manakala Shigehiro dan Ed (2014) pula melaporkan bahawa responden negara kaya memberi makna yang berbeza kepada hidup daripada responden negara miskin. Kajian yang dijalankan ke atas 132 negara ini mendapati bahawa kepuasan hidup adalah lebih tinggi di negara-negara kaya. Namun, makna hidup didapati lebih tinggi di negara-negara miskin berbanding negara kaya. Rakyat di negara miskin dikatakan lebih kuat pegangan agamanya. Pegangan agama telah berperanan sebagai pengantara yang signifikan dalam kajian ini. Ternyata, agama memainkan peranan yang penting dalam pencarian makna hidup responden (Shigehiro & Ed 2014).

Wanita pertengahan usia mentafsirkan kepuasan hidup sebagai kejayaan atau pencapaian, ketenangan jiwa dan fikiran, keselesaan hidup serta keredhaan dan kesyukuran (Siti Marziah, Nor Ba'yah & Nasrudin 2017). Wanita pertengahan usia yang dikaji membuat penilaian kepada kepuasan hidup dengan melihat lebih kepada aspek-aspek dalaman dan kerohanian. Mereka cuba membina kehidupan yang lebih bermakna, lebih tenang dan diredhai. Kajian ini dijalankan secara kualitatif ke atas Sembilan orang peserta wanita pertengahan usia bekerjaya di Hulu Langat, Selangor. Justeru, makna kepuasan hidup mungkin berbeza bagi wanita daripada peringkat umur yang lain.

Beberapa faktor telah didapati penting untuk kehidupan yang bermakna dan berjaya sepanjang bahagian kedua kehidupan (bermula daripada pertengahan usia sehingga meninggal), iaitu faktor hubungan yang rapat dengan individu lain, pembelajaran sepanjang hayat, sikap menerima atau redha dan optimis dan keprihatinan terhadap diri dan orang lain (Corbett 2012). Pengalaman dan ilmu yang dimiliki akan dicurahkan kepada generasi muda. Individu pada usia ini mahu menghabiskan masanya melakukan sesuatu yang bermakna. Mereka akan cuba untuk terus belajar dan mendalami ilmu-ilmu keagamaan. Aspek spiritual didapati menyumbang kepada penuaan berjaya. Sebagaimana Macmillan (2012) menegaskan bahawa individu di bahagian kedua kehidupan mempunyai keperluan sosial dan spiritual yang tinggi. Keperluan ini perlu diambil kira dalam sebarang intervensi perubatan dan kebajikan.

Allardt (2003) turut mencadangkan bahawa individu mempunyai tiga jenis keperluan asas iaitu keperluan untuk memiliki, keperluan untuk mengasihi dan keperluan sendiri. Semua keperluan ini merupakan asas kepada kepuasan hidup serta kesejahteraan. Keperluan untuk memiliki diukur daripada taraf hidup dan persekitaran seperti pendapatan, kesihatan, pendidikan, kediaman dan kenderaan. Manakala keperluan untuk mengasihi pula dinilai daripada hubungan mereka dengan keluarga dan individu lain. Keperluan sendiri lebih menumpukan kepada keperluan untuk membangunkan potensi diri dan mencapai cita-cita. Model ini telah diguna pakai oleh Nor Hafizah dan Hazizan (2012) dalam kajiannya mengenai kepuasan hidup subjektif

dalam kalangan penjawat awam Melayu di Malaysia. Kajian tersebut menambah satu lagi keperluan di dalam kerangka kajian iaitu keperluan spiritual. Keperluan ini lebih terarah kepada aspek agama dan kerohanian.

Nor Hafizah dan Hazizan (2012) mengemukakan dua tema kepuasan hidup subjektif iaitu kepuasan dalam bukan keperluan hidup dan kepuasan dalam keperluan hidup. Dapatan menunjukkan bahawa kepuasan dalam bukan keperluan hidup lebih menjadi keutamaan kepada responden. Sub-tema utama bagi kepuasan dalam bukan keperluan hidup adalah bebas daripada penyakit, memiliki keluarga yang stabil dan ketenangan rohani. Manakala bagi keperluan hidup, responden lebih memberi fokus kepada kemampuan untuk memenuhi keperluan asas, mengekalkan standard kehidupan, memperbaiki kualiti hidup dan mengekalkan cara hidup sederhana. Ini selaras dengan dapatan kajian Easterlin et al. (2012) yang menunjukkan bahawa responden tidak meletakkan wang sebagai kunci kegembiraan. Responden lebih memberi perhatian kepada isu kekeluargaan seperti mempunyai masa untuk keluarga dan menjaga ahli keluarga. Ia konsisten dengan dapatan Song dan Appleton (2008) dan Liu (2006).

Kepuasan hidup juga telah diuji sama ada ditentukan oleh penilaian mengenai kejayaan atau kejayaan hidup itu sendiri (Meulemann 2001). Ia juga dinilai sama ada lebih bergantung kepada kejayaan dalam awal usia atau akhir usia. Untuk menemukan jawapan, kajian ke atas responden berumur 16 hingga 43 tahun telah dilakukan. Analisis mendapati bahawa kepuasan hidup lebih dipengaruhi oleh penilaian mengenai kejayaan daripada kejayaan hidup. Ini kerana, kejayaan dan kegagalan dalam hidup bergantung kepada penilaian peribadi yang dibuat. Penilaian mengenai kejayaan merupakan pertimbangan terakhir yang dibuat bagi memutuskan mengenai kepuasan hidup. Kejayaan di akhir usia juga lebih penting bagi responden daripada kejayaan di awal usia (Meulemann 2001).

Pengukuran dan Domain Kepuasan Hidup

Becchetti dan Pelloni (2011) mencadangkan bahawa literatur telah mengukur persoalan berkaitan dengan kepuasan hidup dalam dua cara. Cara pertama ialah dengan mengambil kira penilaian umum terhadap kehidupan seseorang. Responden akan mengambil kira semua aspek, tanpa melihat kepada peristiwa-peristiwa terkini yang berlaku kepada hidup mereka. Soalan yang biasa dikemukakan adalah: "Sejauh mana anda berpuas hati dengan kehidupan anda, dengan mengambil kira semua aspek hidup?". Maklum balas responden adalah berdasarkan kepada skala Likert sama ada 0-10 mata atau 0-7 mata. Cara kedua ialah dengan meneliti kepuasan hidup mereka berdasarkan kepada peristiwa terkini yang berlaku dalam hidup (Redelmeier & Kahneman 1996). Dalam pendekatan ini, responden biasanya diminta untuk merekodkan peristiwa-peristiwa penting terkini yang berlaku dan tahap kepuasan hidup mereka pada setiap peristiwa.

Kajian-kajian lepas ke atas kepuasan hidup mendapati kecenderungan kebanyakan pengkaji untuk mengukur kepuasan hidup secara umum. Sebagai contoh Praag et al. (2010) menganalisis kepuasan hidup keseluruhan dan kepuasan kewangan dalam kalangan rakyat Israel yang terdiri daripada bangsa Yahudi dan Arab. Begitu juga dengan Song (1992) yang mengkaji pengaruh faktor psikologi sosial ke atas kepuasan hidup warga tua Korea. Hutchinson et al.

(2004) juga percaya tahap kepuasan hidup boleh diukur dengan bertanyakan kepuasan hidup responden secara keseluruhan. Soalan ditanyakan secara jelas dan terus, iaitu; “adakah anda berpuas hati dengan kehidupan anda secara keseluruhan?”. Daripada skor ini, ramalan kepuasan hidup akan ditentukan daripada segi umur, status perkahwinan dan pekerjaan.

Walaupun wujud persetujuan tentang apa yang menyumbang kepada kepuasan hidup atau kehidupan yang baik, tetapi Diener (1984) percaya bahawa individu biasanya akan meletakkan penilaian atau pertimbangan yang tidak sama kepada kriteria-kriteria itu. Setiap individu pastinya mempunyai kriteria tersendiri tentang apa yang dikatakan sebagai kehidupan yang baik. Pada setiap aspek-aspek kehidupan mereka, seperti kerjaya, keluarga, perhubungan dan sebagainya, standard mengenai kejayaan dalam aspek-aspek tersebut adalah berbeza. Oleh sebab itu, menurut Diener (1984), adalah penting untuk menganalisa penilaian global seseorang terhadap kehidupannya, daripada menilai kepuasan mereka dalam domain yang spesifik.

Skala yang dibangunkan oleh Diener dan Pavot (1993) hanya mengandungi 5 pernyataan sahaja. Responden diminta untuk menandakan kadar daripada 1 (sangat tidak setuju) hingga 7 (sangat setuju) kepada item yang dikemukakan. Penilaian ini hanyalah berbentuk pernyataan umum mengenai kepuasan hidup responden, seperti: “Saya berpuas hati dengan kehidupan saya”, “Keadaan hidup saya cemerlang”, “Setakat ini, saya telah mencapai apa yang saya inginkan dalam hidup” dan sebagainya. Diener, Inglehart dan Tay (2013) percaya bahawa manusia mempunyai pelbagai perspektif dan cara hidup. Justeru, kepuasan hidup tidak boleh dibahagikan mengikut komponen-komponen yang tertentu.

Pendekatan ini juga telah diguna pakai oleh Neugarten et al. (1961) dalam kajiannya tentang kepuasan hidup dalam kalangan warga tua. Neugarten telah menjalankan kajian di Kansas, Missouri dengan menemubual warga tua yang berumur 50 hingga 89 tahun. Tema-tema yang terhasil daripada temu bual tersebut telah menformulakan indeks kepuasan hidup (The Life Satisfaction Index) pada tahun 1961. Sebanyak 20 item telah dibangunkan pada mulanya dan dikenali sebagai LSI-A. Ia diuji dan dikemaskini beberapa kali oleh penyelidik lain. Indeks ini telah diguna pakai secara meluas untuk membantu ahli gerontologi dan ahli psikologi mengenal pasti tahap kesejahteraan serta kepuasan hidup warga tua. Ia mengandungi lima tema kepuasan hidup, iaitu; menikmati aktiviti seharian, menganggap hidup sebagai bermakna dan menerima kehidupan yang lepas, merasakan telah berjaya mencapai matlamat-matlamat hidup, mempunyai imej diri positif dan mengekalkan mood gembira dan optimis. Contoh item adalah: “Saya jangkakan banyak perkara-perkara baik dan menarik akan berlaku pada masa hadapan”.

Walau bagaimanapun, terdapat juga sebahagian kajian yang mengambil kira beberapa elemen kepuasan hidup untuk menilai tahap kepuasan hidup responden. Seperti contoh, kajian yang dijalankan oleh Ramachandran dan Radhika (2012) mengkaji status ekonomi dan kepuasan hidup dalam perspektif silang budaya. Pengkaji ini mengambil kira domain-domain tertentu, iaitu tret personaliti, hubungan sosial, keadaan ekonomi, persekitaran tempat tinggal, tahap kesihatan, aktiviti masa lapang dan pencapaian diri (Ramachandran & Radhika 2012). Semua domain ini dikaji dengan meminta responden menandakan tahap kepuasan mereka dalam setiap domain yang dikemukakan (berpuas hati, agak berpuas hati dan tidak berpuas hati). Skor kumulatif kepuasan hidup terhasil daripada skor-skor setiap domain tersebut.

Kepuasan hidup juga telah ditafsirkan dan diterangkan melalui empat domain utama iaitu aktiviti seharian, hubungan sosial dan keluarga, kesihatan dan pendapatan (Kapteyn et al. 2009). Hubungan sosial dan keluarga didapati mempunyai kesan yang paling besar ke atas kepuasan hidup. Manakala pendapatan mempunyai kesan yang paling rendah. Walau bagaimanapun, penduduk daripada negara yang berlainan pastinya mempunyai persepsi yang berbeza tentang nilai pendapatan yang boleh ditafsirkan sebagai satu kepuasan hidup. Hubungan sosial dan keluarga diuji dengan mengenal pasti sama ada responden telah berkahwin atau bujang, bilangan anak yang dimiliki, bilangan kawan-kawan dan bentuk hubungan dengan orang-orang yang penting dalam hidup (Kapteyn et al. 2009).

Sener (2011) turut mengukur kepuasan hidup dengan meneliti elemen-elemen tertentu. Beliau mencadangkan elemen perkahwinan, pekerjaan, kesihatan, anak-anak dan keseluruhan sebagai faktor-faktor yang perlu diambil kira untuk menentukan kepuasan hidup seseorang. Begitu juga Nichols (2009) yang menganalisis kepuasan hidup dengan menggunakan Indeks Kepuasan Hidup yang dibangunkan daripada *Ostomy Comprehensive Health and Life Assessment*. Ia mengandungi soalan yang menggunakan skala Likert untuk mengkaji kepuasan daripada segi kehidupan sosial, kehidupan berkeluarga, masa lapang, situasi kewangan dan kepuasan umum. Indeks yang dibangunkan ini telah dapat membantu pengkaji untuk mengenal pasti peratus responden yang tidak berpuas hati dengan aspek-aspek kehidupan tersebut, seterusnya memberi input tentang program-program yang perlu dijalankan.

KESIMPULAN

Ringkasnya, kajian lepas telah meneroka makna kepuasan hidup di pelbagai negara. Makna kepuasan hidup didapati sangat berkait rapat dengan makna hidup yang dipegang seseorang. Ia juga berkait dengan apa yang dianggap penting dalam kehidupan seseorang, seperti wang, pendidikan, agama dan kesihatan. Makna kepuasan hidup berbeza mengikut peringkat umur yang dikaji. Dewasa pertengahan usia dan lanjut usia mentafsirkan kepuasan hidup lebih kepada elemen spiritual dan kekeluargaan. Manakala bagi golongan yang lebih muda, elemen wang dan pendidikan mungkin merupakan tumpuan mereka. Analisis literatur juga mendapati bahawa kepuasan hidup telah dinilai dengan mengukur kepuasan dalam domain-domain tertentu kehidupan atau mengukur secara umum. Ia bergantung kepada perspektif pengkaji mengenai kepuasan hidup. Justeru, konstruk kepuasan hidup adalah satu konstruk yang sangat dinamik dan sentiasa relevan untuk dikaji di pelbagai negara, dalam pelbagai peringkat usia dan konteks. Dapatan-dapatan terbaharu mengenai kepuasan hidup perlu disebarikan untuk memberi petunjuk kepada tahap kesejahteraan manusia secara umumnya, kualiti hidup dan pencapaian atau kemajuan sesebuah negara.

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**Dark Triad Personality Traits: Evaluation of Self versus Others
among Employees in Malaysia**
***Ciri-ciri Personaliti Triad Gelap: Penilaian Diri Berbanding Orang
Lain Dikalangan Pekerja di Malaysia***

IDA ROSNITA ISMAIL
UKM-Graduate School of Business
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
idarosnita@ukm.edu.my

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ABSTRACT

The major organizational research streamline has been directed towards understanding the nature, causes, and consequences of positive work behavior. In the workplace, however, negative work behavior is also a concern to many employees. Past literature found that various factors contribute to the occurrence of these dark behaviors. Negative personality traits, especially the Dark Triad, have been found to be significant predictors to the dark behaviors. Despite the numerous investigations, little attempt has been done to examine the evaluation of oneself and others on the Dark Triad traits. Therefore, this study aims at to fulfill the gap guided by the following research questions: to what extent do employees believe that they possess the Dark Triad traits and to what extent do employees favorably rate themselves possessing less Dark Triad traits compared to their colleagues at work? Paired data were collected from a sample of 64 part time MBA students from a large Malaysian university who work in various industries. Results of frequency analysis and Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test show that respondents believed that they possessed the Dark Triad traits, and they rated highly on themselves rather than the known others on all components of the Dark Triad traits. Implications of the findings and future study recommendations were discussed.

Key words: Dark Triad, Personality Traits, Narcissism, Machiavellianism, Psychopathy

ABSTRAK

Penyelarasan penyelidikan utama organisasi telah diarahkan untuk memahami sifat, sebab, dan akibat dari tingkah laku kerja yang positif. Walaubagaimanapun, di tempat kerja, kelakuan kerja yang negatif juga menjadi kebimbangan kepada ramai pekerja. Kajian lepas mendapati pelbagai faktor telah menyumbang kepada berlakunya tingkah laku gelap ini. Ciri-ciri keperibadian negatif, terutamanya Triad Gelap, telah dijumpai sebagai peramal penting kepada tingkah laku gelap. Walaupun banyak penyiasatan, usaha kecil telah dilakukan untuk mengkaji penilaian diri sendiri dan orang lain mengenai ciri-ciri Triad Gelap. Oleh itu, kajian ini bertujuan untuk memenuhi jurang yang dipandu oleh soalan-soalan penyelidikan berikut: sejauh manakah

pekerja percaya bahawa mereka memiliki ciri-ciri Triad Gelap dan sejauh manakah pekerja menganggap bahawa mereka mempunyai ciri-ciri kurang Triad Gelap dibandingkan dengan rakan-rakan mereka di tempat kerja ? Data untuk kajian ini dikumpulkan dari sampel 64 orang pelajar MBA dari sebuah universiti terkemuka di Malaysia yang bekerja di pelbagai industri. Keputusan analisis kekerapan dan Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test menunjukkan bahawa responden percaya bahawa mereka memiliki ciri-ciri Triad Gelap, dan mereka diberi nilai tinggi pada diri mereka sendiri dan bukannya yang lain yang diketahui pada semua komponen sifat Triad Gelap. Implikasi penemuan dan cadangan kajian masa depan telah dibincangkan.

Kata kunci: Triad Gelap, Ciri Keperibadian, Narcissism, Machiavellianism, Psikopati

INTRODUCTION

Since the ancient time, scholars had developed an interest in understanding people's personality (Crocq, 2013). The emergence of modern personality psychology, however, started in 19th century (Ellis, Abrams, & Abrams, 2009). There are many research works focusing on understanding the nature of positive personality traits such as the Big Five and happy personality traits, its antecedents and consequences, and the underlying mechanisms that help to explain the relationship between various constructs and the positive personality traits. On the contrary, the negative personality traits attract scholars' attention only at later years (Harms & Spain, 2015).

Among the negative personality traits, Dark Triad receives the most attention within organizational research. Spain, Harms, and LeBreton (2014) review the utilities of the dark personality traits, which include the Dark Triad, and found that these traits affect job attitudes, job performance, organizational citizenship behavior, counterproductive work behavior, and creative performance. They also found that the dark personality traits affect several human resources functions such as training and interviewing. Interest in understanding the effect of the dark personality traits, especially the Dark Triad, also emerges in relation to leadership (e.g., Kiazad, Restubog, Zagenczyk, Kiewitz, & Tang, 2010; Mathieu, Neumann, Hare, & Babiak, 2014).

Despite the increasing number of studies on the Dark Triad traits, little attempt has been done to examine the evaluation of oneself and others on the Dark Triad traits. Understanding how a person evaluates himself possessing these traits relative to others is important for organizational researchers and practitioners to take necessary actions in overcoming the traits' adverse effects at the workplace. Therefore, this study aims at to fulfill this gap by addressing the following research questions: to what extent do employees believe that they possess the Dark Triad traits and to what extent do employees favorably rate themselves possessing less Dark Triad traits compared to their colleagues at work?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The major organizational research streamline has been directed towards understanding the nature, causes, and consequences of positive work behavior. In the workplace, however, negative work behavior is also a concern to many employees. Past literature found that various factors

contribute to the occurrence of these dark behaviors (e.g., Chen & King, 2018; Mitchell, Baer, Ambrose, Folger, & Palmer, 2018). One of these factors is negative personality traits, especially the Dark Triad traits (O'Boyle, Forsyth, Banks, & McDaniel, 2012).

Dark Triad traits refer to the constellation of three socially aversive personality traits, which are Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). A person who possesses the Machiavellianism trait is known to be someone who will do anything to win; that is, ends justify the means (Scandura, 2017). They are the ones who believe that people can be manipulated and doing so is permissible in realizing a targeted goal (Paulhus & Williams, 2002; Scandura, 2017). Narcissism refers to the expression of grandiosity, entitlement, dominance, and superiority (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). It also reflects the self-serving bias in which a person will attribute success to himself but failures to others (Emmons, 1987). Unlike Machiavellianism and narcissism, psychopathy is the extreme socially aversive trait in the Dark Triad traits. A person who possesses this trait has no feelings of guilt, is impulsive, and seeks immediate gratification of his needs (Scandura, 2017). Therefore, psychopathy is defined as characters with high impulsivity, thrill-seeking, and having low empathy and anxiety (Paulhus & Williams, 2002).

Although narcissism and psychopathy can be found in clinical studies involving individuals under clinical or forensic supervisions, the two traits have been studied using broader community samples known as subclinical samples (Furnham, Richards, & Paulhus, 2013). Hence, to distinguish these traits under different conditions, subclinical narcissism and subclinical psychopathy are referred to when the traits are studied using broader community samples. These two subclinical traits are combined together with Machiavellianism to form the Dark Triad traits. Paulhus and Williams (2002) argue that the three traits are distinct constructs but they overlap with each other to some extent. In particular, the three traits represent *socially malevolent traits with behavior tendency toward self-promotion, emotional coldness, duplicity, and aggressiveness* (p.557), but Paulhus and Williams found that the three constructs of Dark Triad traits are distinctive when measured with the normal population. Therefore, the three constructs were examined separately in the present study.

Numerous evidences show that these three traits are commonly found in the workplace (Cohen, 2018). Jonason, Slomski, and Partyka (2012) argue that it is no surprise to find employees with Dark Triad traits in the workplace because these traits are not immediately visible during a short period of employment interview. Coined as toxic employees, the authors also contend that these employees survive in organizations through their "desirable" personalities (e.g., charm and assertiveness) and their ability to use different tactics to influence others in the workplace.

Since 2002, there is an exponential growth of research on Dark Triad traits in organizational research. A search hit in Google Scholar with key terms "Dark Triad" and "workplace" shows that there are 1,710 published articles. The research streams on this phenomenon can be divided into understanding the nature of the Dark Triad traits (e.g., Paulhus & Williams, 2002), identifying its antecedents and consequences (e.g., Kiazad et al., 2010), and explaining its underlying mechanism (e.g., Giammarco & Vernon, 2014). Although most of the

studies on Dark Triad traits focus on its relation to antisocial work behavior, some studies also focus on its beneficial impact to organizational members (e.g., Jonason, Webster, Schmitt, Li, & Crysel, 2012; Jonason, Wee, & Li, 2014).

In terms of tapping into the Dark Triad traits, majority of previous studies asked the respondents to rate themselves on the given items (e.g., Giammarco & Vernon, 2014; Mathieu et al., 2014). That is, Dark Triad traits had been measured through self-rated questionnaires. There are also some isolated attempts to measure the Dark Triad through the lens of self and others. For example, Rauthmann and Kolar (2012) examine the lay persons' perception on Dark Triad traits from two different perspectives (i.e., self versus others) on three criterions (i.e., desirability, consequences for the self, and consequences for others). Data were gathered from 244 respondents. They found that the respondents discriminated the responses between a self- and other-perspective. The respondents also reported that there were favorable consequences towards themselves when others exhibited Machiavellianism or psychopathy, but neutral or detrimental effects on self when they exhibited these traits. In addition, all three traits were reported to be less desirable for the self than for others. Also, respondents had the tendency to judge the consequences of their own behavior less detrimental than when others did.

Although Rauthmann and Kolar (2012) provide some insights into the difference between self-rated and other-rated Dark Triad scores, their primary interest was to understand the effects of exhibiting Dark Triad traits by self and others. In the present study, the aim is to investigate how an individual assesses himself as compared to his assessment on others. This is important because self-enhancement principle and Social Comparison Theory specify that one is more likely to assess oneself positively and others negatively. Furthermore, the definitions of the Dark Triad components entail the same; that is, believing that one is dominant, more important, and self-love most probably support the ideas that oneself does not exhibit the dark traits compare to others.

The above argument is in line with Brown's (1986). According to Brown, his series of experimental studies show that all respondents had pervasive tendency to highlight self positively and less negatively compared to their evaluation on others. In addition, he also found that the respondents rated more positively when evaluating friends than others. His work, however, used ten bipolar positively and negatively valance trait adjectives. Therefore, it is interesting to identify whether the same outcomes can be observed when measuring the Dark Triad traits.

Underpinning Theories

Two theories were used as the underpinning theories. Self-enhancement theory was used to address the first research question, whereas Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954) was used to address the second research question.

Self-enhancement is one of the well-established constructs in the organizational behavior and industrial psychology literature. Commonly known with the motive to highlight oneself favorably in the eyes of people, self-enhancement is defined as *a person's inherent motivation to*

have others perceive him or her favorably) such as being competent, attractive, lucky, ethical, and important (McShane & Von Glinow, 2018: 66). Research has shown that self-enhancement is important to narcissists because it reflects their importance, grandiosity, and competency (John & Robbins, 1994). Therefore, it is expected that people with high narcissism will rate themselves more favorably than when they rate others.

Because no research has shown that self-enhancement is related to Machiavellianism and psychopathy, the present study also draws on the Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954) to explain the reasoning behind the proposed research questions. Social Comparison Theory suggests that people have an innate drive to compare themselves relative to others in order to make an accurate evaluation about them. Kwan (2004) further argues that the theory is useful to explain why people perceive themselves more positively than they perceive others.

Later works on Social Comparison Theory identifies that there are two comparing processes, which are an upward or a downward comparison (e.g., Suls, Martin, & Wheeler, 2002). In the upward comparison, a person may compare himself to other who is superior to him, such as managers who compare a pay increase with a CEO's pay (Gartenberg & Wulf, 2017). On the contrary, a downward comparison specifies that a person who compares himself to other who is worse off than he is to make him feels better about himself. In this case, a person is more likely to make a downward comparison than an upward comparison when he feels threatened by certain characteristics in question (Hakmiller, 1966). Research has shown that by adopting the downward comparison, a person increases his self-enhancement (Buunk, Collins, Taylor, VanYperen, & Dakof, 1990). On the basis of this line of argument, it is expected that employees with Dark Triad traits will use a downward comparison than an upward comparison.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was part of a larger study on understanding the effects of Dark Triad traits on workplace behavior. Data for this study were gathered from 64 part-time MBA students from a large Malaysian university who work in various industries. These students were chosen as respondents because they were working adults who might have some experiences in dealing with everyday work hassles and events. In addition, they are appropriate cases for the present study because the aim of this study is to identify how a respondent evaluate himself as compared to how he evaluates other. The students have known each other for two semesters, which allows them to get to know each other to some extent.

Using a survey questionnaire, respondents were asked to rate their scores on the Dark Triad traits for both themselves and a known other. To avoid possible biases, each respondent was asked to rate themselves first during the first class meeting. Only in the third class meeting, which took place two weeks after the first class meeting, the respondents were asked to rate a known other using the same set of the survey questionnaire. The only difference in the survey questionnaires was the demographic information. In the first phase, information about the respondent was collected. In the second phase, no information about the known other was collected except gender, which was identified *a priori* before data collection. The first exercise was done using paper-and-pencil questionnaire and the second exercise was conducted via online

survey. The known other is defined as a person who takes the same course and in the same class with a respondent. To ease the data collection, questionnaire distribution during the first phase was done when the respondents sat in groups. The membership of the groups remains the same until the end of the course; hence, it is easier for the researcher to avoid assigning a respondent as a known other. An identifier code was used to identify a respondent without revealing much information to minimize the possibility of anyone recognizing who the respondent was. Also, a known other was identified first before the respondents provided their feedbacks. In this situation, a respondent had no control to choose who they wished to rate.

The measures used in this study was the Dirty Dozen developed by Jonathan and Webster (2010). There were 12 items tapping into three components of the Dark Triad traits, with four items each for Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy. A sample item for Machiavellianism is *I tend to manipulate others to get my way*, whereas a sample item for narcissism is *I tend to want others to admire me*. A sample item for psychopathy was *I tend to lack remorse*. All items were rated on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly disagree).

The items included in the demographic information obtained from the respondents are gender, age, ethnicity, occupation, industry, sector, highest education attained, and working experience. The only information obtained about a known other is gender, which the information was derived from class lists. When rating the known other, a slight modification was made to the 12 items of Dirty Dozen. For example, the original item for narcissism was changed from *I tend to want others to admire me* to *He/she wants others to admire him/her*.

RESULTS

Among the respondents, 55% were male and 45% were female. The ages of respondents ranged from 23 to 51 years, with a mean age of 33.9 years. Most of the respondents were Malay (53%) and the rests came from various ethnicity. The highest education attained was a Bachelor degree (88%), followed by a Master degree (12%). A large number of respondents worked in public sector (48%) and private sector (41%), whereas only 11% were self-employed. Their occupations and industries varies. The average working experience was 9.2 years (*S.D.* = 6.16).

Table 1 shows the frequency analysis for item scores for each components of the Dirty Dozen based on self perspective. The first four items belong to narcissism, and majority of the respondents reported that they had the tendency to wanting others to admire them (51.6%) and also to pay attention to them (40.6%). The next four items describe psychopathy. Most of the respondents did not agree to the items, with the highest frequency *tend to be not too concerned with morality* with 70.4%. Only few agreed to the psychopathy items with the highest score of 17.2% for *tend to be cynical* and the lowest frequency score of 9.4% for *tend to lack remorse*. Machiavellianism was captured by the last four items in Table 1. Similar to self-reported psychopathy, majority of the respondents did not agree that they possess the Machiavellianism traits. The highest frequency score for the disagreement scale was 86% for *tend to manipulate others to get to one's way* and the lowest frequency score was 78.1% for *used flattery to get one's way*. On the other end of the scale, the frequencies for all four items were slightly different, with *using flattery to get to one's way* having the highest frequency of 6.3%.

Table 1: Item Frequency for Self-Evaluation

Dirty Dozen Items	Response Frequency (%)				
	1	2	3	4	5
Tend to want others to admire	15.6	14.1	18.8	39.1	12.5
Tend to want others to pay attention	10.9	9.4	39.1	25.0	15.6
Tend to expect special favors from others	20.3	15.6	39.1	17.2	7.8
Tend to seek prestige or status	17.2	20.3	35.9	18.8	7.8
Tend to lack remorse	34.4	29.7	26.6	9.4	0
Tend to be callous or insensitive	45.3	21.9	20.3	12.5	0
Tend to be not too concerned with morality	43.8	26.6	17.2	9.4	3.1
Tend to be cynical	35.9	26.6	20.3	14.1	3.1
Used deceit or lied to get a way	50.0	34.4	10.9	4.7	0
Tend to manipulate others to get a way	46.9	39.1	9.4	4.7	0
Used flattery to get a way	45.3	32.8	15.6	6.3	0
Exploit others towards own end	51.6	29.7	15.6	3.1	0

Note. N = 64; 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree

Table 2 also shows the frequency analysis on the Dirty Dozen items, but for other evaluation perspective. Generally, majority of the respondents did not agree that their known others possess the Dark Triad traits. Of the four items on narcissism, the highest frequency was reported for *tend to seek prestige or status* (81.3%) and the lowest score was reported for *tend to want others to pay attention* (56.3%). None of the respondents indicated strong agreement to the narcissism items when evaluating others. The response frequency for items belonging to psychopathy suggests that a large number of respondents rated their known others as having low level of psychopathy. The highest frequency score was the *tendency not to be too concerned with morality* (90.7%) and the *tendency to be cynical* (90.7%), whereas the lowest frequency score was the *tendency to lack remorse* (79.7%). Only two items of psychopathy for other evaluation show some level of agreement, with *tend to be callous or insensitive* (3.1%) followed by *tend to lack remorse* (1.6%). The same frequency pattern is observed for Machiavellianism. The item with the highest frequency score was the respondents' disagreement that the known others used deceit or lied to get their ways (93.8%). The lowest frequency scores were on the agreement side and shared between *using flattery to get a way* and *exploiting others towards one's own end*, with a frequency of 1.6% each.

Table 2: Item Frequency for Other Evaluation

Dirty Dozen Items	Response Frequency (%)				
	1	2	3	4	5
Tend to want others to admire	20.3	42.2	26.6	10.9	0
Tend to want others to pay attention	18.8	37.5	25.0	18.8	0
Tend to expect special favors from others*	25.0	45.3	18.8	9.4	0
Tend to seek prestige or status	26.6	54.7	10.9	7.8	0
Tend to lack remorse*	32.8	46.9	17.2	1.6	0
Tend to be callous or insensitive	38.9	46.9	14.1	3.1	0
Tend to be not too concerned with morality	46.9	43.8	9.4	0	0
Tend to be cynical*	39.1	51.6	7.8	0	0
Used deceit or lied to get a way	62.5	31.3	6.3	0	0
Tend to manipulate others to get a way	56.3	34.4	6.3	3.1	0
Used flattery to get a way	59.4	31.3	7.8	1.6	0
Exploit others towards own end	50.0	39.1	9.4	1.6	0

Note. Asterisk (*) marks the presence of a missing value in the item.

N = 64; 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree

By looking at the two tables superficially, one may conclude that the two evaluation perspectives are different, with more respondents admitting that they possessed the Dark Triad traits than their known others do. To test the significance of the two evaluation perspectives, a test on comparison was used. Although paired sample *t*-test is the common approach to analyze the present data, a preliminary analysis on the 64 study cases showed that none of the constructs follows a normal distribution. Therefore, a non-parametric approach was used in the next analysis. In particular, the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test was used to compare the score for each component of the Dark Triad traits based on the evaluation perspective.

When comparing self-evaluation and other evaluation on narcissism measure, the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test revealed a statistically significant reduction in narcissism score, $z = -3.946$, $p < 0.000$ with a medium effect size ($r = 0.35$). The median score on narcissism decreased from self-evaluation ($Md = 2.73$) to other evaluation ($Md = 2.046$). Similar results were obtained for psychopathy. Specifically, the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test revealed a statistically significant reduction in psychopathy score, $z = -4.235$, $p < 0.000$ with a medium effect size ($r = 0.37$). The medium score on psychopathy decreased from self-evaluation ($Md = 2.17$) to other evaluation ($Md = 1.67$). A statistically significant reduction in score was also found in Machiavellianism, $z = -2.823$, $p < 0.005$ with a small effect size ($r = 0.25$). The median score on Machiavellianism decreased from self-evaluation ($Md = 1.80$) to other evaluation ($Md = 1.40$).

DISCUSSION

The main objective of the present study was to examine the evaluation of oneself and others on the Dark Triad traits. Two research questions were proposed, which are: to what extent do employees believe that they possess the Dark Triad traits and to what extent do employees favorably rate themselves possessing less Dark Triad traits compared to their colleagues at work?

As shown in the frequency analysis, employee-respondents in this study believed that they possessed the Dark Triad traits. Of the three traits, they were more likely to report having narcissistic traits than Machiavellianism and psychopathy. A probable reason is the items tapping into narcissism are commonly occurred in workplaces. Wanting others to admire, to pay attention, to expect special favors from others, and to seek prestige and status are desires of many when working with a group of people. Therefore, these characteristics may be seen as normal and admitting it will not have any adverse effect on the respondents.

On the contrary, items tapping into Machiavellianism and psychopathy are more intense. It is speculated that, if it is true, the respondents might not want to disclose that they were on the dark side and be condemned for having those traits. Alternatively, it is also possible that morality and culture play important roles in shaping the respondents' traits. That is, they were not Machiavellists or psychopaths because being these toxic people go against the moral principle and the collectivist culture of Malaysians. Another explanation could be derived from the fact that the respondents rated themselves highly on narcissism. Being a narcissist, a person has an inherent motivation to have others perceive him or her favorably such as being ethical (McShane & Von Glinow, 2018). Admitting or reporting themselves having Machiavellianism and psychopathy traits will make them look unethical. Therefore, the first research question receives quite substantial answer. That is, the employee-respondents in the present study believe that they had narcissistic traits but not so much on the other two Dark Triad traits. Future researchers are encouraged to investigate the influence of morality, ethics, and culture on Dark Triad traits.

The second research question was addressed using the results obtained from the Wilcoxon-Signed Rank Test. Interestingly, it was found that the results did not support the theorizing based on self-enhancement and Social Comparison Theory (Ferstinger, 1954). Although there was statistically significant difference in evaluation perspective, the employee-respondents rated known others more favorably than themselves on Dark Triad traits. The reductions in median scores were significant for all three traits. One justification relates to the fact that the respondents were asked to rate known others. As found in Brown (1986), respondents have the tendency to rate positively when evaluating friends. In the present study, the respondents had known their classmates for two semesters. This duration is long enough for the respondents to befriend their classmates, and, thus, they had the tendency to rate the known others positively. The findings here provide an interesting research avenue for future researchers to investigate the moderating effect of workplace friendship on the relationship between Dark Triad traits and work behaviors.

Implications

This study suggests that when measuring Dark Triad traits using a battery test, respondents are more likely to report their narcissism than Machiavellianism and psychopathy. It also suggests that respondents are less likely to rate their known others negatively. Therefore, the present study supports the utility of self-enhancement principle in explaining why respondents rate themselves having narcissism trait, but does not support the Social Comparison Theory (Ferstinger, 1954). In particular, the utility of the Social Comparison Theory may be visible if researchers look into the effect of evaluating others who are unknown to employees or when taking into account the moderating effects of several variables such as workplace friendship, morality, and culture.

Practically, managers must be aware of the differences in evaluation perspective. In cases of complaints and performance evaluation, for example, managers must make sure that the remarks or points are not distorted by the complainers' or evaluators' Dark Triad traits. This problem can be overcome by giving a series of test to employees to assess their Dark Triad traits, and then to profile the employees, accordingly. Although it is not possible to remove the toxic employees from the workplace, their dark behaviors can be suppressed. Also, encouraging workplace friendship could be helpful in regulating the toxic employees' perception of others in the workplace.

Limitations

The present study has several limitations. First, this study used small sample of 64 cases. Having small sample size limits the chances of using parametric approach, which may results in more powerful test. This limitation can be overcome if the data collection period is prolonged so that more responses can be gathered or if the research is conducted in a large organization with many employees. Despite this limitation, the 64 cases allow the researcher to achieve the objective of the study. That is, the researcher could make sure that random assignment of known others be done and the responses were more reliable compared to having the respondents chose their own persons to be evaluated.

Another limitation relates to assessing Dark Triad traits descriptively. Although this approach meets the objective of the present study, future researchers may further explore the Dark Triad's issue by investigating its relationships to work attitudes and work behaviors using a complex model. In relation to the present study, using descriptive approach is appropriate as it meets the research objective. Furthermore, as the present study is only part of a larger research project, the study is good as it is. In expanding the study on Dark Triad traits, future researchers may take into consideration how Dark Triad traits should be assessed. Should it be assessed from the respondents' perspective or observers' perspective? Both perspectives have merits and demerits, and it is up to future researchers to choose the best possible option that could minimize self-serving biases.

One last limitation relates to the measurement scale used. The present study used the Dirty Dozen (Jonathan & Webster, 2010). Using a 12-item scale will have higher retention rate among respondents, especially when the issue in question is sensitive, but it will not be able to capture a larger domain of the constructs. Alternatively, future researchers may use the Short

Dark Triad scale or SD3 developed by Jones and Paulhus (2014). Albeit shorter, this scale has more items compared to the Dirty Dozen.

CONCLUSION

Employees with Dark Triad traits exist in all workplaces. Organizational members will not be able to identify them as their true colors are often hidden behind their charming and charismatic personality. These employees have difficulties in admitting themselves possessing the Dark Triad traits, especially if they are high on Machiavellianism and psychopathy. In addition, their evaluation tends to be inconsistent depending on whether they are evaluating themselves or other persons. By understanding how they evaluate the Dark Triad traits, management can take necessary actions to minimize any adverse effect resulting from the toxic employees' behaviors.

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