

THE RELATIONSHIP OF E-TRAINING, WORK MOTIVATION, AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE ON MALAYSIAN TEACHERS' PERFORMANCE DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

E-training, work motivation and work-life balance are three crucial factors that could affect employee performance. However, literature review indicates a lack of consistency in the study of the relationship among these elements, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. This research delves into how e-training, work motivation, and work-life balance influence teachers' performance during the COVID-19 crisis. Previous studies highlight the detrimental impact of the pandemic on 90 per cent of employees in Malaysia, with 53 per cent of teachers experiencing a decline in performance attributed to elevated stress and mental health issues. A total of 152 teachers from both primary and secondary schools in Malaysia participated in a comprehensive 47-item online survey. The results reveal a positive correlation between e-training, work motivation, and work-life balance with teachers' performance. Teachers equipped with adequate e-training, high work motivation and good work-life balance would translate into increased performance amid the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The insights gained from this study can inform government initiatives to design and implement more effective e-training programmes, fostering work motivation and work-life balance for high-performance employees.

Keywords: E-training, work motivation, work-life balance, teachers' performance, COVID-19 pandemic

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The global impact of the COVID-19 crisis has been significant, affecting 84 per cent of industries worldwide (Gilchrist, 2020). The crisis has taken a toll on employee performance in Malaysia, negatively impacting 90 per cent of workers (Ram, 2021). Notably, teachers have faced challenges, with 53 per cent reporting a decline in performance due to heightened stress and mental health issues, as they had to adapt rapidly to distance learning and virtual student engagement (Kraft et al., 2020). The demands for teacher resilience and tolerance for anxiety were high, contributing to performance issues (Anderson et al., 2020). The adoption of

'emergency remote teaching' to address the pandemic's impact on education further complicated the situation (Assuncao Flores & Gago, 2020). Despite integrating e-training in education, it poses challenges for teachers, such as a lack of social interaction and human contact with students, potentially impacting their ability to lead and guide effectively (Tamm, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with the rise of "work from home" (WFH) practices, has brought discussions about e-training, work motivation, and work-life balance to the forefront (Kaushik & Guleria, 2020). WFH practices, for example, have shown positive outcomes for employees, leading to higher performance and a healthy work-life balance (Wolor et al., 2020). The interconnection between work motivation, work-life balance, and employee performance becomes evident as maintaining a favourable work-life balance increases motivation and performance levels (Thamrin & Riyanto, 2020). This study aims to revisit these four variables to understand their relationship within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study aims to determine the relationship of e-training, work motivation, and work-life balance on Malaysian teachers' performance during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, this study seeks:

- a) To determine the relationship between e-training and teachers' performance during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- b) To determine the relationship between e-training and work motivation during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- c) To determine the relationship between work motivation and teachers' performance during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- d) To determine the relationship between e-training and work-life balance during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- e) To determine the relationship between work-life balance and teachers' performance during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- f) To determine the relationship between work-life balance and work motivation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study is based on Human Capital Theory (HCT), a key theory in human resource development, which became influential in modern economics in the early 1960s and gained further significance with the advent of the "knowledge economy" in recent decades (Baptiste, 2001; Gillies, 2017). HCT is relevant to this study in multiple ways. Firstly, e-training is viewed as imparting valuable knowledge and skills to employees, thereby enhancing their performance, productivity, and income (Fugar et al., 2013). Aliaga (2001) suggested that such training contributes to human capital development, allowing individuals to enhance their expertise. Wang and Holton (2005) emphasized that training is crucial in establishing human expertise, providing a theoretical framework widely accepted by human resource development professionals. HCT also helps employers understand individuals' motivation at work through rational egoism, a consistent motivational factor (Fredman, 2014). Furthermore, HCT posits that work-life balance is largely influenced by employees' attitudes towards their organization and their personal lives (Kumar, 2012). Rincy and Panchanatham (2016) noted that employees

are willing to allocate resources to work, family, and leisure activities within time and energy constraints. This perspective aligns with the study's objectives, which aim to explore the relationship between e-training, work motivation, and work-life balance on employees' performance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

E-Training and Employees' Performance

The literature confirms that the primary purpose of e-training is to improve employees' performance by enhancing their knowledge, skills, and abilities (Zainab et al., 2015). Numerous studies show significant positive associations between e-training and employee performance. For example, Kamal et al. (2016) found a positive correlation between e-training and employees' performance, especially among those at the Ministry of Education. Previous research also indicated a positive relationship between e-training and the performance of academic professionals in public universities (Umar et al., 2020). Hence, the first hypothesis is:

H1: There is a significant positive relationship between e-training and teachers' performance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

E-Training and Work Motivation

E-training is seen as a practical professional development tool that enhances cost-effectiveness, flexibility, comfort, and work motivation (Ramayah et al., 2012). Past studies suggest that e-training helps employees understand how their work fits into the company's structure and goals, leading to increased work motivation (Tanner, 2017). Studies report a positive correlation between e-training and work motivation among employees in childhood education programs (Siswanto et al., 2018). Thus, the second hypothesis is:

H2: There is a significant positive relationship between e-training and work motivation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Work Motivation and Employees' Performance

Motivation reflects employees' orientation towards work within the organizational setting (Pancasila et al., 2020). Employees with a positive disposition towards their work are likely to exhibit higher work motivation and, consequently, better performance. Hamdani et al. (2018) highlighted the close association between work motivation and teachers' performance. Andriani et al. (2018) also found that increased work motivation correlates with elevated teachers' performance. Martini and Sarmawa (2019) discovered a positive correlation between work motivation and the performance of employees in 25 non-star hotels in Denpasar-Bali. Therefore, the third hypothesis is:

H3: There is a significant positive relationship between work motivation and teachers' performance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

E-Training and Work-Life Balance

To gain a competitive edge and meet global job market demands, employees need essential knowledge, skills, and abilities (Alkali & Mansor, 2017). E-training has surged as a substitute for traditional training due to advancements in information technologies (Al-Amri et al., 2020). The literature consistently shows positive associations between e-training and work-life balance. For example, Bulinska-Stangrecka et al. (2021) identified a positive correlation between e-training and work-life balance, demonstrating that e-training helps maintain employees' work-life balance. Hence, the fourth hypothesis is:

H4: There is a significant positive relationship between e-training and work-life balance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Work-Life Balance and Employees' Performance

Previous research has shown a positive connection between work-life balance and the performance of teaching faculty members (Soomro et al., 2018). Work-life balance boosts employee productivity, positively impacting both employees and organizations (Semlali & Hassi, 2016). For teachers, a favorable work-life balance leads to increased job satisfaction and performance (Baluyos et al., 2019). Mendis and Weerakkody (2017) found similar results in the telecommunications industry. Thus, the fifth hypothesis is:

H5: There is a significant positive relationship between work-life balance and teachers' performance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Work-Life Balance and Work Motivation

In the competitive business landscape, work-life balance is essential (Kanwar et al., 2009). Implementing work-life balance practices mitigates work-life conflicts, enhancing employee efficiency and effectiveness (Lazar et al., 2010). Strong work-life balance is linked to increased work motivation and effectiveness (Abdirahman et al., 2018). Literature consistently supports a positive correlation between work-life balance and work motivation (Wolor et al., 2020). Hence, the sixth hypothesis is:

H6: There is a significant positive relationship between work-life balance and work motivation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 1 The conceptual framework of this study

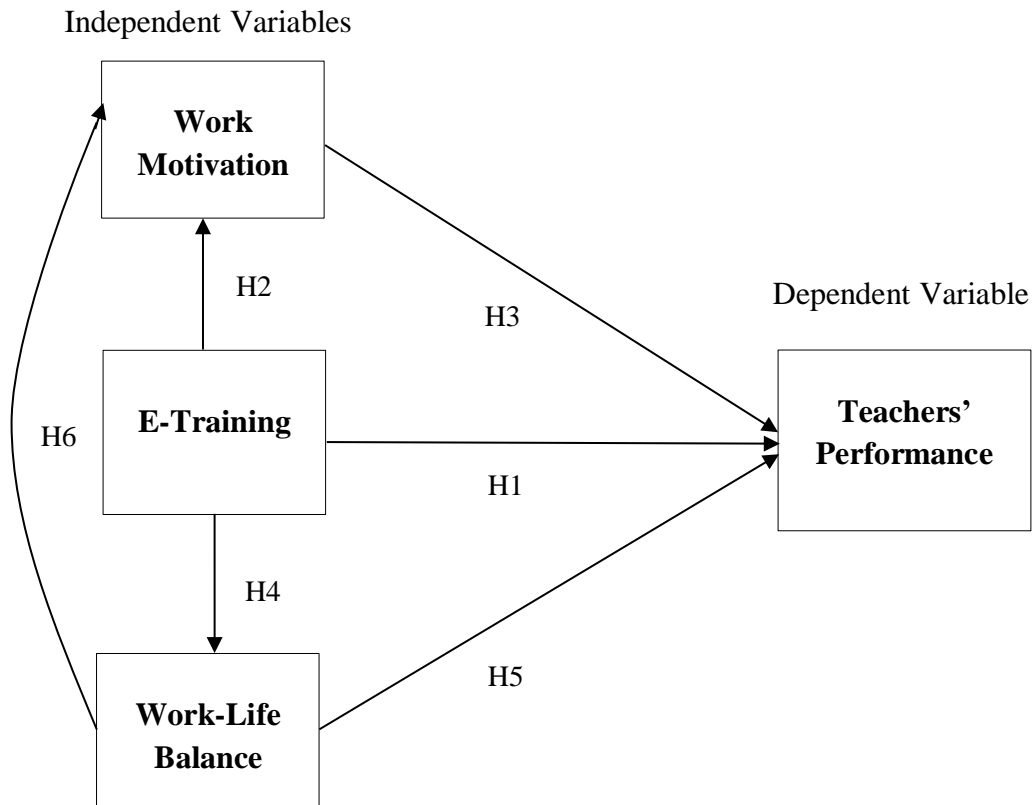


Figure 1 represents the framework used in this study with e-training, work motivation, and work-life balance as independent variables, and teachers' performance as the dependent variable

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a correlational and quantitative research design. This study focused on Malaysian teachers situated in various states. According to Malaysian Educational Statistics (2020), there were a total of 32.4 million teachers in 2018, with an increase of 0.2 million, bringing the total to 32.6 million in 2019. The sample for this study comprised 152 teachers from both primary and secondary schools in Malaysia, who participated through an online survey form. In this study, the snowballing sampling technique involved sharing the survey link with personal contacts, who then circulated it to other teachers. A total of 152 responses were obtained from the survey, and all 152 responses were complete, constituting the final dataset. Consequently, the response rate for this study was 100.00%. The sample size of cases in the current study surpasses 138 cases, as determined by power analysis using G*Power version 3.1.9.4 for conducting Pearson Correlation analysis to test the hypotheses.

Research instrument

An online questionnaire was used as the research instrument to gather data. The questionnaire comprised sections A and B. Section A focused on gathering demographic information, including gender, age, highest educational attainment, city of origin, years of working experience, and the school where teachers are currently employed. Section B addressed the variables of interest: e-training, work motivation, work-life balance, and teachers' performance. To assess e-training dimensions (infrastructure, efficiencies, and methods), a 25-item scaled questionnaire developed by Baldwin and Ford in 1988 and later adopted by Kamal et al. (2016) was utilized. Work motivation was measured using a 6-item scaled questionnaire from the McKinsey Quarterly adopted by Rizwan et al. (2014). A 4-item scaled questionnaire adopted from Shukla and Srivastava (2016) was employed to evaluate work-life balance. Finally, teachers' performance was gauged using a 12-item scaled questionnaire developed by Thomson in 2008 and adopted by Kamal et al. (2016). Respondents were required to rate each item on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree=1, disagree=2, neutral=3, agree=4, to strongly agree=5.

Data Analysis

Before conducting descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation using SPSS, data screening was carried out to identify missing data and assess the presence of extreme values based on skewness and kurtosis. Following data screening, the validity and reliability of the instrument were determined to assess if the data was adequate for subsequent analyses. Additionally, the collected data were utilized to ascertain respondents' demographic profiles during the descriptive analysis phase. This involved analyzing the mean and standard deviation for both the independent variables (e-training, work motivation, and work-life balance) and the dependent variable (teachers' performance) to ensure the acceptability of the mean values. Finally, Pearson correlation tests were employed for hypothesis testing. A total of 152 completed surveys were analysed in the study, resulting in a 100% response rate.

Following the normality tests, no significant outliers were identified, as all values fell within an acceptable range. The normality of the sample was inferred from the Skewness and Kurtosis test results. According to Orcan (2020), as long as Skewness and Kurtosis values remain within ± 1 , it indicates a normal distribution for the study.

Validity of the instrument

According to Table 1, the questionnaire proved reliable instruments for this research. As per Ursachi et al. (2015), the widely accepted guideline suggests that a Cronbach's Alpha value between 0.6 and 0.7 indicates an acceptable level of reliability, while a value of 0.8 or higher indicates an excellent level of reliability. It is worth noting that values exceeding 0.95 may indicate redundancy and are not necessarily favourable. Nonetheless, the results demonstrated that all variables were both valid and reliable for the study.

Table 1 Reliability Test

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha (Past Literature)	Cronbach's Alpha (Current Study)	No. of Items
Teachers' Performance	0.780	0.825	12
E-Training	0.810	0.950	25
Work Motivation	0.759	0.824	6
Work-Life Balance	0.730 to 0.850	0.639	4

RESULTS

Characteristics of the respondents

The initial phase of the data analysis involved evaluating the participants' demographic profiles. This assessment encompassed factors such as gender, age, highest educational attainment, city of origin, years of professional experience, and the type of educational institution where the teachers are currently employed. Female participants surpassed their male counterparts, constituting 77.0% compared to 23.0%. The predominant age range among the respondents was 41-50 years (36.2%). Those aged 21-30 accounted for 27.6%, followed by 19.1% in the 51 years and above category. Respondents aged 31-40 constituted 15.8%, and a minor proportion of 1.3% fell within the age group of 20 years and below. Regarding the highest educational achievement among the teachers, most of the participants, constituting 67.1%, hold a Bachelor's Degree or equivalent. This is followed by respondents with a Master's Degree, accounting for 14.5%, and those with a Diploma/Technical school certificate, making up 13.8%. In contrast, a minority of participants, specifically 3.9%, have educational qualifications of Malaysian Certificate of Education (SPM) and below, while 0.7% have attended college as their highest academic attainment. Additionally, in terms of the city of origin, a significant portion of the respondents, totalling 73.0%, hails from East Malaysia, whereas 27.0% of the participants originated from West Malaysia. Based on the results, most participants, accounting for 32.9%, had work experience falling within the 21-30 years range. Respondents with 11-20 years and less than one year of working experience constituted 26.3% and 18.4%, respectively. A further 14.5% of participants reported working for 1-10 years, while a minority, comprising 7.9%, had accumulated more than 30 years of working experience. Regarding the current type of school where the teachers are employed, 63.8% of the respondents were engaged in teaching at the primary school level, while 36.2% were involved in secondary school education. A comprehensive breakdown of the demographic profiles of the respondents can be found in Table 2.

Table 2 The demographic profiles of the respondents

Variables		Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	35	23.0%
	Female	117	77.0%
Age	20 years and below	2	1.3%
	21-30 years	42	27.6%
	31-40 years	24	15.8%
	41-50 years	55	36.2%
	51 years and above	29	19.1%
Highest academic attainment	SPM and below	6	3.9%
	Diploma / Technical school certificate	21	13.8%
	College	1	0.7%
	Bachelor's Degree or equivalent	102	67.1%
	Master's Degree	22	14.5%
City of origin	East Malaysia	111	73.0%
	West Malaysia	41	27.0%
Years of working experience	Less than 1 year	28	18.4%
	1-10 years	22	14.5%
	11-20 years	40	26.3%
	21-30 years	50	32.9%
	More than 30 years	12	7.9%
Type of school teachers currently serving	Primary school	97	63.8%
	Secondary school	55	36.2%

Descriptive data analysis

The participants were required to evaluate e-training, work motivation, work-life balance, and employee performance. As indicated in Table 3, the analysis reveals that work motivation received the highest mean score (Mean = 3.93, Standard Deviation = 0.692), followed by employee performance (Mean = 3.67, Standard Deviation = 0.607) and work-life balance (Mean = 3.64, Standard Deviation = 0.704). Conversely, e-training obtained the lowest mean score among the assessed factors (Mean = 3.53, Standard Deviation = 0.651).

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
E-Training	3.53	0.651
Work Motivation	3.93	0.692
Work-Life Balance	3.64	0.704
Teachers' Performance	3.67	0.607

Hypotheses testing

This section used the Pearson Correlation to assess the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. As Schober et al. (2018) outlined, correlation coefficients were

employed to elucidate the strength and direction of the association between variables. The Pearson correlation coefficients (r) range from -1 to +1, signifying positive or negative correlations, while a correlation coefficient of 0 indicates no correlation, implying zero relationships (Obilor & Amadi, 2018).

Correlation of E-Training and Teachers' Performance

Table 4 Pearson correlation findings between e-training and teachers' performance

		E-Training	Teachers' Performance
E-Training	Pearson Correlation	1	0.458**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	152	152
Teachers' Performance	Pearson Correlation	0.458**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	152	152

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results in Table 4 showed that there is a significant positive relationship between e-training and employees' performance ($r = 0.458$, $p = 0.000$). Hence, hypothesis 1 is supported because the p-value is ≤ 0.01 . In other words, it also indicates that there is a moderate positive relationship between e-training and teachers' performance which is based on a 99% confidence interval.

Correlation of E-Training and Work Motivation

Table 5 Pearson Correlation Findings between E-Training and Work Motivation

		E-Training	Work Motivation
E-Training	Pearson Correlation	1	0.409**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	152	152
Work Motivation	Pearson Correlation	0.409**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	152	152

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results in Table 5 showed that there is a significant positive relationship between e-training and work motivation ($r = 0.409$, $p = 0.000$). Hence, hypothesis 2 is supported because the p-value is ≤ 0.01 . In other words, it also indicates that there is a moderate positive relationship between e-training and work motivation which is based on a 99% confidence interval.

Correlation of Work Motivation and Teachers' Performance

Table 6 Pearson correlation findings between work motivation and teachers' performance

		Work Motivation	Teachers' Performance
Work Motivation	Pearson Correlation	1	0.622**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	152	152
Teachers' Performance	Pearson Correlation	0.622**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	152	152

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results in Table 6 showed that there is a significant positive relationship between work motivation and employees' performance ($r = 0.622$, $p = 0.000$). Hence, hypothesis 3 is supported because the p-value is ≤ 0.01 . In other words, it also indicates that there is a moderate positive relationship between work motivation and teachers' performance which is based on a 99% confidence interval.

Correlation of E-Training and Work-Life Balance

Table 7 Pearson correlation findings between e-training and work-life balance

		E-Training	Work-Life Balance
E-Training	Pearson Correlation	1	0.266**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.001
	N	152	152
Work-Life Balance	Pearson Correlation	0.266**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	
	N	152	152

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results in Table 7 showed that there is a significant positive relationship between e-training and work-life balance ($r = 0.266$, $p = 0.001$). Hence, hypothesis 4 is supported because the p-value is ≤ 0.01 . In other words, it also indicates that there is a weak positive relationship between e-training and work-life balance, which is based on a 99% confidence interval.

Correlation of Work-Life Balance and Teachers Performance

Table 8 Pearson correlation findings between work-life balance and teachers' performance

		Work-Life Balance	Teachers' Performance
Work-Life Balance	Pearson Correlation	1	0.407**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	152	152
Teachers' Performance	Pearson Correlation	0.407**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	152	152

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results in Table 8 showed that there is a significant positive relationship between work-life balance and employees' performance ($r = 0.407$, $p = 0.000$). Hence, hypothesis 5 is supported because the p-value is ≤ 0.01 . In other words, it also indicates that there is a moderate positive relationship between work-life balance and teachers' performance which is based on a 99% confidence interval.

Correlation of Work-Life Balance and Work Motivation

Table 9 Pearson correlation findings between work-life balance and work motivation

		Work-Life Balance	Work Motivation
Work-Life Balance	Pearson Correlation	1	0.450**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	152	152
Work Motivation	Pearson Correlation	0.450**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	152	152

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results in Table 9 showed that there is a significant positive relationship between work-life balance and work motivation ($r = 0.450$, $p = 0.000$). Hence, hypothesis 6 is supported because the p-value is ≤ 0.01 . In other words, it also indicates that there is a moderate positive relationship between work-life balance and work motivation which is based on a 99% confidence interval.

DISCUSSION

This research demonstrates a significant positive correlation between e-training and Malaysian teachers' performance amid the COVID-19 pandemic. This result aligns with earlier studies indicating a positive correlation between e-training and employee performance (Kamal et al., 2016; Alhooti & Anto, 2020; Hassan et al., 2020). It suggests that e-training plays a crucial role in determining employee performance, consistent with the training literature's emphasis on enhancing performance by developing knowledge, skills, and abilities (Zainab et al., 2015). Furthermore, the study argues that employees are more likely to engage in e-training if these systems create committed and satisfied job performers. This finding resonates with Umar et al.'s (2020) conclusions, emphasizing that effective e-training significantly influences and enhances employees' performance. Despite the pandemic reshaping work patterns and pushing many employees to work online, e-training remains essential to enable employees to fulfill specific job requirements and ensure job satisfaction. To achieve this, each e-training program must cater to individual employee needs to enhance performance (Halawi & Haydar, 2018). Syahmaidhi et al.'s (2021) study, like the current one, suggests that employees' performance depends on the training output, whether in academic or non-academic achievements. Despite teachers' initial lack of preparation for online teaching due to their traditional face-to-face training, e-training proves beneficial. It allows teachers to stay current with teaching methodologies and consistently acquire new technological skills to meet the challenges of the digital age (Delgado, 2020). Consequently, e-training, a vital component of professional development, can enhance teachers' performance by acquiring relevant skills.

The study reveals a significant positive correlation between e-training and work motivation among Malaysian teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. This outcome aligns with earlier research demonstrating a positive correlation between e-training and work motivation, as seen in the study by Siswanto et al. (2018). Their study, conducted in a similar field involving 183 respondents in the educational industry, supports the current findings and suggests that the effectiveness of e-training can influence work motivation positively (Sutarto et al., 2019). E-training helps employees comprehend how their work aligns with the company's structure and goals, contributing to increased work motivation when individuals understand the significance of their contributions (Tanner, 2017). Additionally, this study posits that e-training influences cost-effectiveness, flexibility, comfort, and work motivation (Ramayah et al., 2012). Therefore, increasing e-training provision is perceived to enhance employees' work motivation. The current global situation, notably the pandemic, underscores the imperative of e-training as a crucial tool for upgrading employees' knowledge, skills, and proactive behavior (Mohamad et al., 2020). This finding is consistent with the study by Mohamad et al. (2020), emphasizing the influential role of e-training content in impacting employees' work motivation, leading to improved competencies, reduced errors, and the application of new problem-solving skills. Despite potential tension or stress experienced by teachers in adapting to online teaching, the study suggests that teachers can autonomously enhance their work motivation when the training conditions actively contribute to fulfilling their intrinsic psychological needs for autonomy, efficacy, and efficiency in their professional endeavors (Gorozidis et al., 2020).

The study indicates a significant positive correlation between work motivation and the performance of Malaysian teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. This finding aligns with previous research where work motivation was positively correlated with employee performance (Riyanto et al., 2017; Martini & Sarmawa, 2019; Efendi et al., 2020). Employees exhibiting a positive attitude toward their work will likely have higher work motivation, contributing to excellent performance (Pancasila et al., 2020). Despite the pandemic causing anxiety among employees, those who demonstrate positive work motivation and experience a focus on safety measures, such as implementing work-from-home arrangements, still exhibit commendable performance (Susilo, 2020). Teachers' heightened concern about work-related activities during the pandemic is linked to their understanding that work motivation is closely tied to performance (Hamdani et al., 2018). This perspective is supported by Andriani et al. (2018), emphasizing that a higher application of work motivation leads to enhanced teacher performance. Teachers with high work motivation strive for continuous improvement as educators, aiming for optimal results and performance.

The study reveals a significant positive correlation between e-training and work-life balance among Malaysian teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. This finding aligns with previous research where e-training was found to have a positive correlation with work-life balance (Bulinska-Stangrecka et al., 2021). This suggests that e-training plays a crucial role in shaping work-life balance, given its proven ability to balance professional and personal lives for employees. The pandemic has shifted the role of teachers from knowledge importers to expeditors of knowledge (Yao et al., 2020). Consequently, teachers are under mental strain and stress as they undergo e-training to enhance their technological proficiency and adapt to online teaching quickly (Marek et al., 2021). This transition has likely impacted their work-life balance, as teachers must navigate new family schedules and adjust to a transformed work

situation and online teaching environment. Such substantial lifestyle changes may contribute to increased stress, depression, and anxiety among teachers (Konig et al., 2020). Additionally, despite the positive impact of e-training on enhancing teachers' skills and knowledge, continuous exposure to computer screens may strain their eyes, affecting their overall work-life balance due to an unhealthy lifestyle (Eman, 2021). In summary, the prolonged and intense nature of e-training can become monotonous and stressful, ultimately influencing teachers' work-life balance.

The study demonstrates a significant positive correlation between work-life balance and the performance of Malaysian teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. This finding aligns with prior research where work-life balance was positively correlated with employee performance (Soomro et al., 2018; Mendis & Weerakkody, 2017). This implies that work-life balance plays a pivotal role in enhancing employees' productivity, positively influencing both individual and organizational performance (Semlali & Hassi, 2016). Therefore, organizations are encouraged to implement effective work-life balance policies to ensure that employees remain socially connected with society while concurrently improving performance and productivity. Undeniably, the pandemic has heightened the significance of work-life balance, as it has significantly contributed to positive employee performance (Bataneh, 2019). Despite the rapid transition to online teaching, resulting in increased workloads for teachers during the pandemic, maintaining work-life balance remains crucial. Past research has substantiated that a favorable work-life balance leads to higher job satisfaction and teacher performance (Baluyos et al., 2019).

The study reveals a significant positive correlation between work-life balance and work motivation among Malaysian teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. This result aligns with previous research where work-life balance was found to be positively correlated with work motivation (Wolor et al., 2020). This implies that practices promoting work-life balance are a remedy to reduce work-life conflict, enabling employees to be more efficient and effective in both their professional and personal roles (Lazar et al., 2010). In essence, it reflects the degree to which employees' needs are met in both their work and non-work aspects (Popoola & Fagbola, 2020). Furthermore, according to Abdirahman et al. (2018), work-life balance is considered the most critical aspect of the workplace. Therefore, employees who maintain an excellent work-life balance are more likely to exhibit higher work motivation, putting in more significant effort and dedication. Consequently, it suggests a positive influence of employees' work-life balance on their work motivation. With its shift to remote work, the pandemic has made it challenging for employees to maintain a healthy work-life balance and effective coping strategies for work-related stress, impacting their motivation to work (Rudnicka et al., 2020). Additionally, adopting online teaching during the pandemic has affected teachers' mental health due to the abrupt transition, suggesting disruptions in work-life balance and work motivation for employees during this period.

CONCLUSION

The study's findings indicate that the performance of Malaysian teachers is influenced by the provided e-training, aligning with the training literature's primary aim of enhancing employees' performance by developing knowledge, skills, and abilities. Additionally, the results underscore the role of e-training in determining work motivation. According to the

study, e-training can influence work motivation, with increased training effectiveness leading to heightened motivation. Furthermore, the research highlights the equal importance of work motivation in determining employees' performance. The study suggests that teachers who exhibit a positive attitude towards their work demonstrate higher work motivation, ultimately contributing to outstanding performance. Moreover, the study indicates that e-training plays a role in determining work-life balance, as it has been proven to help maintain teachers' work-life balance. Subsequently, the outcomes emphasize that employees' performance is also influenced by work-life balance. The study proposes that work-life balance significantly enhances teachers' productivity, positively impacting individual and organizational performance. Additionally, the study stresses the equal significance of work-life balance in determining work motivation. According to the findings, work-life balance is considered the most crucial aspect of the workplace. Therefore, when school teachers maintain an excellent work-life balance, they are more likely to be motivated to work harder and invest more effort. In summary, the study underscores the interconnected roles of e-training, work motivation, and work-life balance in shaping and enhancing the performance of Malaysian teachers.

However, this study exclusively focused on Malaysia as its study population, and this narrow scope restricts the generalizability of the findings to a broader population. Additionally, the research was conducted with 152 complete respondents, which is considered the minimum sample size. Therefore, caution must be exercised when attempting to extrapolate the results of this study. Furthermore, a limitation of the present study is that data were collected exclusively from teachers in both primary and secondary schools. Consequently, the extent to which the findings can be generalized to other sectors or industries may vary due to differences in operational models, government policies and implementation, and cultural distinctions.

Despite the acknowledged limitations, it is imperative for future research to undertake a nationwide study that delves into understanding how the interplay of e-training, work motivation, and work-life balance can impact and shape employees' performance on a more expansive scale. This approach would enable the derivation of cross-border findings, allowing for a more comprehensive comparison of the research model across various states in Malaysia. Additionally, future research endeavours should broaden the coverage of the population by including samples from neighbouring countries such as Brunei, Indonesia, and Thailand, encompassing employees from diverse industries or sectors. This expanded approach aims to achieve a larger and more diverse sample size, thereby mitigating the potential for sample bias in the current study and facilitating meaningful comparisons between countries.

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