

THE IMPORTANCE OF SUPPORTIVE LEADERSHIP IN THE SEWERAGE OPERATION INDUSTRY IN MALAYSIA: A CASE OF INDAH WATER KONSORTIUMPRIVATE LIMITED (IWK)

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Abstract

Purpose: This study intends to determine the importance of Supportive Leadership in the sewerage operation industry since the nature of work itself, together with workload and pressure, has resulted in severe occupational stress among the workers; consequently, it would translate into poor work commitment.

Methodology: The random sample was obtained from the sampling frame, which consists of employees of the sewerage operation company in Malaysia, namely, Indah water Konsortium (IWK). Data was gathered using a self-administered questionnaire given to the randomly selected respondents. Meanwhile, data were analyzed using the second-generation method of multivariate analysis called Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) in IBM-SPSS-AMOS 24.0. Furthermore, the results were reconfirmed through bootstrapping procedures.

Result: The study found Supportive Leadership fully mediates the relationship between Occupational Stress and Work Commitment. The finding of this research indicates that in this particular industry, Supportive Leadership is extremely important to transform from negative Work Commitment to positive and significant Work Commitment from the employees.

Applications: The management of sewerage operation industries needs to be supportive of their workers in order to obtain a positive and significant commitment from the workers amid the work pressure and stress.

Novelty/Originality: Unlike other industries, the sewerage operation industry (in Malaysia) is pre-occupied with work burden and under tremendous work pressure. The study that links occupational stress and work commitment are scarce, especially in this particular industry, and in developing countries like Malaysia.

Keywords: Sewerage Operation Industry, Occupational Stress, Supportive Leadership, Employee Work Commitment, Malaysia.

INTRODUCTION

The very important matters today besides having a good economic development, plus the changing into inventive and innovative, everything considered the advancement portion needs to discover and keep up its high ground (Emeagwal & Ogbonmwan, 2018), but without the good management and development of sanitation, ill-health dominates a life without dignity, and with inadequate sanitation impacts not only human health but also the environment. Indah Water Konsortium Sdn. Bhd., (IWK) is a National Sewerage Utility company established way back in 1994. Besides managing own's project, IWK also played the roles as Project Management Consultant (PMC) to the construction of the government sewerage project, and today the construction sector is observed among the major industries that run effectively (Department of Commerce, 2017), IWK provides sewerage services to over 25 million population in Malaysia. When it comes to achieving an international level of sanitation, it may be a major challenge to a country and can only achieve if the action is to look into seriously.

Therefore, to cope with the circumstances mentioned along with the current aggressive economic conditions, employee commitment seems to be an important aspect of accomplishing organizational realization. Hence, the administrators will look in the general scan for a new approach to make their employees' commitment since it would have positive outcomes for the association, including lesser magnitudes of turnout, enhanced job performance, and making the firm gradually focused (Fesharaki & Sehat, 2017).

Nevertheless, an employee with low levels of commitment will do very little because they have "no heart" to do so. They are not committed to the job and mission of the organization. They seem to be more concerned with individual achievement and not the organizational achievement. Less committed employees are more likely to see themselves as outsiders rather than members of the organization in the long run.

But the question is why some employees are less committed than others? Take, for instance, an employee of sewerage operation workers of IWK doing filthy works which are references to the '3D' job, usually acknowledged as dirty, tough and dangerous task, occupation (ILO, n.d.), where the working relationships or conditions create particular risks, traditional or emerging ones, and work overload. Their duty and their work that is probably going to be viewed as horrendous and shows low occupational prestige in such way that makes the individuals need to hurl or be embarrassed (Everett Hughes, 1951; Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999; Zock, 2005), and at greater risk for occupational injuries and work-

related diseases, as well as death at work besides, adverse effect on physical, social or moral trace or some combination where the certain perspective of public and individuals who carry out filthy works probably becomes absurd and not accepted by the society. Thus, society narrates 'filthy workers' as a negative attribute attached to their works ([Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999](#); [Hughes, 1951](#)). With those views, it has an impact on the workers, which lead to high occupational stress and low employee commitment. The occupational stress faced by the sewerage operation workers often continues as long as they bear the same responsibility as a sewerage operation worker. The perception of the community that their jobs are dirty and disgusting as well as underestimated. Thus, a supportive leadership approach is important to reduce gaps and imbalances. To achieve the effectiveness of an organizational objective, the approach and efficiency of supportive Leadership are very necessary. The impact of employees' achievement can be observed from what has been established by supportive Leadership.

Nevertheless, supportive leadership analysis in the sewerage sector in Malaysia is still less explored. Therefore, the study aims to analyze the importance of supportive Leadership in the sewerage operation sector.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Supportive Leadership

The Path-Goal Theory

The path-goal theory attempts to explain how to induce followers' work effort through motivation and to achieve high levels of performance ([Daft, 1999](#)), and [Gustafsson and Hornay \(2014\)](#) had an opinion that the path-goal of leadership style is a model that provides a pathway. Also, [Daft \(1999\)](#) give reasons for that a leader can motive followers' by either:

1. Clarifying the follower's path to the rewards that are available or
2. increasing the rewards that the follower values and desires" (p. 102).

In other words, the leader's behavior should be able to increase followers' expectancy, and with leader efforts, followers will be able to complete the task and achieve valued rewards ([House & Dressler, 1974](#)).

[House \(1971\)](#) identified four leadership behaviors, such as:

- a. Directive leadership
- b. Supportive Leadership
- c. Participative Leadership, and
- d. Achievement-oriented Leadership.

The path-goal theory claimed that leaders could vary such leadership behaviors as the situational leadership model assumes, depending on the follower and the situation characteristics ([House, 1971](#); [House & Dressler, 1974](#)). Besides, there is a clarification made by the path-goal theory with regards to the level of exercising of Leadership under varying circumstances by a given organization leader ([Alanazi, 2013](#)).

About the follower factor, the path-goal theory explains that followers take the leader's behavior when the leader can satisfy them. Depending on the followers' locus of control, experience, and their perceived abilities, a leader needs to vary leadership styles to satisfy them ([House & Dressler, 1974](#)). Besides, leaders look for the thoughts of the employee and put them into thought when making key decisions ([Famakin & Abisuga, 2016](#)). Supportive Leadership also needs a substantial thoughtful of the needs of followers as well as wanting to provide them with important support ([Al-Malki & Juan, 2018](#)). Also, depending on situational factors such as the level of task structure, formal authority system, and norm of a workgroup, an appropriate leadership style should be selected to motivate followers to put forth the effort and eventually satisfy them ([House & Dressler, 1974](#)).

Supportive leadership style refers to the leader behavior that shows individual concerns for followers' development and needs and leaders will exhibit his support to employees in their position to deliver on tough tasks and goals ([Northouse, 2013](#)), and to verify the effectiveness of supportive leadership, conveying a friendly interaction atmosphere with their followers is very important ([Al-Malki & Juan, 2018](#)). Besides, [Daft \(2014\)](#), emphasized that Leadership is the relationship between the followers and leaders where both concern each other and lead to revolutionizing and the results that disclose their collective goal. Therefore, support leadership considers a crucial part of effective Leadership in the path-goal theory.

Employee Work Commitment

One of the biggest challenges facing by the organization today is how to maintain their workforce. Work commitment is a crucial topic for organizations to understand this is because the success or failure of an organization is closely related to their employee work commitment and this where the speed of work needed to be increased, efficiency and work skills are the most important asset for employees to be owned ([Bahkia et al., 2019](#)). Besides, one of the most frustrating

aspects of the organization is its ability to always grow in line with shifts in cultural, economic, and political infrastructure due to their employee less commitment to work.

Recently, the element of employee work commitment has been listed as a key hierarchy goal and increases the dimensions of fulfillment needed to hold the employees (Krajcsák 2016). According to [Mowday et al. \(2013\)](#), employee work commitment refers to an employee's attachment and identification with the organization as a whole. On the other hand, work commitment is the trust of workers, their feelings, and their acceptance of the goals and values of the organization as a disposition to belong to the organization and build up the career ladder in the organization ([Vandenberg & Scarpello, 2004](#)).

Besides, wanting the employee to be committed, factors such as occupational stress should be given a serious look by the organization. With the appropriate amount of stress and can be handled by the employee, it helps positive influence as well as ([Mai and Vu, 2016](#)) reducing the negative side of either arising or eliminate it. However, there are positive and negative implications of employee work commitment. According to [Bahkia et al. \(2019\)](#), the organization forgets that the employees they employed are humans and the requirements by the organization have led to having caused the workers to suffer from occupational stress. [Beehr and Newman \(1978\)](#) stated that occupational stress could be defined as a condition that occurs from the interactions of employee and their jobs that compel them to deviate from their normal duties. Hence, a situation sometimes made employees are committed to working, but are not committed to the organization. According to [Mahmoud \(2008\)](#), Occupational stress can also be defined as physical and emotional reactions that occur when work needs do not match the ability, resource or employee needs. Based on the findings of the study conducted by [Odor HO \(2019\)](#) showed that occupational stress was apparent in relation to the commitments of the respondent's organization, the results are in line with previous research showing that high pressure sustained in the workplace by an employee, whichever is lower will be their commitment to the organization ([Tytherleigh et al., 2005](#); [Nart & Batur, 2014](#)).

Take a look at the IWK sewerage operation workers for instance; working in sewerage sector is often regarded as 'dirty work' ([Hughes, 1951](#)), and is not recognized as a career that requires high qualifications ([Thumala et al., 2011](#); [White, 2010](#)), although these jobs require skills and strong mental and physical strength besides, as for the workers although they are committed employee ([Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999](#): 418), they still feel stress with community views, not only they are feeling stress, but their entire family will also feel embarrassed due to the community perception of their everyday work with sewage and waste, thought to be performed under particularly hazardous or dangerous conditions ([Ashforth and Kreiner 1999](#); 415), and this situation contributes to employees to become unmotivated. Hence, organizations need to increase employee commitment by ensuring the occupational stress issues to be minimized because to sustain a committed employee and dedicated employee is crucial nowadays. A fully satisfied employee will do more than what expected for the organization ([Khoreva and Zaik, 2016](#)). Scholars like [Backhaus & Tikoo, \(2004\)](#) [Chi & Gursoy, \(2009\)](#), [Kosteas, \(2011\)](#), and [Curtis & Glacken, \(2014\)](#) have found that employees will not leave their organization if they are satisfied and are as well as less absent, and show increased in their productivity at work. As for the organization, it is a loss of highly qualified human capital, results in the loss of intellectual assets, and this will be a risk to the organization's success and competitiveness in the future ([Maheshwari et al., 2017](#); [Maurya & Agarwal, 2018](#)).

Employees of the service sectors are facing a high level of stress due to many contributing factors of stress, and this situation influences organizational commitment and performance of the organization ([Famakin & Abisuga, 2016](#)). There are inconsistencies in findings regarding the linkage between job stress and organizational commitment ([Abdelmoteleb, 2019](#)). Therefore, the organization should always have a strategy to minimize the occurrence of the occupational stress to ensure employees felt comfortable performing their tasks besides becoming committed to the job, work hard to remain in the organization as well as having a sense of dedication toward the organization. [Meyer and Allen \(1991\)](#) stated that there are three components of employee commitment, namely, affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. According to [Krajcsák \(2016\)](#), affective commitment is when a person based in a place, then he acts as sincere as possible against the association, administration and to the individual at that place. While continuance commitment is considered a person devoted himself or herself to remain in the association ([Mayer & Schoorman, 1992](#)). And, normative commitment is where employees think they should stay in the associations to reflect their sentiment of responsibility to continue with their assignments ([Meyer & Allen, 1991](#)).

The relationship between Supportive Leadership and Employee Work Commitment

Basing on the theories above, nowadays, organizations require a good supportive leadership that comprehends the difficulties of the speedily moving worldwide situation. The administrators will look in the general scan for a new approach to make their employees' commitment since it would have positive outcomes for the association, including lesser magnitudes of turnout, enhanced job performance, and making the firm gradually focused ([Fesharaki & Sehhat, 2017](#)). When the work is extremely organized, and the leader holds a sound rapport with the subordinates, efficiency will be great on the subordinates. Similarly, employee commitment is very important for pioneering or manager to keep their employees motivated and satisfied ([Riaz et al., 2017](#)).

Organizations need their employees to interact with environmental challenges without feeling afraid of contribution information and expertise and be able to declare their own and trusting their team ([Nikolaou et Al., 2008](#)). Likewise for

[Shih and Wijaya, \(2017\)](#), believe that supporting their employee to voice their thoughts of concern and also make suggestions on serious issues in their organization, excellence, and efficiency as well as able to play a vital part in acquiring enhancements in the workplace. Thus, it will be able to continue the endurance and progress of an organization ([Li and Tian, 2016](#)).

Hence, effective Leadership plays a crucial part in ascertaining the accomplishment or disappointment of an organization ([Tourish, 2014](#)). [Nazarian, Soares, & Lottermoser,\(2017\)](#) stated that at times the company is unable to identify the leaders that are ineffective or effective until the time passes and causes an organization to suffer. Thus, with the presence of supportive Leadership may be linked to the employee work commitment. [Elsaied \(2019\)](#), finds that supportive Leadership has a positive and essential effect on employee advocacy. [Cooke et al. \(2018\)](#) in their research, demonstrate that supportive Leadership and co-worker support are positively associated with employee resilience. Also, Leadership supports providing a friendly working environment, attending to employee's general well-being ([Northouse, 2013](#)). In fact, according to [Rahman et al. \(2015\)](#) that support Leadership is highly suggested when the task given to an employee is very depressed or frustrating. At the same time, the presence of supportive Leadership is to recognize the interests of individual workers and help them reconcile with the objectives and goals of the organization ([Monyazi, 2015](#)).

Research has proven that when an employee has been backed up by other an employee and management, they able to perform better. Employees resilience can be developed through the use of social teams, information sharing, and leadership support ([Cooke et al., 2016](#)) apart from the intervention exercise ([Luthans et al., 2010](#)) where Leadership theory supports a position that enhances the relationship of leader followers. [Li et al. \(2019\)](#) believed that social exchange theory has the basic principle that followers of transformational leaders will pay back their supportive leaders by demonstrating positive behaviors and attitudes, which contribute positively to an organization. The statement is related to the employee's commitment and competence. [Smit \(2016\)](#) also stated that studies have shown that supportive Leadership supports an employee's attachment to their work.

In the 21st century today, organizations need a drastic change, for the maximum accomplishment of achievements. [Cooper et al. \(2018\)](#) claim that HRM practices are well-oriented, especially through increased knowledge, skills and ability of employees, work involved, positive social environment, and supportive Leadership, may increase the norm of cooperation by emphasizing the importance of individual efforts towards achieving the group's goals. By directing this reform and restructuring, it is a need to transformational behaviors by the supportive Leadership, for the increment adherents' organizational commitment through the empowering procedure ([Kim & Shin, 2017](#)), and this has translated into what scientists have seen that the Leadership of transformation adds ampleness results ([Choi et al., 2017](#)).

The supportive Leadership is the extent to which the leaders able to assist their followers through their active involvement in solving problems in a difficult and critical situation openly, honestly, and fairly in their interactions ([Schmidt et al., 2014](#)). Supportive Leadership has encouragingly correlated to greater levers of well-being, retention, performance for subordinates and lesser intensities of psychological results, such as anxiety, depression, stress and post-traumatic stress disorder ([Cohen and Wills, 1985; Ho, 2017](#)). By encouraging employees to come out with their ideas actively as well as listen to their suggestions on a pressing issue in the organization, able to play a critical role in efforts to strive for improvements in the workplace, quality and productivity ([Shih and Wijaya, 2017; Dundon et al., 2004](#)). Hence, it will continue to connect to the survival and development of an organization ([Li and Tian, 2016](#)).

Proactive people tend to suggest new ways of performing tasks and suggest new ideas to enhance their initiatives and tasks ([Jafri et al., 2016](#)). On the other hand, the servant leaders are different from supportive leaders that they concentrated on the benefits of their followers, who deemed subordinates, not as a tool in an organization. They saw the leader position more like a passage for them to assist, support, and assistant their followers ([Yan and Xiao, 2016](#)).

As for the committed employees, they become more creative and involved in the mission and values of the organization and are always thinking of ways to do their job better. In essence, committed employees work for their organization, as if it were theirs. With the studies that have taken place as mentioned, it concluded that supportive Leadership as a form of social support to create a supportive workplace climate.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used a cross-sectional research design. The target population for this study was the IWK Sewerage Operation Workers in Malaysia. A total of 2494 population of Sewerage Operation workers across the country. This study randomly selected 384 sewerage operation workers using simple random sampling, The data were analyzed using SEM procedure in IBM-SPSS-AMOS 25.0. This document is responsible for explaining the modeling and testing procedures for the importance of supportive Leadership in the sewerage operation sector.

Instrumentation and Validation Procedures

The framework for this study consists of one exogenous construct, one mediator constructs, and one endogenous construct. The path of interest in the study where the hypotheses to be tested presented in Figure 1.

The study has a total of three latent constructs, namely Occupational Stress, Supportive Leadership, and Employee Work Commitment. All constructs in the model are of second order. Occupational Stress is an exogenous construct measured

with six components namely, Job-Demand (JD), Workload (WL), Time-Pressure (TP), Work-Pressure (WP), Conflict-Work-Place (CWP) and (Family-Work-Conflict (FWC). Supportive Leadership is a mediator construct measured with three components, namely Inspire (INS), Sympathetic (SYM) and Human-Value (HV). The endogenous construct is Employee Work Commitment, measured with three components, namely Affective-Commitment (AC), Normative-Commitment (NC) and Continuance-Commitment (CC).

The hypothesis of interest, as shown in Figure 1 listed in Table 1.

Table 1: The hypothesis statement of the study

Hypothesis Statement	Statistical Analysis
H ₁ Supportive Leadership mediates the relationship between Occupational Stress and Employee Work Commitment in the Malaysian sewerage operation sector	Path Analysis in SEM and Bootstrapping

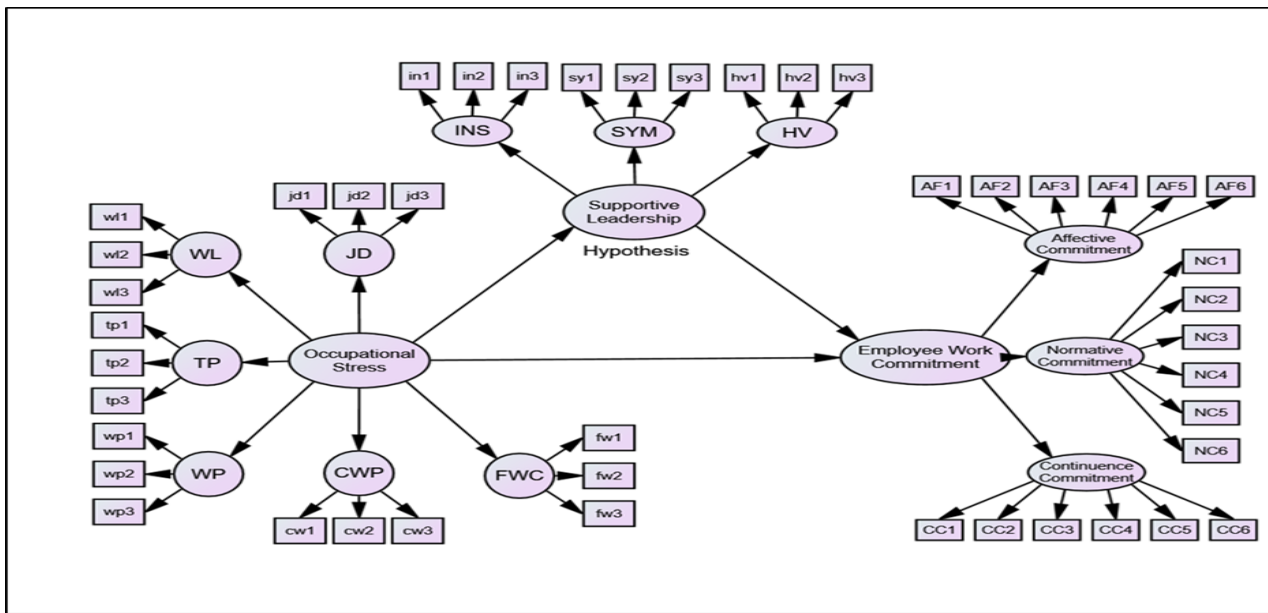


Figure 1: The framework of the study showing the constructs, components, and items

The framework in Figure 1 has been converted into IBM SPSS Amos graphic for data analysis through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is presented in Figure 2.

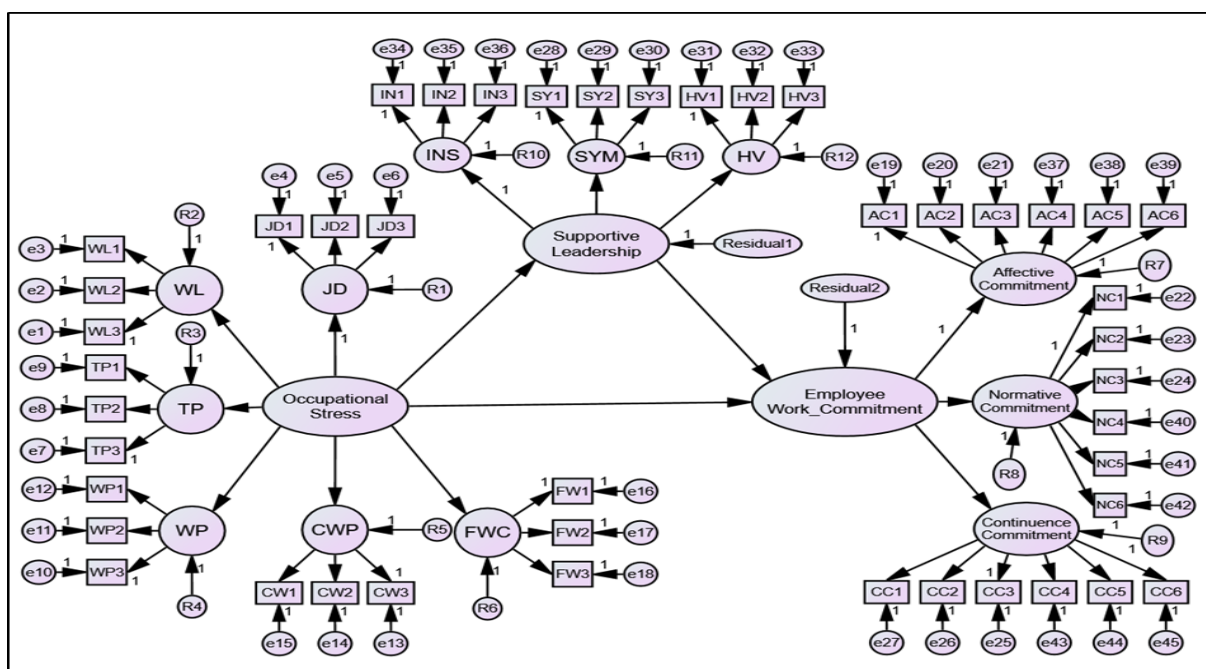


Figure 2: The Research Framework of the study in IBM-SPSS-AMOS Graphic

The target population for this study is sewerage operation workers of Indah Water Konsortium (IWK) throughout Malaysia. Thus, the Unit of Analysis will be individual sewerage workers of IWK. The sampling frame where respondents selected in the list of sewerage workers of IWK. The study employed a simple random sampling method to select respondents from the sampling frame. The selected respondents were given a self-administered questionnaire; they could attend the questionnaire at their own convenient time without fear or pressure.

Based on the total population of 2494 sewerage workers, the [Krejcie & Morgan \(1970\)](#) recommends some 334 workers to be selected as respondents for this study; nevertheless, for this study, the sample was taken randomly from 384 workers as respondents. Finally, this study conducted the following analyses:

1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) – to validate the measurement model of all constructs for construct validity, convergent validity, discriminant validity and composite reliability
2. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) – to model and estimate the inter-relationships among the constructs in the study and to test hypotheses.
3. Testing the mediator effects of Supportive Leadership and to confirm the results through bootstrapping procedure using MLE bootstrapping with percentile confidence interval 95% and bias-corrected confidence interval 95%.

The CFA was utilized to assess the construct validity, convergent validity, and discriminant validity of latent constructs prior to executing SEM ([Awang et al., 2015, 2018](#)). The measurement model in Figure 3 has achieved the required fitness indexes satisfactorily (RMSEA = 0.075, CFI = 0.912, TLI = 0.895, ChiSq/df = 2.986), so the construct validity was achieved ([Afthanorhan et al., 2019](#); [Mohamad et al., 2016, 2019](#); [Bahkia et al., 2019](#); [Rahlin et al., 2019](#); [Mahfouz et al., 2019](#)).

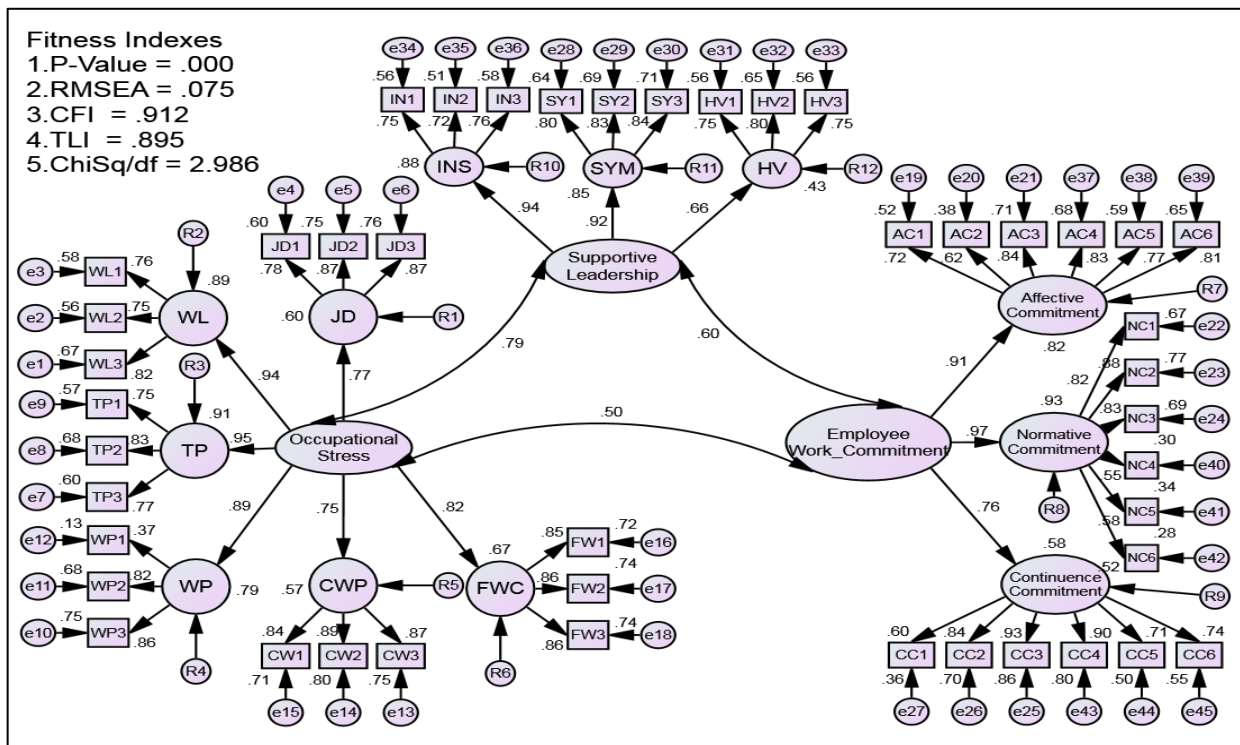


Figure 3: The Pooled-CFA Results to validate three constructs simultaneously

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) which determines the convergent Validity and CR determines the composite reliability for the main constructs and sub-constructs are presented in Table 1a, 1b & 1c. All factor loading for components as well as items is greater than 0.60. Through the CFA procedure, the study validated the constructs for Convergent Validity by computing Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Construct Validity (through fitness indexes), and Discriminant Validity (Discriminant Validity Index Summary) of the latent constructs.

Table 1a: The AVE and CR Values for Occupational Stress Construct

Construct	Component	Factor Loading	CR (above 0.6)	AVE (above 0.5)
Occupational Stress	JD	0.77	0.943	0.734
	WL	0.94		
	TP	0.95		

WP	0.89
CWP	0.75
FWC	0.82

The results in Table 1a indicate the Occupational-Stress construct as well as the six components measuring the construct namely, JD, WL, TP, WP, CWP, and FWC achieved the level for Convergent Validity and Composite Reliability. Through the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) procedure, the study validated the constructs for Convergent Validity by computing Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Construct Validity (through fitness indexes), and Discriminant Validity (Discriminant Validity Index Summary) of the latent constructs.

Table 1b: The AVE and CR Values for Supportive Leadership Construct.

Construct	Item	Factor Loading	CR (above 0.6)	AVE (above 0.5)
Supportive Leadership	INS	0.94	0.884	0.722
	SYM	0.92		
	HV	0.66		

The results in Table 1b indicate the Supportive-Leadership construct as well as the three components measuring the construct, namely, INS, SYM, and HV the level for Convergent Validity and Composite Reliability.

Table 1c: The AVE and CR Values for Employee Work Commitment Construct.

Construct	Item	Factor Loading	CR (above 0.6)	AVE (above 0.5)
Employee Work Commitment	Affective	0.91	0.914	0.782
	Normative	0.97		
	Continuence	0.76		

The results in Table 1c indicate the Employee-Work-Commitment construct, as well as the three components measuring the construct namely, Affective-Commitment, Normative- Commitment, and Continuence-Commitment, have achieved the level of convergent Validity and Composite Reliability.

For assessing the discriminant validity, one needs to develop the discriminant validity index summary, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: The Discriminant Validity Index Summary for all Constructs

Construct	Occupational Stress	Supportive Leadership	Employee Work Commitment
Occupational Stress	0.856		
Supportive Leadership	0.79	0.850	
Employee Work Commitment	0.60	0.50	0.884

Note: Values on the diagonal are the square root for AVE. Off-diagonal elements are the squared pairwise correlations between factors.

Referring to Table 2, the Discriminant Validity of the respective construct is achieved if the square root of its AVE exceeds its correlation value with other constructs in the model (Yusof et al., 2017; MohdAzli et al., 2017; Mohamad et al., 2017, 2018; Afthanorhan et al., 2017, 2017a, 2018 and Asnawi et al., 2019). In other words, the Discriminant Validity is achieved if the diagonal values (in bold) are higher than any other values in its row and its column. The tabulated values in Table 2 meet the threshold of Discriminant Validity. Thus, the study concludes that the Discriminant Validity for all constructs is achieved.

Additionally, the normality assessment for the present examination was made by looking at the value skewness and kurtosis for every item. Considering the estimation of skewness was inside the range between -0.407 to -0.984 and kurtosis was inside the range between -0.245 and 1.225, and this demonstrated the skewness prerequisite degree of -1.0 and 1.0, as suggested by Aimran et al. (2017, 2017a), Awang et al. (2018) accomplished. That demonstrated that the data normally distributed.

Data Analysis

To test the hypotheses, a structural equation modeling procedure performed utilising IBM SPSS AMOS 25.0. Structural equation modelling (SEM) has accompanying points of interest; to start with, it can appraise connections among latent constructs demonstrated by indicator variables. Second, it can consider correlations among measurement errors. Third, it

can measure the recursive connection between constructs. The standardized regression path coefficient is presented in Figure 4 while the regression path coefficient is presented in Figure 5.

Table 3: The Coefficient of Multiple Determination or R^2 and its implication in this study

Endogenous Construct	R^2	Conclusion
Employee Work Commitment	0.41	The two constructs, namely Occupational Stress and Supportive Leadership, manage to estimate about 41 percent of Employee Work Commitment.

The explanation regarding the performance of R^2 (coefficient of multiple determination) of the model that has been shown in Figure 3 explained in Table 3.

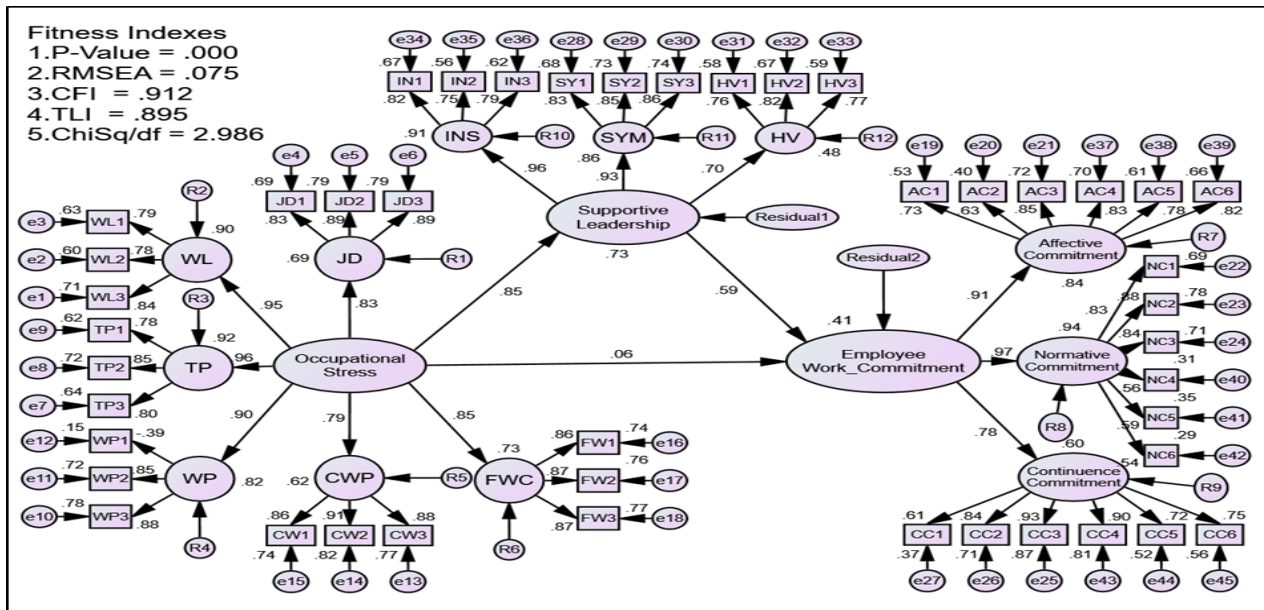


Figure 4: The Standardized Regression Path Coefficient between Constructs (SEM Output)

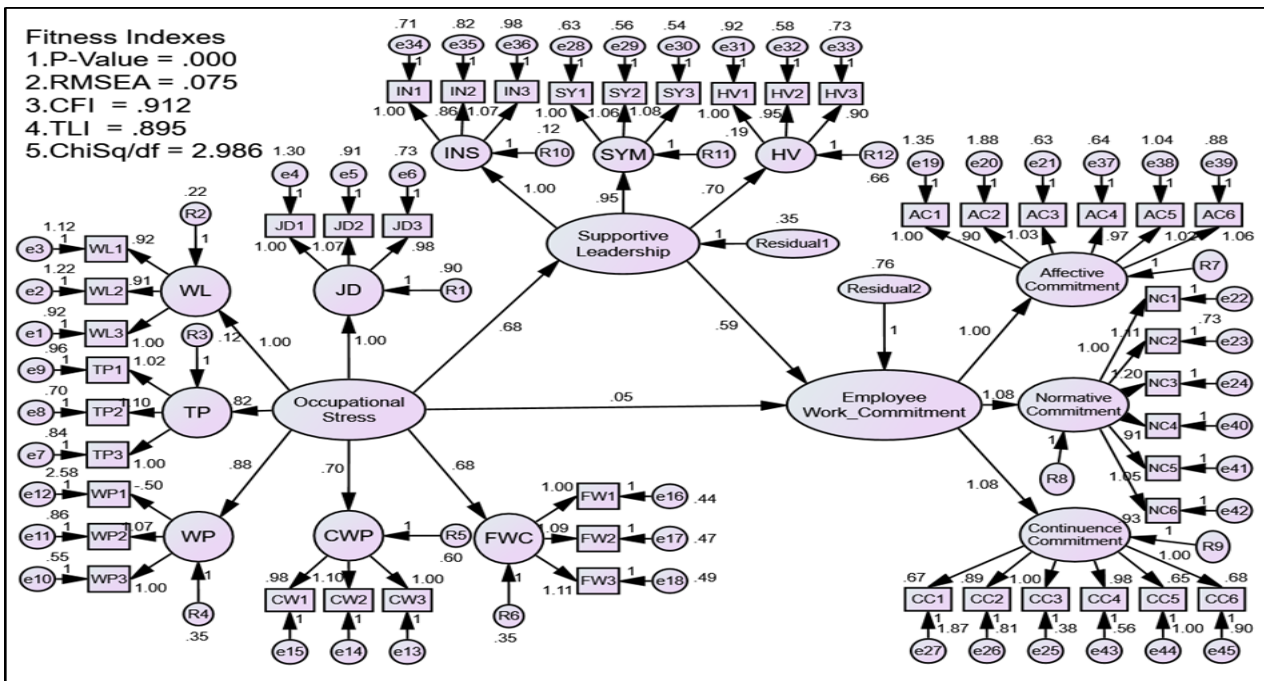


Figure 5: The Regression Path Coefficient between Constructs (SEM Output)

The text output of the regression path coefficient (beta), reflecting the effects of exogenous constructs on the endogenous construct, is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: The Regression Path Coefficient and Its Significance

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Result
Supportive Leadership	<---	Occupational Stress	0.681	.048	14.066	.001	Significant
Employee Work Commitment	<---	Supportive Leadership	0.591	.110	5.397	.001	Significant
Employee Work Commitment	<---	Occupational Stress	0.048	.080	0.594	.552	Not Significant

The results in Table 4 are used for testing the mediator effect hypothesis. The hypothesis statement is shown in Table 5

Table 5: Testing the Mediator Effect Hypothesis

Hypothesis Statement	
H ₁	Supportive Leadership mediates the relationship between Occupational Stress and Employee Work Commitment.

The study employed the method of testing the mediation effects in the model as proposed by [Awang et al. \(2018\)](#); [Kashif et al. \(2015, 2016\)](#); [Afthanorhan et al. \(2018\)](#); [Mohamad et al. \(2016, 2018\)](#); [Mohd Azli et al. \(2017\)](#); [Yusof et al. \(2017\)](#), and [Asnawi et al. \(2019\)](#). The procedure for the testing mediator is carried out in Figure 6.

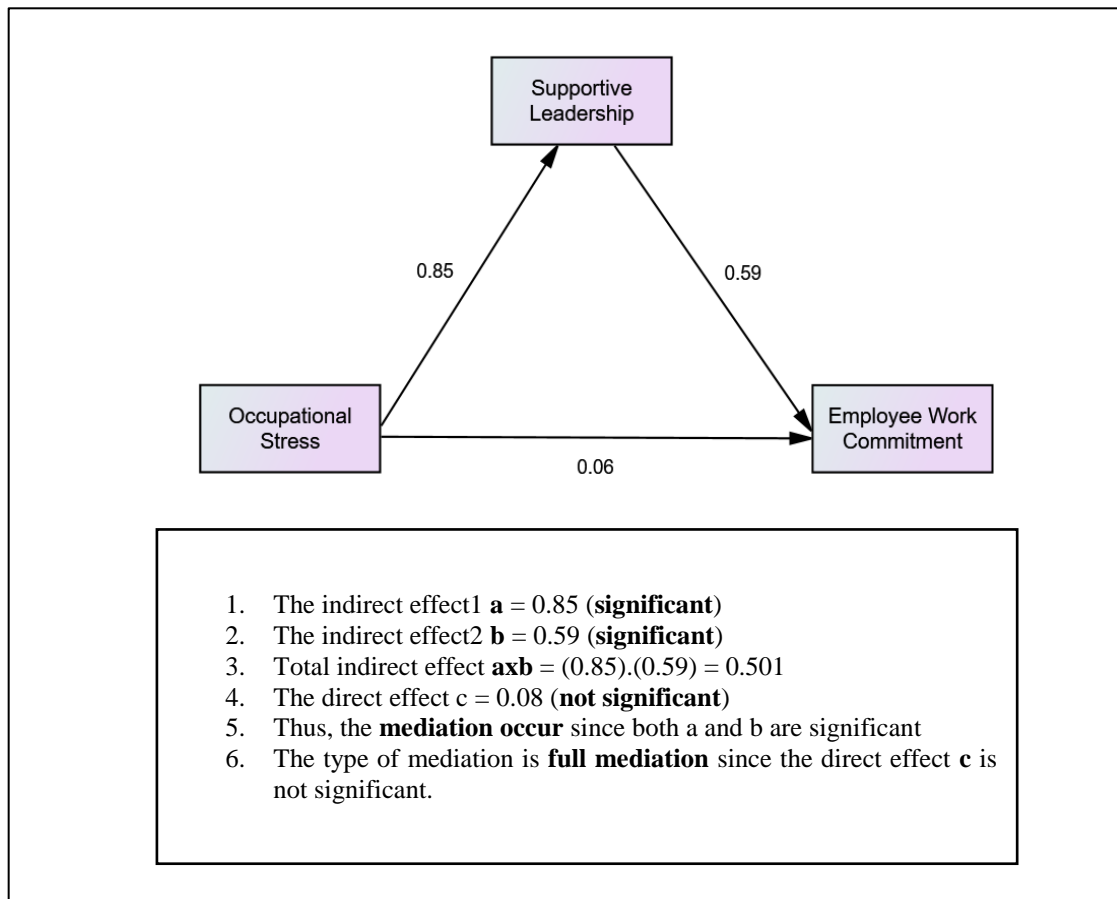


Figure 6: The Procedure for Testing Mediator in the Model

The bootstrapping procedure to reconfirm the hypothesis testing in Figure 6 is presented in Table 6. The study employed the Maximum Likelihood bootstrapping procedure using 1000 bootstrap samples with both percentile confidence intervals, and biased-corrected confidence intervals are set at 0.95.

Table 6: The Bootstrapping Procedure to Confirm the Mediation Test in Figure 6.

	Indirect Effect	Direct Effect
Bootstrapping Results	0.504	0.060
Bootstrapping P-Value	0.002	0.820
Result	Significant	Not Significant
Mediation Type	Full Mediation occurs since the direct effect is not significant	

DISCUSSION

Many researchers have stressed that supportive Leadership influences the employee work commitments results of this study are consistent with the findings with the previous researches by [Shamir, Zakay, and Popper \(1998\)](#) and [Walumbwa and Lawler \(2003\)](#). Besides statements from [Swanepoel, Erasmus, Van Wyk, Scheck \(2000\)](#), [Pfeffer \(1998\)](#), [Bass & Avolio \(1994\)](#), [Walumbwa & Lawler \(2003\)](#) and [Kent & Chelladurai \(2001\)](#) also highlighted the same declaration.

When employees serving in any organization and receive support from their leaders, the level of occupational stress drops and they will show their commitment towards their work. An employee always want to have a leader who cares for them and motivate them, understands their problems, and assist in solving problems. In this regard, the present study assessed the Importance of Supportive Leadership in the Sewerage Operation sector in Indah Water KonsortiumPte Ltd (IWK). Employee's work commitment declines when they meet a high level of occupational stress, which can be improved through a supportive leader who keeps employees, motivated even at unfavorable situations. It means that supportive Leadership plays a mediating role in the relationship between occupational stress and employee work commitment. The results of the present study also revealed that Occupational Stress did not have a direct positive impact on Employee Work Commitment.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this research article was to assess the mediating role of Supportive Leadership in linking Occupational Stress to Employee Work Commitment as far as the sewerage operation sectors concerned. The study found supportive Leadership plays an important role in the stated relationships. A significant relationship between the three variables; supportive Leadership, Occupational Stress, and employee work commitment. Findings suggested that employees working in the sewerage operation sector in the case of IWK under supportive Leadership have less occupational stress and committed to their work. Although the present study also showed that there are insignificant between occupational stress and employee work commitment also highlighted. The findings of the study hence confirmed that supportive Leadership plays an important role as a mediator between occupational stress and employee work commitment of the sewerage operation sector (IWK) in Malaysia. If the organization could apply this supportive Leadership wisely, the employees will be motivated, and the level of commitment will be enhanced by showing a higher level of loyalty.

LIMITATION

According to [Ghuri and Gronhaug \(2010\)](#), in order to define the limits of the study, it is important that academic studies conducted. Thus, the current study is very important to explain the limitations.

Firstly, the limitation of this research is that it merely focuses on Leadership in the context of sewerage operation workers in the sewerage sector, namely Indah Water KonsortiumSdnBhd (IWK) Malaysia. Leadership styles make an impact on other industries such as; rubber plantation industry, airline industry for cabin crew, music industry, etc. In addition, the questionnaires distributed to selected respondents all over peninsular Malaysia, but not for Sabah and Sarawak as they are managed by the government JKR' sand, not by IWK. In other words, the responses from all over peninsular might not be able to represent the responses from all Sabah and Sarawak employees in the sewerage sector in Malaysia. Some workers are not able to fill in the questionnaires during lunchtime as their work was to settled customer problems (sewerage pipeline blockage) during their lunch hours. This process is taking a longer time than it is expected to be completed.

The future study should involve what has been mentioned in the limitation here for more conclusive results.

SUGGESTIONS BASED ON THE PRESENT STUDY

The future study should employ the same model into other service-related sectors in the country such as banking, healthcare, higher education, and plantation. The results might be different among sectors since the characteristics of the industry itself differ. Future researchers also might replace the dependent construct with Job Performance since this is more meaningful as far as profit-oriented organizations are concerned.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors affirmed that there is no conflict of interest in this work. Ayu Suriawati initiated the work by proposing the framework of the study, problem statement, and hypotheses. Nor Azma Rahlinand Mohd Zulkifli Abd Rahim refined the methodology section and help in data cleaning. Zainudin Awang performed the statistical analysis, test hypothesis, interpret the results and enhanced the write-up in the analysis section.

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