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The Role of Workplace Spirituality and Workplace Support Determining Work Engagement among Employed Cancer Survivors

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Abstract

This study investigated the antecedents of work engagement, with special focus on the influence of workplace spirituality of employees who were cancer survivors. Work engagement refers to a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterizing employees who work hard and persist despite difficulties. Employees with high levels of work engagement are deeply involved in what they do and are happily absorbed in their work. This study was aimed at identifying the influence of workplace spirituality and work-place support in work engagement among employed cancer survivors. A quantitative research paradigm was adopted, with a cross-sectional design using data collected from cancer survivors registered at the Hospital Kuala Lumpur. A total of 270 participants in this study were randomly selected by inclusive criteria sampling. It was found that there is positive relationship between work engagement, workplace spirituality and workplace social support among the participants. The findings further indicated that workplace spirituality and workplace social support were important constructs which influence work engagement. This study highlights the importance of workplace spirituality in improving work engagement among cancer survivors in Malaysia.

Keyword: Work Engagement, Workplace Spirituality, Workplace Social Support, Cancer Survivors

Introduction

Cancer is a major cause of morbidity and mortality in Malaysia. In 2012-2016, the figures in the National Cancer Registry in Malaysia showed an increase of 11.3% in new case cases from 103,507 in 2007-2011 to 115,238 in the 2012-2016 period, with 44.7% men and 55.3% women respectively. Cancer imposes a massive economic pressure on patient's healthcare, their families, and the larger society. Aside from financial loss, cancer has significant repercussions on patients and their families, along with work-related issues (De Souza et al., 2017).

Employment is important for the well-being of the individual and is necessary both for economic, social and achievement reasons, and for the economic contribution.

Many studies have been conducted on work limitation for cancer survivors (Klaver et al., 2020; van Maarschalkerweerd et al., 2019). Previous research has shown that cancer survivors experience chronic fatigue and cognitive problems at work (Butow et al., 2020). Notably, this research might create presumptions among employers, which could result in a stigma against cancer survivors in relation to work (Fitch & Nicoll, 2019). There were also reports of decreased employment quality (Marques et al., 2019), as evidenced by decreased job satisfaction, increased turnover intention, increased absenteeism, decreased job performance, and decreased organizational commitment (Gonzalez et al., 2018). As a result, it is not surprising that cancer survivors should therefore deal with negative impressions of their potential and ability to contribute to their organizations. Few are known about cancer survivors' "well-being, engagement, daily activities, and work abilities at work." (Shelby et al., 2020; Mehnert, 2011). There haven't been many studies on the work engagement of cancer survivors so far. Is it true that cancer survivors are less engaged at work? This question leads to the research gap that this study hopes to fill by investigating the level of work engagement and workplace social support as well as the role of workplace spirituality. Taking into consideration the paucity of such research, further investigations on similar topics could provide important contributions to human resource development. To the best of the authors' knowledge, research to date has not ventured sufficiently far in examining the experiences of cancer survivors concerning of work engagement.

Engaged employees often going extra the miles, thus it is important for practitioner to identify the factors of work engagement behaviour. Previous researchers have also embarked to explore the role of organizational factor that can enhance work engagement. Inculcating the work engagement behaviour needs strong support within organizational context. Workplace social support plays a crucial role in ensuring work engagement can be cultivated. As stated by Glen (2006), employees show higher level of work engagement when they are provided with continuous opportunities to grow and develop within the organization.

Next, workplace spirituality is seen postulate a new insight on work engagement and organisation will complete when they practice the workplace spirituality (Benefiel et al., 2014). The important foundation to escalate the engagement at workplace is through workplace spirituality that focuses on the humanistic aspect of work and it has emerged as a positive organizational filed (Singh & Chopra, 2018).

With a paucity of research on the influence of workplace social support and workplace spirituality on workplace engagement of cancer survivors in Malaysia, the findings of this study narrow the gap in the literature. Therefore, in view of the above arguments, the purpose of this study to investigate the role of workplace spirituality and workplace social support in work engagement among employed cancer survivors.

Work Engagement

Kahn (1990) coined the term "work engagement," claiming that it refers to employees controlling and utilizing their own selves so that they can feel more connected to their jobs. Individuals with high work engagement integrate their personal values and their work to fulfil

their physiological, cognitive, and emotional selves, desire to take the effort and be dedicated. (Kahn, 1990). Work engagement is a positive, self-realizing mental state wherein one feels connected to one's work (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004) which has three dimensions (Salanova et al., 2005): (1) vigor, which is characterized by high energy levels during work, willingness to devote effort to work, and perseverance in the face of adversity; (2) dedication, which is characterized by strong work involvement and feelings of enthusiasm, significance, confidence, and fearlessness in the face of challenges; and (3) absorption, which is characterized by complete concentration.

Over the past two decades, work engagement has been at the forefront of management practice and academic research (Saks, 2019; Kwon & Park, 2019). Scholars in the field of human resources and organisational behaviours have focused on employees' sustainable engagement at work to improve performance. Although a wealth of knowledge has been accumulated about the nature, causes, and consequences of engagement, the changing world of work (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018) continues to suggest more exciting research opportunities. Despite the current proliferation of employee engagement research in HRD, the application of employee engagement theory is a particularly underexplored topic (Kwon & Park, 2019). The scarcity of practical knowledge surrounding issues in work engagement has circumscribed the understanding of how to assess, boost, and sustain employee engagement in real-world contexts (Knight, Patterson, & Dawson, 2017). Work engagement is a popular topic among organizations that interested in maximizing human capital performance and employee wellbeing at work. It generally leads to positive outcomes such as organizational sustainability (Schaltegger & Burritt, 2018), organizational productivity (Loerzel, 2019), and organizational commitment (Geldenhuys et al., 2014). Moreover, work engagement has been linked to positive individual outcomes (Musa et al., 2020), with engaged employees often recording low absenteeism and turnover, (Karatepe et al., 2020). Work engagement also instills creativity in employees (Asif et al., 2019) and promotes employee wellbeing (Robledo et al., 2020).

The present study adopts the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) in explaining the work engagement that stress the proactive and intentional role of the individual with work spirituality and workplace social support. SCT has been employed to understand and predict human behaviours in various contexts. Particularly, it has often been used to investigate various workplace related behaviours (Otake-Ebede, Shaffakat, & Foster, 2019). However, the application of SCT to cancer survivorship research gives rise to concerns regarding the lack of investigation.

SCT estimates the ability of an individual to engage in a targeted behaviour, based on internal and external parameters and their interrelationships. In this triadic reciprocal determination model, Wood and Bandura (1989) explain the interrelationships of the personal factor, behaviour, and environment in one model. The first relationship exists between the personal factor and behaviour factor. This explains the individual's cognitive beliefs and competencies. Next, there is a relationship between the environmental factor and the factor of behaviour, where behaviour determines the environment, and the environment determines the behavioural change. According to Wood and Bandura (1989), individuals will demonstrate positive behaviour when they feel that their behaviour is appreciated. However, if the behaviour does not benefit them, they will not engage in it. Based on the triadic reciprocal

model, this study suggests that behaviour, cognitive and personal factors, as well as the environment act in a causal relationship that affects one another. Specifically, workplace social support, workplace spirituality and work engagement operate as interacting factors that influence each other bi-directionally.

With regard to the present study, it was presumed that cancer survivors would have higher work engagement if they received support at the workplace; they would also strive to have efficacy if they knew they were supported and appreciated by their supervisor and co-workers. Also, other environmental factors in this study included workplace spirituality which could lead to behavioural aspirations or positive outcome expectations such as work engagement. Employees are found to be more engaged at work if they have better quality of working life (Geisler et al., 2019; Wahlberg et al., 2017). Thus, it was assumed that if cancer survivors experienced the workplace social support that they expected, they would likely be more engaged in their work. In other words, from the social cognitive perspective, positive environmental factors such as workplace spirituality and workplace social support may enhance the cancer survivor's cognition to be more engaged at the workplace.

Regarding to workplace spirituality, SCT suggests a variable involving internal and external inputs to the system and that acts as a stimulus to promote the desired behaviour (Martin et al., 2014). Underpinned by SCT, this study argues that cancer survivors within an organization would be influenced by an external cue (sense of community and alignment with the organization's values), thus prompting them to be more engaged at work. A study by Otaye-Ebede et al. (2019) examined the use of SCT in explaining workplace spirituality. The importance of workplace spirituality is reflected by cancer survivors experiencing a multi-faceted sense of connectedness to one another and to their workplace community in the effort to increase work engagement. In the individual-environmental interaction of workplace spirituality, the desire to manifest work engagement could serve as an important internal motivation to develop positive work behaviour. In sum, SCT, as an integrative theory, was used in this study to explain how one's behaviour (work engagement) could be affected by an environmental factor (workplace spirituality and workplace social support).

Workplace Spirituality and Work Engagement

Workplace spirituality refers to a strong connection to co-workers and other people associated with the workplace, and the alignment between one's core beliefs and values of the organization. There is strong empirical support to show workplace spirituality as one of the most important antecedents for work engagement. A study by Jena and Pradhan (2018) looked at the dynamics of workplace spirituality in India's public and private sector businesses, and concluded that both developed equally as long as they were associated with employees, resulting in a strong emotional connection and a sense of belonging. According to the study, appropriate intervention mechanisms for instrumentalizing personal roles and organisational goal fit would result in a more engaged and committed workforce. Similarly, a cross-sectional study by Roof (2015) of individuals located primarily within the United States and Canada revealed the importance of workplace spirituality in contributing to higher work engagement.

The phenomenon of workplace spirituality was shown to be one important element in a study by Rashidin, Javed, and Liu (2019) in order to improve work commitment and satisfaction for

professors from Chinese university institutions. Furthermore, Milliman et al. (2018) found that workplace spirituality helped employees in a U.S. hospitality organization experience a deeper level of intrinsic work motivation and engagement, i.e., the study found a significant positive association between workplace spirituality and work engagement among employees. Other related studies also share the same finding. For example, Petchsawang and McLean (2017) revealed how workplace spirituality contributed to work engagement among employees in education, public health service, and industrial organizations in Bangkok. They stated that when people found their work meaningful, they felt inspired, enthusiastic, and committed to it. Similarly, Adnan et al. (2020) found that because spiritually-minded employees were of the view that their work was meaningful, it strengthened their work engagement. While studies on the relationship between workplace spirituality and work engagement remain limited, a few empirical studies on this topic have shown that workplace spirituality is positively related to work engagement (van der Walt, 2018).

From the discussion above, we propose that the relationship between work-place spirituality and work engagement constitutes a perfect conceptualized framework that can be empirically tested. Consistent with the existing literature aforementioned, this is indeed another interesting avenue to explore from the cancer survivor's perspective. However, the relationship between workplace spirituality and work engagement warrants more research, especially among cancer survivors. We, therefore, hypothesize that:

H1: Workplace spirituality significantly influences work engagement among cancer survivors

Workplace Social Support and Work Engagement

Research on the influence of workplace social support has focused on evaluating the impact of support received from various sources, typically supervisors and colleagues, to foster work engagement. For example, Kiema-Junes et al. (2020) reported that high social support at work was associated with higher total work engagement, higher vigor, higher dedication, and higher absorption in Northern Finland. The study considered two types of social support, namely supervisory and collegial, and it discovered a common link: both promoted work engagement. In another related study on the Asian diaspora, Nasurdin et al. (2018) found that social support positively affected work engagement of staff nurses in Peninsular Malaysia. This study discovered that employees greatly benefited from mutual encouragement from others at both a task and personal levels, which motivated them to be more engaged in their job. Likewise, supervisory support also contributes positively towards work engagement. According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2004), supervisory support is a crucial to the achievement of objectives in the work place of work and can mitigate stress in high demanding positions, leading to better work engagement. A few studies found the link between social support from supervisor (Holland et al., 2017) as well as co-workers (Xi et al., 2020; Wolter et al., 2019) to be positively related to work engagement. The results indicated that supervisor and co-worker support were mutually related predictors of work engagement. Besides, social support facilitated dealing with work–privacy conflict and that, in turn, promoted work engagement too. Furthermore, from the standpoint of social exchange, if employees receive supervisory support, they will naturally feel indebted and morally obligated to the organization, and would, therefore, reciprocate with increased work engagement (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Employees who feel that their role is favourable to them,

would usually react by becoming more energized and involved in their work, i.e. they have a very high degree of engagement to the work (Saks, 2019).

A study by Pattnaik and Panda (2020) reported that high supervisor support led to high-quality relationships between supervisors and their employees, which, in turn, influenced the engagement levels among Indian call center employees. Applying the same logic advanced by SET, employees with high work engagement rewarded the organization with reduced levels of intention to leave the organization (Saks, 2019). The empirical work by Shahpouri et al. (2016) conducted in Iran also lent support to the findings in a non-Western context, i.e. that job resource “supervisor support” enhances work engagement among employees. Thus, strong social support at the workplace provides employees with resources for enabling accomplishment of work goals.

As indicated by previous studies, workplace social support gives rise to mutually beneficial actions, resulting in good relationships with superior and co-workers. Based on the discussion thus far regarding the important role of workplace social support in predicting work engagement, the following hypothesis is stated:

H2: Workplace social support significantly influences work engagement among cancer survivors

Conceptual Framework

As mentioned earlier, this study was aimed at investigating the role of workplace spirituality and workplace social support on work engagement among Malaysian cancer survivors (Figure 1).

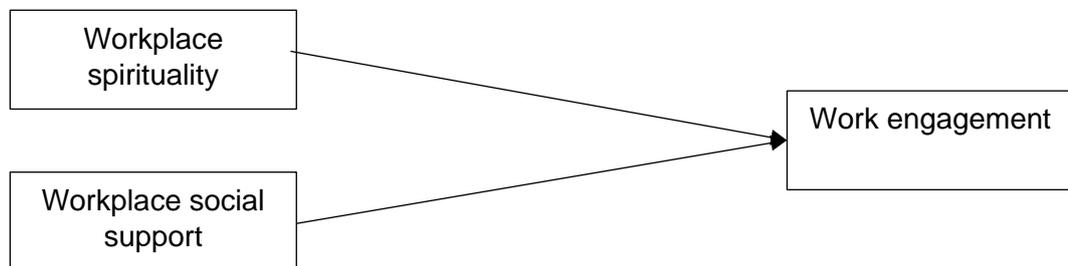


Figure 1: Research Framework

Methodology

Sampling

A cross-sectional study was conducted among 270 cancer survivors in Malaysia. The sample size for this study was estimated through G-power analysis at 80 per cent with effect size 0.15 (Cohen, 2013). As there was a total of two predictors, the minimum sample size was estimated at 85. The sample of 270 therefore exceeded the minimum sample size. The protocol of this study was approved by the Medical Ethics Committee (MREC), Ministry of Health, Malaysia and National Medical Research Registry (NMRR NMRR18-85-40225-IIR). Employed cancer survivors were identified with the assistance of hospital staff. The respondents in this study were selected using a systematic sampling from a list of all 1,192 eligible cancer survivors who had registered for follow-up sessions at the Kuala Lumpur General Hospital within a year. The data collection started from 1 September 2018 until 1

September 2019. The sample taken in this study is cancer survivors that are survived from childhood cancer in Pediatric Institute Hospital Kuala Lumpur. The reason for this selection is because of the Pediatric Institute Hospital Kuala Lumpur (HKL) as a prime site whereby it is known as a primary treatment centre for childhood cancer in Malaysia, and the patients are come from all over Malaysia. HKL also known as the largest hospital in Malaysia under the Ministry of Health Malaysia.

Measures

In measuring work engagement, the most cited measurement scale is the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale, also known as UWES. This study utilized the UWES-17 scale developed by Schaufeli et al. (2002) that uses a seven-point response format ranging from 0 (never) to 6 (every day). The Cronbach alpha for work engagement was 0.937. Supervisor support from Eisenberger (2002), which consists of four items, and coworker support from Haynes et al., (1999), which consists of three items, were the two dimensions of workplace social support. The five-point Likert scales ranging from 1 to 5 (strongly disagree) were measured for every item in this building (strongly agree). The Cronbach alpha for this study was 0.884. Workplace spirituality was measured using 21 items from the Spirituality at Work (SAW) scale by Ashmos and Duchon, (2000) and Milliman et al. (2003). It consisted of three dimensions, namely meaningful work, sense of community, and alignment of values. Each item in this construct was measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) and the Cronbach alpha for this study was 0.949.

Demographic Profile

This study included 270 cancer survivors ranging in age from 18 to 40 years old (mean 25.41). Female cancer survivors were slightly more likely to participate (51.5%) than male cancer survivors (48.5%). Most of them were Malays (68.5%), followed by Chinese (22.6%) and Indians (7.0%). The respondents had different levels of educational qualifications; Master's degree (1.5%), Bachelor's degree (27.8%), Diploma (30.7%), Higher Education Certificate of Malaysia (4.4%), Malaysian Certificate of Education (31.1%) and Certificate of Lower Education (4.1%). With regard to marital status, 75.2% were single, 24.1% married, and 0.7% widowed. The demographic profile on work status showed that cancer survivors had permanent jobs (45.9%), while 20.4% had temporary employment; 25.6% were self-employed, and 8.1% were part-time workers. The mean reported gross monthly income was between RM1001 and RM5000. In addition, the number of cancer diagnoses showed that 89.6% of the respondents had been diagnosed only once, 10.4% had been diagnosed more than once. The most common cancers were leukemia (52.2%), Hodgkin lymphoma (10.7%), Wilms' tumor (5.9%), Ependymoma (5.9%) and, ovarian cancer (3.7%). The demographic profiles of the respondents are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Profiles of the Respondents (n=270)

Demographics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	131	48.5
	Female	139	51.5
Ethnicity	Malay	185	68.5
	Chinese	61	22.6
	Indian	19	7.0
	Others	5	1.9
Religion	Islam	187	69.3
	Buddhism	52	19.3
	Hinduism	18	6.7
	Christianity	12	4.4
	Others	1	0.4
Marital status	Single	203	75.2
	Married	65	24.1
	Widowed	2	0.7
Level of education	Master's degree	4	1.5
	Bachelor's degree	75	27.8
	Diploma	83	30.7
	Higher School Certificate	12	4.4
	Malaysian Certificate of Education	85	31.5
	Lower Certificate of Education	11	4.1
Work status	Permanent	124	45.9
	Temporary	55	20.4
	Self-employed	69	25.6
	Part time	22	8.1
Types of cancer	Leukemia	141	52.2
	Breast cancer	1	0.4
	Ovarian cancer	10	3.7
	<i>Hodgkin lymphoma</i>	29	10.7
	<i>Testicular cancer</i>	5	1.9
	Papillary thyroid cancer	1	0.4
	<i>Nasopharyngeal cancer</i>	1	0.4
	<i>Ependymoma</i>	16	5.9
	Yolk sac tumor	7	2.6
	<i>Wilms' tumor</i>	16	5.9
	Ewing's sarcoma	9	3.3
	Langerhans Cell histiocytosis	2	0.7
	Left Orbital RMS	2	0.7
	Germinoma	2	0.7
	Lung cancer	3	1.1
Brain cancer	5	1.9	

	Skin cancer	2	0.7
	Pancreatic cancer	1	0.4
	Embryonal rhabdomyosarcoma	1	0.4
	Bladder cancer	1	0.4
	Hepatoblasma	7	2.6
	Neuroblastoma cancer	6	1.5
	<i>Medulloblastoma</i>	6	2.2
Frequency of cancer diagnosis	<i>once</i>	242	89.6
	<i>>once</i>	28	10.4
Gross monthly income			
	< RM3,000	199	73.7
	RM3,001-RM5,000	57	21.1
	RM5,001-RM10,000	14	5.2
Age			
	18-20	59	21.9
	21-25	97	35.9
	26-30	61	22.6
	31-35	30	11.1
	36-40	23	8.5

Mean (Age) = 25.41; Standard deviation=5.682

Results

Bivariate Correlation

The relationships of workplace spirituality and workplace support with work engagement level were analysed using the Pearson product-moment correlation. Means, standard deviations, bivariate correlations, and coefficient α s for each variable are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Bivariate correlations among workplace spirituality and workplace support on work engagement

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3
1. Work engagement	5.04	.752	1		
2. Workplace spirituality	5.82	.885	0.629**	1	
3. Workplace support	4.11	.562	0.637**	0.412**	1

Notes: **indicates levels of statistical significance: $p < 0.001$ level (two-tailed)

Pearson product–moment correlation analysis results (Table 2) depicts a strong and positive correlation among workplace spirituality and workplace support on work engagement. The highest relationship value is between workplace support and work engagement ($r=0.637$, $p < 0.000$). Next, workplace spirituality revealed a strong and positive relationship with work

engagement ($r = 0.629$, $p < 0.000$). The results validate that cancer survivors respondents experience high level of work engagement, workplace spirituality and workplace support.

Regression Analysis on Workplace Spirituality and Workplace Social Support with Work Engagement among Cancers Survivors

Table 3 illustrates the results of the regression analyses conducted to test the hypotheses pertaining to the main effects of the relationship between workplace spirituality and workplace social support regarding work engagement among cancers survivors. In determining the extent to which the research data fitted the proposed multiple linear regression model, it was found that the workplace spirituality and workplace social support explained a significant amount of the variance accounted for work engagement ($F(2, 267) = 126.687$, $p < 0.05$). With regards to the main effects, workplace social support ($\beta = 0.397$, $p = 0.000$) and workplace spirituality ($\beta = 0.373$, $p = 0.000$) predictors significantly associated with work engagement of the cancer survivors. Therefore H1 and H2 were supported. In this study, the largest beta coefficient was 0.397 for workplace social support, making it the strongest unique contribution in explaining work engagement. The coefficient of determination, $R^2 = 0.487$, suggested that nearly 50% of the variance in work engagement among cancer survivors was explained by the workplace social support and workplace spirituality.

Table 3. Results of simple linear regression for workplace spirituality and workplace social support on work engagement

Relationship between variables	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Standard Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	sig.
Constant	1.015	.256		3.958	.000
Workplace spirituality	.317	.049	.373	6.488	.000
Workplace social support	.531	.077	.397	6.907	.000

Notes: * $p = .05$, $F = 126.687$, $R = 0.698$, $R^2 = 0.487$

Discussion

The cancer survivors in this study reported having high levels of work engagement. As a result of this research, cancer survivors were found to be able to work and function just like other employees who had not been affected by the disease. Likewise, the employer should not anticipate poor cancer survivors working in their job. Being cancer survivor is not a cause for loss of work. Cancer survivors who have positive traits can be as immersed in work as their healthier colleagues. As a result, this finding debunks the false notion that cancer survivors aren't as productive as other workers. Work engagement is crucial for the success of organizations (Bakker & Leiter, 2017). The following paper proposes a framework that includes workplace spirituality and workplace support and work engagement as a key to engaging competent employees.

This empirical study yielded several key findings that could help advance the field of work engagement research. This research suggests at least two crucial conclusions. First, the highest contribution factor on work engagement is through workplace social support. This study proposes that when employees are the recipients of the acts of supporting from co-worker and supervisor, they respond to this with higher work engagement. The finding was similar with the study by Gordon, (2020) who reported that employees that received high social support will keep them engaged at work. In the same vein, our results resonated with the research findings of Geisler, (2019) who reported that workplace social support such as supervisor and co-worker support contributed to work engagement. Relationships with supervisor and co-worker are critical because work is a domain where connections are formed, and where support is rallied and received. Social support plays an important role in the lives and social relationships of employees, and it should be given the attention it deserves in the workplace. It can be concluded that the more the support received from the supervisor and co-worker, the more likely the cancer survivors will be engaged at work. Indeed, when cancer survivors feel supported and recognized by their supervisor and co-workers, it will contribute to their positive emotional well-being, and enhance their work engagement. It can be said that organizations in Malaysia practice a supportive workplace culture because they value the contributions of cancer survivors instead of having negative perceptions about cancer survivors' ability to perform. Dorland et al. (2016) stated that supervisor attributes such as empathy, understanding, and honesty, facilitated cancer survivor's ability to work. The results of these studies add value to the literature by demonstrating the role of workplace support in relations organizational behaviour and engagement, hence further strengthening the theory of SCT.

Next, research study results depicted that workplace spirituality has an affirmative and positive influence on the engagement of an employed cancer survivors at the workplace. The potential explanation of this result is that, when people find their work to be meaningful, they feel inspired by, enthusiastic about, and dedicated to their work. This conclusion is steady with the previous study and extends the findings of Iqbal et al. (2020), Petchsawang and McLean (2017) and De Carlo et al. (2020) who proves that spirituality at work enhanced work engagement. Furthermore, our outcomes revealed that cancer survivor who is contemplated higher level on purpose or spiritual sense in their work are likely to expend more energy on work-related tasks. In addition, spirituality at the workplace provides cancer survivors with a sense of compassion, kindness and caring, cultivating the cancer survivor's sense of community and interconnectedness. As a result, seeing their institution as one that provides them with opportunities for a greater sense of purpose in their work goals and self-worth development strengthens their desire to fully immerse themselves in their work (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). Thus, employees will be engaged when they are allowed to conduct themselves at the spiritual level in their workplace.

Conclusion and Implications of the Study

The current study contributes to the literature in establishing how work engagement can be increased through the lens of workplace support and workplace spirituality. From a research perspective, this study is significant as it extends the current literature on work engagement and its implications at the workplace, while exploring the role of workplace spirituality and workplace support that influencing work engagement. Though workplace social support and spirituality at work has been widely explored in human resource development (HRD) studies,

the present study highlights the important role it plays in the work engagement of Malaysian cancer survivors, thereby adding to the literature. Thus, the present study advocates that work engagement be developed by fostering employees' spirituality at the workplace and practicing a positive relationship in workplace between employees and supervisor.

This study also provided several critical practical implications from our findings concerning workplace support and workplace spirituality in the context of employed cancer survivors. First, this study provides insights into the role of workplace social support in the experience of work engagement. It also showed that collegial support plays almost as important a role as supervisory support, hence, organization should pay attention to social interaction and social support in workplaces might offer a way to improve support and resources for better work engagement. Organizations that accommodate a healthy support system and practice a non-discriminative culture reflect a positive attitude towards cancer survivors. Next, work organizations should promote employees' social relationships and practitioners should be able to strategize to encourage mutual collaboration among cancer survivors and the organization.

Following that, based on current research finding, a manager must also recognize that workplace spirituality is an important component of organisational effectiveness that can contribute to organizational development (Sharma & Singh, 2020). Through this relationship, practitioners should be able to strategize to promote workplace spirituality, such as creating cultures and policies that strengthen their employees' spiritual character traits. Moreover, it is worthwhile for organizations to accommodate the spiritual request because of different backgrounds, spiritual beliefs and respect individual differences especially in Malaysia that practice multiracial identities. Since workplace spirituality is intrinsically linked to workplace engagement, workplaces should consider ways to cultivate a spiritually inspiring environment to help employees in appreciating the company's mission and the contribution they make.

Limitations and Future Research

The limitations of this study must be considered. First, the generalization of the results across cultures might be a concern because the entire sample was from Malaysia, and, even then, it was a small sample, albeit larger than the recommended sample size. Furthermore, in relation to workplace social support, the present study focusses on collegial and supervisory support, the role of social support in one's private life, such as from a spouse, family and friends should be considered in workplaces by providing opportunities for maintaining a better balance between work and one's private life. Next, the study was conducted at the Hospital Kuala Lumpur, and the results cannot be generalized to cancer survivors in other regions of Malaysia. Thus, it is suggested that future studies should cover other regions in Malaysia. Next, this was a cross-sectional study applied at a specific time as the researcher wanted to get responses within the stipulated time; it was also faster and easier to control. A longitudinal study would, undoubtedly, yield more comprehensive findings. Next, this study focused on cancer survivors from different types of organizations that might have different policies and practices. The results might be different if the context of study was confined to the same type of organization, for example, comparing cancer survivors from only the public sector or private sector.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interest in conducting this study.

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