**MENTAL HEALTH AMONGST MALAYSIAN EMPLOYEES IN THE BANKING INDUSTRY**

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# Preface

**Purpose:** The main purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of job demand control on mental health amongst Malaysian employees in the banking Industry.

**Theoretical Framework:** The study builds upon existing research and theories on job demand control and their effect on employee mental health. The Job Demand-Control (JDC) model, was used in the study due to its relevance and applicability to job demand control in the context of the banking industry in Malaysia. This study analyzed the various job demand controls along the continuum and assessed their applicability to Malaysian employees in the banking industry by applying the Job Demand-Control (JDC) model. The Job Demand-Control (JDC) model offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the dynamics at work in the context of job demand control and their effect on the mental well-being of the employees.

**Expected Findings:** The study's findings revealed that Job demand control affects the mental health of Malaysian employees in the banking Industry. It provided insights into the specific job demand control that has a significant effect on the mental health among Malaysian employees in the banking Industry.

**Research, Practical, and Social Implications:** The findings of this study have implications for both research and practice. Understanding the relationship between job demand control and mental health among Malaysian employees in the banking Industry can assist organizations in creating healthier work environments, leading to improved employee well–being and productivity. Additionally, the study contributes to the existing literature on mental health and job demand control by providing valuable insights for future research in this field.

**Originality/Value:** This research adds value by examining the effect of job demand control on mental health among Malaysian employees in the banking Industry. The study's focus on this particular context contributes to the understanding of job demand control and mental health in a specific industrial setting, filling a gap in the current literature in the context of Malaysia.

## **Chapter 1**

## **MENTAL HEALTH AMONGST MALAYSIAN EMPLOYEES IN THE BANKING INDUSTRY**

According to the World Bank Malaysia's economy has been on an upward trend since the Asian financial crisis of 1997-1998, averaging 5.4% growth since 2010 (World Bank, 2022). Malaysia's banking sector has been a substantial contributor to the country's economy, creating money, job opportunities, and exports. The banking industry has played a vital role in Malaysia's economic development and transformation, with the government pursuing numerous programs and policies to stimulate industrialization and increase the banking sector's contribution to the economy. These efforts have resulted in the creation of a strong and competitive banking industry in the country.

In Malaysia, there are several different types of banking, including commercial banking, investment banking, Islamic banking, and insurance. With the government aggressively pushing foreign direct investment (FDI) in the banking sector through alluring incentives and a business-friendly climate, the industry has experienced substantial expansion and diversification over the years. As a result, Malaysia now boasts a large number of multinational firms and banking facilities. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) climbed by RM14.1 billion, hitting a record RM893.2 billion at the end of the first quarter of 2023, according to figures from the (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2023). With RM385.3 billion, or 43.1%, going to the banking industry, financial activities came in second (RM212.2 billion, or 23.8%), while wholesale and retail commerce came in third (RM52.3 billion:5.9%).

The economic development, creation of jobs, and export revenue of Malaysia have all been significantly influenced by the banking sector. It has grown to be an important surface of Malaysia's economic growth and continues to be a top focus for the nation's industrialization aspirations. For the workforce to meet the needs of the banking sector, the government has prioritized skill development. To increase the technical skills of the workforce and guarantee a consistent supply of skilled labor, the government has invested in educational and vocational training programs. According to the IMF (Regional Economic Outlook, 2023), Malaysia's banking industry has remained robust in the face of global shocks. With the government implementing measures to support private sector activity, the banking industry has been able to resist the obstacles created by the COVID-19 epidemic. As the shock of COVID-19 restricts export-led growth and a limited fiscal space limits public investment-led expansion, the banking industry's near-term economic outlook will be more reliant on government initiatives to sustain private sector activity than usual. In the long term, as Malaysia converges with high-income economies, incremental growth will be more dependent on raising productivity to sustain greater potential growth.

To summarize, Malaysia's banking business has been a substantial contributor to the country's economy, providing money, job opportunities, and export operations. The government has launched a number of initiatives and programs to stimulate industrialization and increase the contribution of the banking industry to the economy. Over the years, the banking industry has grown and diversified significantly, with the government aggressively pushing foreign direct investment (FDI) in the banking sector through attractive incentives and a business-friendly climate. According to the IMF, Malaysia's banking industry has remained robust in the face of global shocks. To fulfill the demands of the banking industry, the government has prioritized the development of a trained workforce.

Mental health is important in our lives and in society as a whole. It has a significant impact on our overall well-being, work performance, and the quality of our relationships with friends, family, and the community. Mental health illnesses are a global concern, with millions of people suffering from them each year and many more dealing with them throughout their lives (Ritchie & Dattani, 2023). The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic brought mental health issues to the forefront, forcing researchers around the world to step up their efforts to investigate the pandemic's effects on mental health (Liang et al., 2022). The epidemic created a new set of stresses, including as virus-related anxieties, social isolation due to lockdowns, economic uncertainty, and interruptions in daily life. Researchers have been studying the pandemic's influence on mental health in order to better understand the problems that individuals and communities have experienced throughout this unprecedented global crisis.

The relationship between mental health and social media use is a prominent area of investigation within the mental health landscape. Social media platforms have become a vital part of modern life, but their implications on mental health have prompted issues and worries. A comprehensive review was undertaken to summarize the impacts of social network usage on mental health, shedding insight into how digital interactions and online experiences can influence individuals' psychological well-being (Fazida Karim, 2020). The findings of this review offer useful insights into the complex interaction between technology and mental health, emphasizing the importance of using social media responsibly and mindfully. Another key area of study is working adults’ mental health, which focuses on prevention and early intervention. Understanding working people's mental health needs is critical, given the possible long-term effects of early experiences. Colizzi et al. (2020) conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the existing state of knowledge on delivering promotion and preventative interventions that address mental health. This study not only finds helpful solutions but also emphasizes the importance of proactive steps to promote people's mental well-being and provide them with the tools they need to face life's challenges.

Finally, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of working adults have received special attention. Working life has its own set of anxieties and adjustments, and the epidemic has brought fresh layers of complication. A timely assessment was undertaken to examine the pandemic's influence on working people's mental health (Smith et al., 2020). This study emphasizes the particular problems that this group faces, as well as the importance of tailored assistance and intervention measures to address their mental health concerns. To summarize, mental health is an important component of our life, influencing our well-being, productivity, and relationships. The COVID-19 epidemic has highlighted the importance of mental health on a global scale, spurring serious investigation into its numerous facets. This research provides essential insights into mental health challenges ranging from the impact of social media usage to adult mental health interventions to the impacts of the pandemic on working adults. They are a call to action, emphasizing the importance of ongoing research, understanding, and assistance to overcome the various difficulties linked with mental health in our modern culture.

The literature gap identified in the context of the title The Effect of Job Demand Control on Mental Health among Malaysian Employees in the Banking Industry refers to the lack of research that specifically investigates the relationship between job demand control and mental health among Malaysian banking employees. Prior research on employment demand control and its impact on mental health has mostly focused on Western settings, leaving a significant space in understanding this link within the particular context of Malaysia's banking sector.

This research intends to fill this knowledge gap by carrying out a comprehensive investigation into how job demand control affects the mental health of Malaysian bank employees. It aims to investigate the subtle interactions between job demands, control over one's work environment, and employees' mental well-being in the Malaysian context. To achieve this research goal, the study will look into many components of job demand control, including workload, decision-making autonomy, and job-related stressors. The research attempts to provide insights into how these factors collectively effect employees' mental health outcomes by examining these components in the unique context of the Malaysian banking industry.

This study's findings are anticipated to have practical implications for both the banking industry and policymakers in Malaysia. By gaining a deeper understanding of the relationship between job demand control and mental health among employees, organizations can implement more effective strategies to support their workforce's well-being. Furthermore, this research contributes to the existing body of literature by expanding the knowledge of job-related stressors and their impact on mental health beyond Western settings, promoting cross-cultural insights and comparisons in the field of occupational health and psychology.

Chapter 2

**Challenges in the Banking Industry**

The mental health of employees in the banking industry is a matter of increasing concern and importance. Working in the banking sector often entails dealing with high levels of stress, pressure to meet financial targets, stringent regulatory compliance, and demanding client interactions. As a result, employees in this field are susceptible to various mental health challenges, including stress, anxiety, burnout, and even depression (Sophie Perryer, 2022). The stressful nature of banking professions can have an adverse effect on employees' psychological well-being. Working long hours and constantly keeping up with financial markets can lead to tiredness and fatigue. Furthermore, the high stakes and responsibility of maintaining considerable financial assets can impose huge mental stress (Beckan, 2022).

The recent economic challenges, as highlighted in the proposal, have only exacerbated these concerns. The banking industry's performance fluctuations and uncertainty can contribute to heightened stress levels among employees, affecting their mental health. Understanding the mental health of banking industry professionals is essential not only for the well-being of individuals but also for the industry's overall performance (Shevlin, 2023). Employees who experience mental health challenges may struggle with productivity, decision-making, and interpersonal relationships at work. This, in turn, can impact the organization's efficiency, customer service, and competitiveness.

Employees in the financial services sector require extra assistance from their companies to manage stress and anxiety due to the uncertainty and quick change they face. For those who work in the financial sector, the obstacles never stop. Analysts predict that bank executives and staff will experience uncertainty and disruption for several years as the pandemic starts to fade. Banks will be under pressure at all organisational levels to quickly change, decrease costs, or both in order to compete, expand, and remain profitable. As inflation and threats of recession linger, for example, banks will need to become financially resilient. Besides, to thrive in the long term, however, banks also will need to innovate. Meeting customer demand for a more personalized banking experience will require investing in technology as well as reskilling and redeploying workers. Addressing calls for greater transparency will require investments in regulatory compliance. And, as cybersecurity threats continue to escalate, banks will need to beef up their data security protocols and technology.

Leaders in the banking sector are under pressure, but there is also a chance to completely redefine the sector as a result of these issues. Because of worries about branch closings, low raises, and bonuses, or having to quickly pick up new skills or take on a new role, may cause additional tension, anxiety, and sleepless nights for banking staff who are not in positions of control (Calm Business, 2023). According to Calm Business (2023), workforce mental health trends, 36% of workers in the banking sector are stressed and anxious more than half the time, or nearly all of the time. Overworking has a negative impact on the mental health of 44% of banking personnel while being too busy has a negative impact on 34%. Prolonged stress can swiftly lead to burnout, lowering productivity, and increasing negative attrition. It can interrupt sleep, create a variety of physical health issues, and escalate into major mental health illnesses such as sadness and anxiety.

Recognizing the unique challenges faced by banking industry employees, this research seeks to investigate how specific job-related factors, such as job demand control, influence their mental health outcomes. By gaining a deeper understanding of these dynamics, the research aims to contribute valuable insights that can inform strategies and interventions to promote better mental health among employees in the Malaysian banking sector. Ultimately, this can lead to a more sustainable and productive work environment, benefiting both individuals and the industry as a whole.

Table 1.1: Definitions of the key terms

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Key Terms | Definitions |
| Mental Health  | Mental health refers to a person's emotional, psychological, and social well-being. How well someone can adapt to recurring stressors is frequently used to assess the quality of someone's mental health. People who are in good mental health are able to use their skills, be effective, make choices, and participate fully in their communities (Leonard Holmes, 2023). |
| Job Demand  | Job demands are described as the physical, psychological, social, or organizational components of the job that require persistent physical and/or psychological effort or skills. These pressures can include work pressure, emotional expectations, and cognitive demands (Arnold B. Bakker, 2022). |
| Job Control | Job control refers to the degree to which workers believe they have the freedom to influence the scheduling, approaches, and results of their tasks. It encompasses an employee's ability to manage their work assignments, their work setting, and the ultimate outcomes of their work (Guolong Zhao, 2022). |
| Social Support | Social support encompasses the emotional and practical assistance offered by a person's social connections to assist them in managing stress. These sources of support can originate from coworkers, managers, and the overall workplace context. Social support manifests in various ways, including emotional aid, access to information, and tangible assistance (Kendra Cherry, 2023). |
| Banking Industry | The banking sector is described as a network of financial organizations licensed by the state to provide banking services. The industry provides a wide range of financial services, such as storing, transferring, extending credit against, or managing the risks involved with retaining various types of wealth (Jessica Ellis, 2023). |

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# CHAPTER 3

## **Global and Malaysian Perspective on Mental Health**

## **Global Perspective on Mental Health**

Mental health stands as a pressing global public health concern, as indicated by the fact that mental illnesses contribute to nearly a quarter of the total years lived with disability worldwide (Global Mental Health, 2022). Despite the increasing recognition of the burden imposed by mental health issues, these conditions have not received the same level of policy or program priority as comparably disabling physical ailments, as noted by (Paolo Cianconi, 2020). This disparity highlights the need for greater attention and action in addressing mental health challenges on a global scale. Depression, along with its often companion, anxiety, casts a formidable shadow on a global scale. It's estimated that a staggering 264 million people worldwide grapple with depression, making it one of the foremost causes of disability (World Health Organization, 2022). The profound impact of these mental health conditions extends far beyond personal suffering, significantly affecting economies as well. According to the Human Capital Insights Report (2022), the economic toll is substantial, with a staggering cost of approximately US$ 1 trillion per year in lost productivity on a global scale. This striking figure underscores the urgent need for greater awareness, investment, and support to address mental health challenges and alleviate their broader societal consequences.

The implications of climate change on mental health have also come to the forefront, raising growing concerns. A systematic review, as documented by (Luogi Janiri, 2022) has revealed that climate change can lead to heightened levels of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Additionally, climate change exacerbates existing mental health conditions and increases the risk of suicide, emphasizing the urgent need to address this emerging facet of mental health. Furthermore, there exists a robust interconnection between physical and mental health, influenced by lifestyle choices and social interactions, as outlined by (Sophia Betro, 2022). For instance, individuals who engage in regular physical activity are less likely to experience depression and anxiety. Likewise, social support and resilience act as protective factors, enhancing mental health outcomes, particularly during challenging times like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Stigma continues to be a significant obstacle in accessing mental health care, with many individuals refraining from seeking treatment due to the fear of discrimination or social exclusion. Reducing the stigma associated with mental illness is imperative to improve access to care and foster positive mental health outcomes. Integrating mental health care into primary care services assumes paramount importance in enhancing service accessibility and financial support for mental health care. This approach not only helps mitigate the stigma linked with mental health but also widens the availability of mental health services to a broader spectrum of individuals in need. Lastly, it's crucial to recognize the global prevalence of mental health conditions, with nearly one in five adults grappling with a mental illness (Samsha, 2023). These conditions result from a complex interplay of factors, including biological elements, life experiences, and a family history of mental health issues. Acknowledging these multifaceted determinants is essential to comprehensively address mental health challenges worldwide

## **Malaysia's Perspective on Mental Health**

Mental health constitutes more than just the absence of mental disorders; it encompasses psychological, emotional, and social well-being (codeblue, 2023). Unfortunately, Malaysia has been grappling with a significant burden of mental health challenges. East Malaysia, in particular, recorded a high prevalence rate of individuals meeting the criteria for mental disorders, standing at 43 percent, closely followed by Kuala Lumpur at 40 percent (Raaj et al., 2021). Even in 2015, a substantial 29.2 percent of individuals aged 16 and above were reported to have mental health problems in the country (Ministry of Health Malaysia, 2020). As Malaysia transitions into a high-income country, stress levels have been on the rise, linked to increasing workloads, competition, and globalization (Koukkanen et al., 2020). The repercussions of this trend are severe, with a reported 51 percent of the workforce experiencing work-related stress in recent times (The Star, 2022). This high prevalence of mental health issues translates into substantial costs for organizations and the economy, primarily due to reduced productivity and increased absenteeism (Hennekam et al., 2021).

Regrettably, only around 20 percent of Malaysians with mental health issues receive the treatment they require (Relate Mental Health Malaysia, 2020). Poor mental health in the workplace is a major contributor to unproductivity. On a global scale, the WHO estimates that it costs the economy a staggering USD 1 trillion annually. In the Malaysian context, poor mental health in the workplace accounts for around RM14.46 billion, equivalent to 1 percent of the GDP. Given these substantial financial losses, it becomes evident that investing in the mental health of the workforce is not only humane but also economically prudent. Organizations can play a pivotal role in enhancing their employees' mental health, subsequently bolstering their productivity. Measures such as providing flexible working hours, respecting non-office hours, and cultivating a healthy work culture have proven effective in this regard. While these steps are valuable, therapy remains a critical aspect of improving mental health. Therapy has been linked to increased creativity, motivation, cognitive flexibility, and problem-solving abilities, as well as enhanced resilience. In fact, a study from 2010 revealed that access to therapy can halve employee sick days, translating into increased productivity for employers.

Moreover, a happier workforce is an engaged workforce, with employee engagement and productivity increasing by 12 percent when employees are content. Google's experience is a testament to this, reporting a 37 percent boost in employee satisfaction and productivity after providing therapy.

Another study involving 197 employees from two Fortune 100 companies receiving counseling through an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) showed promising results. Just 90 days after commencing counseling, employees exhibited significant decreases in absenteeism, presenteeism, workplace distress, and an increase in life satisfaction (Sharar et al., 2012). Ironically, the annual estimated cost of treating depression and anxiety in Malaysia is markedly lower than the annual cost incurred due to lost productivity from mental health issues. The substantial RM14.46 billion spent on these workplace-related mental health issues has likely surged in recent years, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Notably, this figure does not encompass the costs associated with treating physical health problems triggered or worsened by mental health issues, rendering it a conservative estimate. Alarmingly, the budget allocation for mental health in 2022 was a mere RM337 million, emphasizing the need for a more robust approach to address this critical issue (Relate Malaysia, 2020). In essence, addressing mental health concerns in Malaysia is not merely a matter of well-being; it's a matter of economic prudence and social responsibility. Investing in the mental health of the workforce is not just an act of compassion but a strategic move with far-reaching benefits for individuals, organizations, and the nation as a whole.

Chapter 4

## **Job Demand-Control (JDC) Model**

The Job Demand-Control (JDC) model developed by Karasek, a well-established theoretical framework in occupational health psychology, provides a valuable lens through which to understand the dynamics between job characteristics and mental health outcomes. This model is particularly relevant in the context of examining the effect of job demand control on the mental health of middle-level managers in the Malaysian banking industry. According to the JDC model, a combination of job demands and job control leads to work-related stress. The demands of the job include a variety of stressors, including workload, deadline pressure, and task complexity (Aihui Chen, 2023). Job control, on the other hand, is a measure of an employee's level of autonomy and decision-making power over their work. Due to the nature of their positions, which include financial responsibility and regulatory compliance, middle-level managers in the banking industry frequently deal with significant job demands. They may simultaneously have varied degrees of job control, which may have an effect on how they handle these pressures (Tuo Yang, 2023).

The JDC model is suitable in this context for analyzing the relationship between job demand and job control and how these characteristics affect middle-level managers' mental health. High job demands and little job control can lead to a stressful work environment that may result in mental health problems including anxiety and burnout. On the other hand, more job control can serve as a buffer, helping managers better manage the demands of their positions and perhaps even enhancing their mental health.

In addition, the model recognizes the importance of social support as a moderator in this interaction. The assistance and resources available to employees from colleagues, supervisors, and the organization are referred to as social support. Strong social support networks can play an important role in minimizing the detrimental impact of high job demands and inadequate workplace control on mental health. Colleagues who give assistance in difficult situations, as well as a supportive organizational culture, can help to reduce stress and improve mental health results (Yaobin Lu, 2023).

Overall, the JDC model provides a relevant and comprehensive framework for understanding how job characteristics, specifically job demand, job control, and social support, interact and influence the mental health of middle-level managers in the banking industry. Its applicability is supported by empirical research, making it a valuable tool for investigating and addressing mental health challenges in this context.

Chapter 5

## **Job Control, Job Demand & Social Support**

## **Job Control**

The relationship between job demand control, and its effect on mental health, is a critical aspect of understanding the well-being of employees. These variables play a significant role in shaping the mental health outcomes of employees in the sector. Job demand, encompasses various aspects of the work environment that require cognitive, emotional, and physical efforts from employees. In the banking industry, these demands can be substantial, including managing client interactions, meeting financial targets, and complying with regulatory requirements. When job demands exceed an employee's coping capacity, it can lead to increased stress, burnout, and a decline in mental health (Smith et al., 2021).

Meanwhile, the degree of autonomy and decision-making power an individual has over their work activities is related to the control they have over their position. Higher job control allows for greater freedom in decision-making, task organization, and workplace climate. On the other hand, workers with little job control could feel limited in their ability to influence the working environment. According to Bakker and Demerouti (2017), job control enables people to efficiently manage their workload and adjust to workplace demands. This has a favorable influence on people's mental health.

The relationship between independent variables and the dependent variable, mental health, can be summarized as When employees face high job demands but have limited job control, it often results in adverse mental health outcomes. The combination of intense job demands and restricted control can lead to feelings of helplessness, frustration, and ultimately, stress-related disorders such as anxiety and depression. In contrast, individuals with greater job control can better manage and adapt to high job demands, mitigating the negative impact on their mental health. In a nutshell, the relationship between job demand control and the effect it has on mental health is critical for understanding and treating the well-being of middle-level managers in the banking sector. Balancing these elements is critical for improving mental health outcomes and creating a healthier, more productive workforce (Ivan Marzocchi, 2023).

## **Job Demand**

Job demand, in the context of occupational psychology, refers to the various physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of a job that require sustained physical or mental effort and are therefore associated with certain physiological and psychological costs (Cecilie Skaalvik, 2023). It encompasses the pressures and expectations placed on employees in their work roles, including factors such as workload, time constraints, cognitive demands, and the complexity of tasks. High job demand is frequently associated with conditions in which employees confront a significant level of work-related pressure. These pressures can have a negative impact on their mental health (Akhavan Sharareh, 2022). High employment demand in the banking sector may appear as an overwhelming workload, tight deadlines, the need to multitask, and constant pressure to reach targets and financial goals.

The effects of high job demand on mental health can be significant. Employees experiencing high job demand without sufficient control may be more susceptible to stress-related conditions like anxiety and depression (Sara Lindberg, 2021). They may struggle to manage their workload effectively, leading to exhaustion and burnout. In the banking sector, where financial decisions and client interactions are critical, high job demand can contribute to decision fatigue, reduced cognitive functioning, and increased emotional exhaustion. On the other hand, low job demand can also have adverse effects on mental health. When employees experience low levels of stimulation and challenge, they may become disengaged, bored, or demotivated. This lack of mental stimulation can lead to feelings of stagnation, reduced job satisfaction, and even depressive symptoms (Noorie Haryaniee Moulton, 2022). Middle-level managers in the banking industry may experience low job demand if they are not provided with opportunities for growth, advancement, or meaningful work tasks. For middle-level managers in the banking sector, finding the right balance between job demands and managing tasks is crucial. An excessive workload without good management can increase the risk of mental health challenges. Conversely, when middle-level managers have organized tasks and are able to manage their workload, they can better cope with job demands, leading to improved mental health outcomes.

In summary, mental health is intricately linked to job demand. High job demand without sufficient control can lead to stress, burnout, and mental health challenges, while low job demand can result in disengagement and reduced job satisfaction. Striking the right balance between job demand and control is essential for promoting positive mental health outcomes in this industry.

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## **Job Control**

Job control is defined as the degree to which employees have the autonomy and authority to make decisions about their jobs, including characteristics like task organization, work speed, and problem-solving (William J. Becker, 2022). High job control implies that employees have a significant say in decision-making related to their job tasks, allowing them to influence how they perform their work. On the other hand, low job control indicates limited autonomy and decision-making authority, with employees having little control over how they execute their tasks. High job control can have positive effects on mental health. When employees have the autonomy to make decisions and organize their work, they often experience a sense of empowerment and satisfaction. This can lead to increased job engagement, motivation, and overall well-being. Employees with high job control are better positioned to adapt to job demands, as they have the authority to manage their workload, set priorities, and make decisions that align with their expertise and judgment.

Conversely, low job control can be detrimental to mental health. When employees have limited say in how they perform their tasks, they may experience feelings of helplessness and frustration. This lack of control can lead to stress and, over time, contribute to the development of mental health issues like anxiety and depression (Simon Beausaert, 2022). Employees, with low job control may feel disempowered and restricted in their ability to manage the demands of their role effectively.

In the context of middle-level managers in the banking sector, job control plays a crucial role in determining their mental health outcomes. High job control allows these managers to tailor their work to their strengths, make decisions that align with their expertise, and manage their workload more effectively. This, in turn, can lead to higher job satisfaction and reduced stress levels. On the other hand, middle-level managers with low job control may struggle to cope with the demands of the industry, leading to increased stress and potential mental health challenges. Johnson and Hall (2021) found that employees with high job control reported lower levels of psychological distress and higher job satisfaction. In contrast, employees with low job control experienced higher levels of psychological distress. Additionally, a study by Stansfeld et al. (2021) highlighted the importance of job control in mitigating the adverse effects of high job demands on mental health.

In conclusion, job control is a critical factor in determining mental health. High job control empowers to make decisions, organize their tasks, and adapt to job demands effectively, leading to improved mental health outcomes. Conversely, low job control can contribute to feelings of helplessness and stress, potentially leading to mental health challenges. Balancing job demands and control is essential for promoting positive mental health in the workplace.

## **Social Support**

Social support refers to the network of relationships and resources that individuals have to help them cope with various stressors and challenges in their lives. It encompasses emotional, instrumental, and informational assistance from friends, family, colleagues, and other social connections (Jessie, 2021). High social support is characterized by strong and reliable connections with others who offer assistance, understanding, and encouragement during difficult times. Individuals with high social support often have a sense of belonging and access to resources they can rely on when facing stressors (Bengt Karlsson, 2022).

Low social support, on the other side, indicates a lack of or insufficient ties with others, leading to feelings of isolation and a lack of available tools for dealing with pressures. A high level of social support can be beneficial to one's mental health. Individuals who have access to a strong social support system are more likely to have lower stress levels, higher emotional well-being, and better general mental health (Knut Ivar, 2022). Employees who receive a lot of social support from their coworkers, bosses, and friends may find it easier to manage job expectations, and work-related obstacles, and maintain a healthy work-life balance. Social support can help to mitigate the negative impacts of stress and contribute to higher job satisfaction. In contrast, a lack of social support may be harmful to mental health. Lack of strong social relationships can lead to emotions of vulnerability, loneliness, and isolation (Pengju Wei, 2022). This may result in higher stress levels, a greater risk of mental health problems including anxiety and depression, and lower job satisfaction. With little social support, middle-level bank managers may find it difficult to handle the demands and stress of their jobs, which could result in burnout and other mental health issues.

According to research published in the journal Counselling Psychology in 2013, social support is linked to better mental health outcomes, such as less psychological distress and greater coping skills. Furthermore, research by Cohen and Wills (1985) has emphasized the benefits of social support in preventing stress-related mental health issues. In conclusion, social support has a crucial role in determining the mental health of middle-level bank managers. Low social support might raise the risk of mental health issues, whereas high social support can foster stress resilience, work satisfaction, and general mental wellness. For the mental health and overall well-being of workers, it is crucial to have a workplace culture that encourages social interactions and support systems.

Chapter 6

## **Drivers of Mental Helath**

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## **Job Demand and Mental Health**

The relationship between job demand and its effects on employees' mental health is complex and multifaceted. A reasonable degree of job demand can be energizing and satisfying giving employees a sense of purpose, accomplishment, and engagement (Peter Warr, 2021). However, when job demands become high, they might have a negative impact on mental health. Excessive workload, tight deadlines, and long working hours can lead to stress, burnout, and an increased risk of mental health concerns such as anxiety and depression. The constant pressure to satisfy rigorous job standards without enough resources or assistance can degrade individuals' overall well-being and negatively damage their psychological health.

Furthermore, individual traits and workplace settings alter the association between job demand and mental health. Personal coping mechanisms, workplace social support, and an organization's commitment to employee well-being all play important roles in determining how job demand affects mental health (Luca Tisu, 2020). Employers can help mitigate the negative effects of increasing job demand by establishing a healthy work environment, providing stress management resources, and promoting work-life balance. Recognizing the complex relationship between job demand and mental health is critical for both employers and employees in creating a work environment that fosters mental well-being and productivity.

## **Job Control and Mental Health**

The relationship between job control and its effect on employees' mental health is fundamental in understanding how the work environment influences psychological well-being. Job control refers to the extent to which employees have autonomy and decision-making authority over their tasks and work processes. When employees have a higher degree of job control, they often experience more positive mental health outcomes. This autonomy allows individuals to tailor their work to their strengths, preferences, and personal needs, fostering a sense of empowerment and self-determination. This, in turn, can lead to increased job satisfaction, reduced stress, and improved overall mental health.

Conversely, a lack of job control or limited autonomy in the workplace can have adverse effects on employees' mental health. When individuals feel micromanaged or have little say in how they perform their tasks, they may experience increased stress, feelings of powerlessness, and reduced job satisfaction (Aimee Brougham Chandler, 2022). Over time, this can contribute to mental health issues such as anxiety and depression. Therefore, organizations that prioritize providing employees with a reasonable level of job control can positively impact their mental health, leading to a more engaged and resilient workforce. Recognizing the importance of job control in the workplace is crucial for creating a supportive environment that fosters employees' mental well-being (Shonna Waters, 2022).

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## **Social Support and Mental Health**

The relationship between social support and its impact on employees' mental health is significant, as it plays a crucial role in buffering the negative effects of workplace stressors. Social support refers to the emotional, instrumental, and informational assistance that individuals receive from their colleagues, supervisors, and peers in the workplace (Jurgen Margraf, 2022). When employees have strong social support networks at work, they are better equipped to cope with job-related stressors, which can have a positive effect on their mental health. Supportive colleagues and supervisors can provide a listening ear, offer guidance, and lend a helping hand during challenging times, reducing feelings of isolation and emotional strain. This sense of belonging and camaraderie can enhance employees' psychological well-being and resilience (Shiyue Hu Dan Cai, 2022).

Conversely, a lack of social support in the workplace can contribute to increased stress, feelings of alienation, and a higher risk of mental health problems. Employees who feel unsupported may struggle to manage work-related stressors effectively, leading to burnout, anxiety, and depression. Employers who recognize the importance of fostering a culture of social support within the organization can not only promote employees' mental health but also enhance overall job satisfaction and productivity. Encouraging teamwork, open communication, and mentorship opportunities can create a workplace environment where employees feel valued and supported, ultimately benefiting their mental well-being.

Chapter 7

## **Measuring Mental Health**

##  **Measurements of Mental Health**

A two-pronged method was used in this study to ensure the reliability and validity of the measurement scale items. Existing factors from prior studies were used to improve the construct's measurement's reliability and validity. Initially, a comprehensive literature review within Malaysia's banking industry was undertaken to find the initial measures of the key factors pertaining to mental health. This review laid the groundwork for selecting appropriate measurement constructs.

After that, a thorough assessment of the existing literature linked to the banking business was done in order to discover measurement constructs that were closely associated with the aims of this investigation. These constructs were then changed and modified to fit the study's unique goals. The following section will provide detailed descriptions of all of the altered measurements. This strategy guarantees a strong measuring framework for analyzing the variables of interest by using existing measurements from previous literature while aligning them with the unique aims of this investigation.

Measuring Job Demand

The measurements of variables related to the independent variable "job demand" in the study offer a comprehensive insight into the multifaceted nature of job demands within the banking sector. These items collectively assess various dimensions of job demands, including workload, work-life balance, task complexity, time pressure, multitasking, and the availability of necessary resources and support. Employees in the banking industry are asked to reflect on the challenging aspects of their roles, such as handling heavy workloads, meeting tight deadlines, and coping with complex tasks. The items also explore the impact of these demands on their stress levels and mental fatigue. Furthermore, they assess how the demands of the job spill over into employees' personal lives, potentially affecting their overall well-being.

These measurements are crucial for understanding the specific stressors and challenges faced by Malaysian banking professionals. By analyzing the responses to these items, researchers can gain insights into how job demands, across various dimensions, may influence the mental health of employees in this industry. Overall, these measurements provide a robust foundation for investigating the intricate relationship between job demand and mental health in the context of the Malaysian banking sector.

**Table 3.2: Job Demand (Adopted)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Items** |
| 1 | My job requires me to handle a heavy workload and tight deadlines, leading to increased stress. |
| 2 | Balancing my work responsibilities with my personal life is challenging due to the demands of my job. |
| 3 | The complexity of tasks and responsibilities in my job often leads to mental fatigue. |
| 4 | Tight deadlines at my work contribute to heightened stress levels. |
| 5 | I have to juggle multiple tasks and responsibilities, which can be overwhelming. |
| 6 | I often feel that I lack the necessary resources and support to handle my job demands effectively. |

***Sources:*** *Tung-Ju Wu, 2023*

Measuring Job Control

The results of the measurements of the variables related to the independent variable provide important information about how much control workers in this industry have over their working conditions. These criteria evaluate many aspects of job control, such as the ability to make decisions, flexibility in scheduling, autonomy in job duties, the chance to participate in goal-setting, and workload flexibility. Employees in the banking sector are asked to consider how often they participate in task-related decision-making and whether they have the flexibility to adjust their work schedules to meet personal demands. They evaluate their level of autonomy in performing their jobs as well as their possibilities to actively take part in creating roles-specific goals and objectives. These evaluations assess their capacity to modify their workload when necessary to reduce stress.

These factors are critical for figuring out how much control Malaysian bankers have over their work, which is necessary for figuring out how job control affects mental health. Researchers can learn more about how job control—including chances for autonomy, flexibility, and goal-setting—may affect the mental health of workers in the banking industry by examining the replies to these questions. Overall, these assessments offer a thorough framework for examining the complex relationship between job control and mental health in the context of this particular industry.

**Table 3.3: Job Control (Adopted)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Items** |
| 1 | I have a significant say in decision-making related to my job tasks. |
| 2 | I have the flexibility to adjust my work schedule to accommodate personal needs. |
| 3 | I have a good degree of autonomy in carrying out my job tasks. |
| 4 | I have the opportunity to contribute to setting goals and objectives in my role. |
| 5 | I can make adjustments to my workload when needed to reduce stress. |

***Sources:*** *Kuo-Shu Yuan, 2023*

**Measuring Social Support**

The measurements of the factors connected to the independent variable "social support" are focused on the critical component of social support at work. These questions evaluate how much social support individuals perceive from their coworkers, managers, and the workplace as a whole. Employees in the banking industry are asked to rate their colleagues' and supervisors' supportiveness and helpfulness when they face obstacles at work. They also consider if they have meaningful friendships with coworkers that benefit their work environment and whether they feel emotionally supported by individuals with whom they contact at work. Furthermore, these measurements assess the workplace's inclusiveness and supportive climate, as well as the effectiveness of team collaboration, both of which contribute to a happy work environment.

These items provide a comprehensive understanding of the social support network within the banking industry in Malaysia. The perceived support from colleagues, supervisors, and the broader work environment can significantly influence the mental health and overall well-being of employees. These measurements offer valuable insights into how social support may mitigate the potential negative effects of job demands and enhance mental health outcomes among Malaysian banking professionals. Overall, they provide a solid foundation for investigating the intricate relationship between social support and mental health in the context of job demand control.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| No. | Items |
| 1 | My colleagues and supervisor are supportive and helpful when I encounter challenges at work. |
| 2 | I have meaningful friendships with coworkers that positively impact my work environment. |
| 3 | I feel emotionally supported by those I interact with at work. |
| 4 | The workplace promotes an inclusive and supportive atmosphere. |
| 5 | My team collaborates effectively, contributing to a positive work environment. |

**Table 3.4: Social Support (Adopted)**

***Sources:*** *David C. Yen, 2023*

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