9. GENERAL SELF EFFICACY, LIFE SATISFACTION, AND TYPE A BEHAVIOUR AMONG UNIVERSITY STAFF

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Introduction

General self-efficacy, life satisfaction, and Type A behaviour have been used in organizational research as important variables which have crucial consequences for both the employees and the organizations. Continued empirical research involving general self-efficacy, life satisfaction, and Type A behaviour in organizational and educational settings is of immense theoretical and practical value because these variables have several crucial positive and negative outcomes.

Self-efficacy has been conceptualized and studied both as a state like concept called specific self-efficacy and a trait like construct referred to as general self-efficacy. Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy perception as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (p.3). General self-efficacy (GSE) refers to a broad and stable sense of personal competence to deal effectively with a variety of stress full situations (Schwarzer, 1998). Recent research results show that GSE negatively correlates with negative affect, anxiety, depression, anger, and physical symptoms (e.g., Leganger, Kraft, & Røysamb, 2000; Luszczynska, Gutiérrez-Donã, & Schwarzer, 2005).

Recently, there has been rapidly growing interest among the economists to analyze life satisfaction (Andren & Martinsson, 2001). Haybron (2005) defined life satisfaction as having a favorable attitude toward one's life as a whole. Furthermore, Mroczek and Spiro (2005) argued that life satisfaction stands together with the affective elements to yield a relatively comprehensive picture of psychological well-being. Research findings show that life satisfaction is positively associated with job satisfaction and positive affect and negatively related to negative affect (e.g., Hochwarter, Perrewé, & Meurs, 2007; Kinicki & Kreitner, 2006)).

According to Friedman and Rosenman (1974), people who exhibit Type A behaviours are characterized by ambitiousness, competitiveness, time urgency, impatience, and aggressiveness or hostility. Individuals who are relatively lacking in these characteristics are identified as Type B. Many psychologists see Type A and B individuals as falling on a continuum, with Type A at one extreme and Type B at the other. However, Matthews (1982) suggests that Type B individuals in fact behave differently from Type A people rather than behaving less intensively. Research results show that Type As perform better and are typically on a "fast track" to the top (Bluen, Barling, & Burns, 1990; Lee, Jamison, & Early, 1996). They are more successful than Type Bs. However, at the very top they do not tend to be as successful as Type Bs, who are not overly ambitious, are more patient, and

take a broader view of things (Steers, 1984). Previous research results revealed that Type A faculty members produced higher quantity and quality research (Matthews, Helmreich, Beane, & Lucker, 1980; Taylor, Locke, Lee, & Gist, 1984).

Empirical research findings highlighting the relationships among self-efficacy, life satisfaction, and Type A behaviour are also of immense importance because such knowledge can help make prediction for effective course of action for the benefits of both the employees and organizations. There are some impressive previous research results to this effect. For example, a cross-cultural study on career success and satisfaction among successful women in nine countries revealed a significant positive correlation between life satisfaction and self efficacy (Punnett and associates, 2007). This result is further supported by another study conducted by Hampton and Marshall (2000) on culture, gender, and life satisfaction among American and Chinese samples with spinal cord injury. For both the samples, general self-efficacy significantly correlated with life satisfaction.

Some past research findings are in line with the earlier reported features of Type A people. For example, using samples of full-time employees, part-time employed students, and non-employed students Tang, Kim, and Tang (2002) found that Type A behaviour significantly predicted life satisfaction for all the three samples. However, in a mail survey involving a sample of sales representative located in six regions across United States, Lee and Gillen (1989) found that Type A behaviour did not correlate significantly with either self-efficacy in obtaining quota or self-efficacy in obtaining a superior performance rating.

Research results cited above indicate that the past published studies on general self-efficacy, life satisfaction, and Type A behaviour are largely based on non-academic western samples. These findings also show that empirical studies involving the variables in question are very desirable in academic setting in Malaysia. Keeping in view the importance of the study variables in academic setting we planned to assess the extent of these variables as reported by the university staff. We also decided to explore the relationships among these variables. In this regard, we raised the following questions:

- What is the distribution of general self-efficacy, life satisfaction, and Type A behaviour scores in a sample of university staff?
- What is the reported magnitude of general self-efficacy, life satisfaction, and Type A behaviour average scores in a sample of university staff?
- What is the relationship between the measures of general self-efficacy, life satisfaction, and Type A behaviour in a sample of university staff?

Method

Participants

One hundred and fifty academic (professors 4%, associate professors 4%, assistant professors 4% and lecturers 46%) and administrative (28.7%) staff members from three institutions of higher education in Kuala Lumpur and one such institution in Terengganu completed the scales (13.3% of the respondents did not report their designation). The sample included 40% men and 58.7% women (1.3% did not report their gender). Majority

of the participants were Malaysians (Malaysian = 65.3, Internationals = 8.7%). 26 percent of the participants did not report their nationality.

Measures

General Self-efficacy Scale: We used English version of Schwarzer and Jerusalem's (1995) 10-item GSE scale to measure general self-efficacy. A typical item is, "Thanks to my resourcefulness, I can handle unforeseen situations." Possible responses are *not at all true* (1), *hardly true* (2), *moderately true* (3), and *exactly true* (4), yielding a total score between 10 and 40. Earlier studies have confirmed high reliability, stability, and construct validity of this scale (Lenganger et al., 2000; Luszczynska, Gutiérrez-Donã et al., 2005). Cronbach's alpha for the current sample was 0.84 ($p < .001$).

Life satisfaction: We measured life satisfaction using the Satisfaction with Life scale (SWLS*;* Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). The SWLS is a short, 5-item global measure of life satisfaction rated on a 7-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).The scores may range from 5 -35, with theoretical average being 20. The higher the total score, the more satisfied is the respondent with his/her life on the whole. Sample items are "I am satisfied with my life", "The conditions of my life are excellent". SWLS has been reported to demonstrate high reliability and convergent and predictive validity (Pavot & Diener, 1995). Cronbach's alpha for the present sample was 0.78 ($p < 0.01$).

Type A Behaviour: A short-rating scale of semantic differential format (Adapted version of Bortner's Scale, 1966) was used to measure Type A behaviour. This scale contains seven eight-point scales that assess the basic aspects of Type A behavior such as competitive drive, sense of time urgency and perception of job pressure. All item scores are summed to yield an overall Type A score. The scores on this scale range from 7 to 56. Cronbach's alpha for a Pakistani sample of university academia was 0.53 ($p < 0.01$). For the present sample Cronbach's alpha was 0.49 ($p < 0.01$).

Procedures

A total of 500 scale booklets were distributed and 150 completed booklets were returned and used in subsequent analyses. The cover page of the booklet of scales indicated the purpose of the research, voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality of participants' responses, and that how the data were to be used. All scales were self-administered. The participants completed the scales during their leisure time. The completed scales were collected back personally by the coauthors of this article. The response rate was 30 percent.

Results and Discussion

Our purpose in this study was two-fold. First, we wanted to assess the extent of general self-efficacy, life satisfaction, and Type A behaviour as reported by a sample of academic and administrative university staff. Second purpose of this study was to explore the relationships among these variables. Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations for the three study variables for men and women separately. The *t*-ratios (.79 – 1.76) and

p-values (.08 - .43) indicated that men and women did not differ significantly in terms of their reported average scores on general self-efficacy, life satisfaction, and Type A behaviour. In the absence of any gender difference in the study variables, the subsequent analyses involved the whole sample.

Table 1: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations by Gender

Measures	Men			Women				
	N	*M*	*SD*	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
GSE	60	33.54	3.98	88	32.41	3.71	1.76	.08
LS	60	26.54	4.40	88	25.91	5.02	.79	.43
Type A/B	60	37.96	5.47	88	37.08	6.04	.90	.37

GSE = General Self-efficacy, LS = Life Satisfaction, Type A/B= Type A/B behavior

Figures 1- 3 present the distribution of total scores on GSE, LS, and Type A behaviour for the whole sample. The distributions of GSE and TAB scores approximated normal distribution, but the distribution of LS scores was skewed. The convenient sample used in the present study might have contributed to the type of score distributions that were obtained in the current study. Lecturers were overrepresented and professors, associate professors, and assistant professors were underrepresented in the sample. Administrative university staff members enjoyed varied designations. The sample consisted of a small percentage (8.7%) of the international participants. A probability sample represents the population well, but the type of respondents, who took part in this study; usually do not respond well when selected randomly.

Table 2 shows the means and standard deviations for the three study variables for the whole sample. The *t*-ratios (12.62 – 24.62) and the *p*-values ($p < .0001$) indicated that the obtained mean scores on all the three measures were significantly higher than the corresponding theoretical scores on these scales. The reported high general self-efficacy, life satisfaction, and Type A behaviour scores reflects the present scenario of the university life of the staff. In any society, individuals aspire to climb the higher ladder of the social structure, for which they need better job placement. It is reasonable to admit that in most of the Muslim countries a small number of people have access to better jobs. Thus, in general, being employed as university staff might have contributed to the feeling of high self-efficacy and overall life satisfaction. University staff members, be they academic or administrative staff, have to meet deadlines and other challenges and such their success lies in being a bit more Type A like people. This tendency has been reflected in their high average Type A score.

The present results are also in line with the Islamic teaching. For example, *Al-Qur'ân* says , "And will make him a Messenger to the Children of Israel (saying): I have come to you a sign from your lord, that I design for you out of clay, a figure like that of a bird, and breathe into it, and it becomes a bird by Allâh's Leave; and I heal him who was

born blind, and the leper, and I bring the dead to life by Allâh's Leave. And I inform you of what you eat, and what you store in your house. Surely, therein is a sign for you, if you believe" (*Al- Qur'ân*, V, 3:49). Similar self-efficacy perception is reflected in a few other verses of *Al- Qur'ân, (e.g.,* V, 2:269; V,4:35).

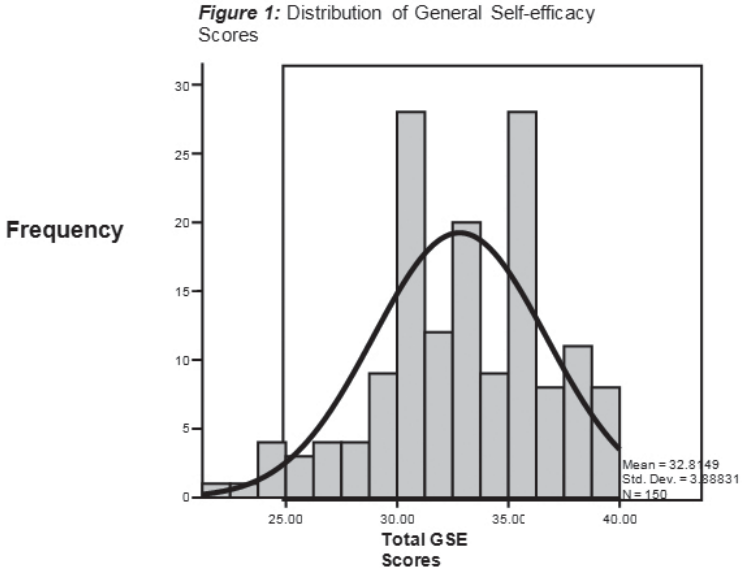

Figure 1: Distribution of General Self-efficacy Scores

Figure 2: Distribution of Life Satisfaction Scores

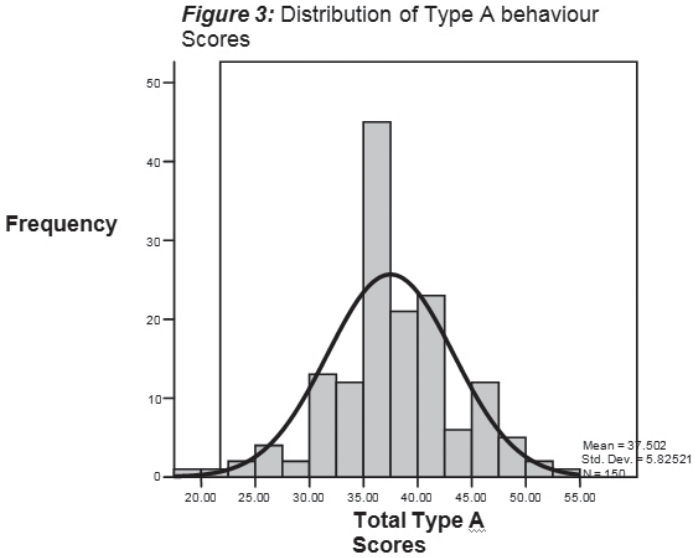

Figure 3: Distribution of Type A behaviour Scores

Table 2: Theoretical and Obtained Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for the Whole sample (n = 150)

Measures	Theoretical M	Obtained SD	t	p	
GSE	25	32.81	3.88	24.62	.0001
LS	20	26.17	4.77	15.85	.0001
Type A/B	31.5	37.50	5.83	12.62	.0001

GSE = General Self-efficacy, LS = Life Satisfaction, Type A/B= Type A/B behavior

The zero order correlations between the study variables appear in Table 3. General self-efficacy correlated positively significantly with life satisfaction only (r = 0.42, p < .0001). Other correlations were not significant statistically. Significantly positive correlation between self-efficacy and life satisfaction is in agreement with previous research results (e. g., Hampton & Marshall, 2000; Punnett and associates, 2007). Absence of significant correlation between Type A behaviour and self-efficacy agrees with previous finding as reported by Lee and Gillen (1989). However, lack of significant correlation between Type A behaviour and life satisfaction contradicts with earlier research findings of Tang, Kim, and Tang (2002) who found positive significant association between the two variables. Why we found such results? One reason might be moderate internal consistency of Type A behaviour Scale. The other reason might be the fact the Type A behaviour Scale is in semantic differential format and remaining two scales are in Likert format.

Table 3: Zero Order Correlations among Study Variables (n = 150)

	1	2	3
1. General Self-efficacy	-	-	-
2. Life Satisfaction	0.42*	-	-
3. Type A/B Behaviour	0.03	0.09	

Correlation is Significant at 0.0001 (2-tailed).

Regression analysis was carried out using general self-efficacy as predictor variable and life satisfaction as criterion variable. The regression results indicated that general self-efficacy ($\beta = .42$, $p < .0001$) significantly predicted life satisfaction and explained 18% of variance in life satisfaction. Same results were obtained when life satisfaction was used as predictor and general self-efficacy was used as criterion variable, i.e., β did not change. This finding supports the view of "spill over" effects between the two variables. The present result suggests that general self-efficacy and life satisfaction can be used to predict each other equally well. However, practically it is more feasible to intervene to increase the self-efficacy of employees which can ultimately lead to higher life satisfaction.

The present findings are limited in external validity because the convenient sample used in this study did not represent the university staff adequately. Sample homogeneity is another problem of this study which limits generalization of these results to other settings.

Implications

The findings of this study provide important data base on general self-efficacy, life satisfaction, and Type A behaviour in academic setting and inspire researchers to further explore these concepts with respect to theory, practice and research in the field of human resource management in educational settings in Malaysia.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we can say that the university staff , who took part in the present study, enjoy high self-efficacy and are well satisfied with their life. Overall, they also tend to be Type A people. Further studies using adequate heterogeneous probability samples are needed to provide a larger data base, especially for the purpose of exploring the relationships between these study variables in educational and other organizational settings at different levels in Malaysia.

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