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# The influence of Japanese work cultures on Malaysian foodservice employees' work stress and their turnover intention

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## Abstract

**Research Aims** - This study investigates the influence of Japanese work cultures on Malaysian foodservice employees' work stress and their turnover intention.

**Design/methodology/approach** - A total of 381 respondents participated in this study, and the research data was validated prior to the empirical assessment.

**Research Findings** - The results of this study signify that the Japanese work culture amplifies workers disorientation, stress and turnover intention. Besides, thru hierarchical regression, workplace stress was found to mediate the relationship between Japanese work culture and employee turnover intention.

**Theoretical Contribution/Originality** - The study reveals the conflicts between the South East Asian employees and the Japanese management culture in the foodservice industry.

**Managerial Implication in the South East Asian context** - This study contributes to the organisational and human resource management literature by examining the direct and indirect effects of Japanese work culture on employees' workplace stress and their turnover intention in the context of the restaurant industry.

**Research limitation & implications** - As for the study limitation, the current study does not cover all Japanese restaurant in Malaysia as the researchers focus on the Klang Valley setting.

**Keywords** - Japanese restaurant; work cultures; workplace stress; turnover intention.

## INTRODUCTION

The changes in technology and economics have brought many challenges into the foodservice industry (Anthony-McMann, Ellinger, Astakhova, & Halbesleben, 2017; DiPietro, Martin, & Pratt, 2019; Zhao, 2016). Currently, foodservice organisations are always struggling to control workforce turnover. As the foodservice sector is highly competitive, employee's turnover had been their significant issues (Chiang, Birtch, & Kwan, 2010; Deery, 2008; DiPietro et al., 2019; Kim, 2014; Mohanty & Mohanty, 2014; Nasyira et al., 2014). The high staff turnover adversely affects the service sector service quality, and it is costly (Chiang et al., 2010; DiPietro et al., 2019). Such cost typically includes the expenses which involved hiring, training and selecting the new employees. Thus, providing a conducive work environment is one of the examples of an organisation's practices that help to reduce

employee turnover ratio (Akbaruddin, Zahari, Hadi, Suhaimi, & Ramli, 2018; Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015).

Nasyira, Othman, and Ghazali (2014) mentioned that human capital is a valuable asset for an organisation in order to have a distinct competitive advantage over its rival. Thus, the key factors possessed by the successful organisation within the service industry are the ability to attract and retain talented employees (Kahumuza & Schlechter, 2008; Pieterse-Landman, 2012; Wong & Wong, 2017). This is achieved primarily through the efficient execution of an organisation's policies and practices which centred on the development and wellbeing of the employees. However, the ever-changing necessitate the organisation to exert constant effort to combat the competitive advantage that causes a lot of burden and stress on the work environment. Several studies revealed that peoples who are working within the service industry are under stressful conditions and the strain on their emotions cause a vulnerable to the turnover intention (Anthony-McMann et al., 2017; Ryan, Ma, Hsiao, & Ku, 2015; Taormina & Kuok, 2009; Zhao, 2016; Zhao & Ghiselli, 2016). Workplace stress is even now perceived to be a global issue, which affects both individuals and organisations at large (Tetrick & Winslow, 2015).

Stress has the potential to cause psychological risk or physical injury. Psychosocial risks are widely recognised as the main challenge in regard to employee health (Kivimäki & Kawachi, 2015; Padyab, Backteman-Erlanson, & Brulin, 2016). This resonates with the latest research done by Javaid et al. (2019), which claimed that the exposure to psychosocial risks in the workplace affects the physical, mental and social health of the workers. On the other hand, stress is also associated with organisational or work cultures in any given workplace. The work cultures are viewed as a system of beliefs, value and behaviour that generally practised among the employees (Bakhtiar, Zamri, Hashim, Othman, & Ismail, 2016; Buunk & Schaufeli, 2017; Winnubst, 2017). Nonetheless, many researchers claimed that unhealthy organisational or work cultures could elevate the stress in the workplace (Newman, Round, Bhattacharya, & Roy, 2017; Olson, 2018; Ulrich et al., 2007). A survey conducted by AIA Vitality (2019) found that 51% of Malaysian employees suffer from at least one dimension of work-related stress and sleep deprivation on the rise as 53% of employees get less than 7 hours of sleep.

Numerous research on workplace stress has been conducted in the Japanese restaurant setting (Matsuzuki, Haruyama, Muto, Aikawa, Ito & Katamoto, 2013; Haruyama et al., 2014). However, limited studies were found with regards to stress, organisational commitment and turnover intention in the cross-cultural workplace (Bakhtiar et al., 2016). The Japanese work cultures have long been characterised with hard work, long working hours, loyalty and meticulous work ethics (Franklin, 2017; Steers & Sánchez-Runde, 2017). A study by Kuroda and Yamamoto (2016) noted that Japanese people worked more than 60 hours per week which is beyond the regular work hours among other nations. Moreover, the words "Sah-Bee-Soo Zahn-Gyo" or overtime for free or "service overtime" is a common phrase in Japanese work cultures (Asgari, Pickar, & Garay, 2016; Kawanishi, 2008).

Currently, more than two hundred quick-service and other types of Japanese restaurants operated in Malaysia, and together, they brought and embedded the typical Japanese organisational culture into the restaurant operation (Bakhtiar et al., 2016). Such Japanese work culture is currently embedded within the Japanese restaurant setting and practised by their Malaysian employees (Bakhtiar et al., 2016; Smith, 1993). However, to the Japanese, managing their Malaysian employees is not an easy task since they come from two different cultures (Abdul, Ismail & Jaafar, 2010). The Japanese organisational culture is somewhat hierarchical, and emphasis on respecting the seniors, highlighting the greater 'power distance' between the employer and employees. With such situation, high turnover caused by workplace stress and lack of commitment among the employee is expected to affect the Japanese restaurant performance in general (Karatepe & Vatankhah, 2014; Kim, 2014; Lee, Huang, & Zhao, 2012; Qiu, Haobin Ye, Hung, & York, 2015).

As the Malaysian work culture is different compared to the Japanese, questions arise whether the employees would be able to adapt with the Japanese work cultures and to what extent these work cultures influence their level of stress and subsequent turnover intention. Due to lack of studies looking at this matter in the Malaysia perspective (Bakhtiar et al., 2016), an empirical investigation needs to be undertaken to understand the phenomenon and as well filling the research gaps. The study findings would contribute to knowledge and understanding of the effects of working cultures, job stress and turnover among the Japanese restaurant employees. In addition, this study offers a much straightforward understanding of how the nature of Japanese working culture affect the local employees' personality and behaviour. Besides, the Japanese restaurant owner would be much informed on how the Japanese working and management culture influence their employee stress and turnover intention.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Japanese Work Cultures*

Out of many work cultures, Japanese work cultures is one of the exciting cultures which received substantial attention among scholars (Franklin, 2017; Kuroda & Yamamoto, 2016; Ogura, 2009; Tsutsumi, Kayaba, Tsutsumi, & Igarashi, 2001). The philosophy of Japanese organisational culture is an extension of its own rigid culture (Ono, 2018). Hard work, loyalty, work ethics, and work practices are some of the essential characteristics of Japanese work cultures (Aljayi et al., 2016; Batyko, 2012; Takagi & Tagami, 2019). This Japanese working philosophy can be seen through several core business principles that they believe in such as trust, loyalty to the company, investment in training, recognition of employee achievements, decentralisation of decision-making and consensus decision making (Demerouti, Shimazu, Bakker, Shimada, & Kawakami, 2013; Gordon, 2018; Goydke & Herbes, 2016; Hirokawa & Miyahara, 1986; Swierczek & Onishi, 2003). The Japanese have adopted and institutionalised many of these fundamental insights which have been transformed into their daily organisational practices (Gordon, 2018; Hirokawa & Miyahara, 1986; Takagi & Tagami, 2019). The Japanese business culture could be enacted may be due to the high level of consistency between the Japanese cultures

and how their companies operate. Based on the literature, this study highlighted how the fundamental Japanese work culture (hard work and loyal, work ethics and work practices) affect workplace stress.

### ***Hard work and Loyal and Workplace Stress***

One of the most central concepts that come into the mind of the Japanese work cultures is that the Japanese are hardworking (Franklin, 2017; Takei & Alston, 2018). The Japanese working cultures have been known to emphasise on long work hours and paying careful attention to the work being done (Ali & Rana, 2017; Kanai & Wakabayashi, 2001; Swierczek & Onishi, 2003; Takei & Alston, 2018). Japanese are workaholics, and they seem to experience relatively high levels of work engagement. This has to do with Japanese culture as their social relationships at work are interdependent (Cheng, Park, Kim, & Kawakami, 2012; Iwasaki, Takahashi, & Nakata, 2006; Yamauchi et al., 2018) and strongly hierarchical (Matsumoto, Kudoh, & Takeuchi, 1996). In this sense, if members in the department face high job demands, others will voluntarily assist them (Liu-Farrer, 2011). Moreover, a robust hierarchical culture requires Japanese employees to respect their senior superiors.

The Japanese employees are expected to demonstrate loyalty to the firm, in exchange for some degree of job security and benefits (Ali & Rana, 2017; Swierczek & Onishi, 2003). They expect the employees to stay with working with the company until retirement (Takei & Alston, 2018). The Japanese working system was, however, carrying a few human resource management weaknesses as the loyalty system-induced elevated workplace stress among their employees and eventually influence high turnover intention (Bakhtiar et al., 2016; Franklin, 2017; Iwasaki et al., 2006). Similarly, Pouwels, Siegers and Vlasblom (2008) found that the Japanese long work hours have the effect of reducing workers happiness, and ultimately influenced them to stress out and eventually search for another job.

### ***Work Ethics and Workplace Stress***

Works ethics deals with the rules and procedures that should be carried out by the employer and the employees in maintaining a professional company culture (Connelly et al., 2017) and intimately connected with the job itself (Viswesvaran & Deshpande, 1996; Vitell & Davis, 1990). The comprehension of work ethics in employment is crucial for defining way of intervention as well as mitigation policies which help to increase work productivity and satisfaction (Hijal-Moghrabi, Sabharwal, & Berman, 2017; Nauman & Qamar, 2018). An employee who possesses work ethic will feel good at work with active attitude and performance to the job or job position (Pathardikar, Sahu, & Jaiswal, 2016; Shafique, N Kalyar, & Ahmad, 2018).

Out of many, according to Chen (2004) and Peltokorpi (2013), the Japanese work ethics is the manifestation from several deep-rooted traditional eastern teachings and philosophies, of which their collective ideals and principles have extended into mainstream Japan, evolved and shaped Japanese work ethics. Employees in Japan are generally known for their obligation to their places of work, and for having clear ambitions to see the companies, they work to succeed and prosper (Bakhtiar et al.,

2016; Tsutsumi et al., 2001). The personal responsibility of the Japanese employee is excellent and, in most cases, reflects his desire to lead his company to success but also point towards workplace stress, turnover intention and eventually health concerns (Cheng et al., 2012; Iwasaki et al., 2006; Kuroda & Yamamoto, 2016).

### *Work Practices and Workplace Stress*

Work practices reflect how employees do their job according to the common practice of an organisation (Holman, Wall, Clegg, Sparrow, & Howard, 2003). Although they are much advanced in terms of technology and infrastructure, the Japanese still practise traditional approach with regard to business relations (Takei & Alston, 2018). Some of the distinctive characteristics of Japanese corporations are strict hierarchical structures, risk aversion and obsession for detail (Chen, 2004; Goydke & Herbes, 2016). The sense of belonging to a group, teamwork, and the pursuit of a consensus is fundamental. According to Yanase and Limpaphayom (2017), personal relationships are overwhelmingly crucial to create profitable business relations. They share information and do extensive consultation among staff during the decision-making process and shared the responsibility of the decision-making (Gill & Wong, 1998). Such widespread discussion and consensus are a distinctive characteristic of Japanese employee work practices and management style.

### *Workplace Stress and Turnover Intention*

Workplace stress has been viewed as an interactive process which occurs between employees and their work environment which leads to excessive demands being placed on them and resulting in physiological and psychological distress (Bakhtiar et al., 2016; Kivimäki & Kawachi, 2015; Tetrick & Winslow, 2015). Workplace stress is an extension to general human stress that specifically related to work capabilities, employee work task, job characteristic, work environment or work conflict (Anthony-McMann et al., 2017; Holman et al., 2003; Kafashpoor, Sadeghian, Shakori, & Kavooosi, 2014). According to Anthony-McMann et al. (2017), workplace stress ascends when persons observe that they cannot sufficiently cope with the work demands being made on them or with pressures to their wellbeing. As the service industry has dramatically expanded, workplace stress would affect the competitiveness and the performance of service industries. It appears mainly in the service industry, work with guests sometimes may be challenging and difficult, but arguments and tensions among fellow employees or co-workers turned out to be more prevalent in term of stress (Hon, Chan, & Lu, 2013; Jung & Yoon, 2014; Ross, 1995). These propositions had been well researched, and various study claimed that workplace stress is a leading variable of workers' exhaustion and affect their job satisfaction and overall performance (Anthony-McMann et al., 2017; Bakhtiar et al., 2016; Jung & Yoon, 2014; Ross, 1995; Zhao & Ghiselli, 2016).

Turnover intentions are considered as a conscious and deliberate wilfulness to leave the organisation (Tett & Meyer, 1993). High turnover rate and the costs associated with employee turnover have influenced researchers to reason why an employee intended to quit at the first place (Hom et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2017; Zhang, 2016). Several other studies also consider turnover intention as the primary precursor of

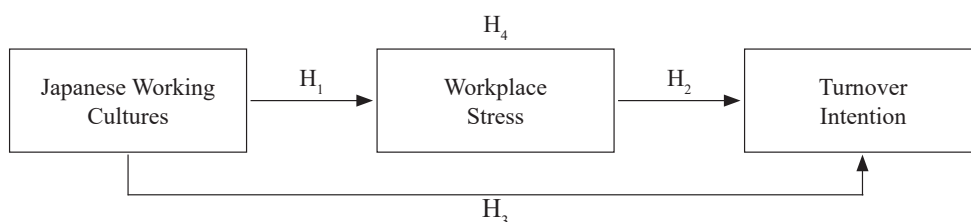
actual turnover (Al Mamun & Hasan, 2017; Huang, Lawler & Lei, 2007; Joo & Park, 2010; Kim, Tam, Kim & Rhee, 2017). In analysing turnover intention, researchers found a significant influence of human resource management (HRM) practices on employee turnover intention (Aljayi, Fjer, Guennioui & Tamek, 2016; Gill & Wong, 1998; Holman, Wall, Clegg, Sparrow & Howard, 2003).

Many potential causes might influence employee turnover intention. The main reason of employee turnover intention is related to the different working culture, low wages or unattractive work conditions (Bakhtiar et al., 2016; Karatepe & Vatankhah, 2014; Kim, 2014; Lee, Huang, & Zhao, 2012; Qiu, Haobin Ye, Hung, & York, 2015). Other reasons include poor job feedback, job dissatisfaction, unmet job expectations, performance problems, situational constraints, socialisation difficulties, higher degrees of job stress, and a lack of career advancement opportunities might also cause the causations (Joo & Park, 2010; Kim, Tam, Kim, & Rhee, 2017; Rizwan et al., 2013; Wollard & Shuck, 2011). In contrast, higher-quality work environments led to lower employee turnover intentions (Huang, Lawler, & Lei, 2007; Mosadeghrad, 2013; Pouwels, Siegers & Vlasblom, 2008; Zhang, 2016). Besides, improved perceptions of the work environment will improve the retention rates of employees (Al Mamun & Hasan, 2017; Zhang, 2016). Satisfaction with the workplaces leads to employees feeling more attached to the workplace and subsequently reduced the employee's turnover intention (Nakagawa et al., 2014).

**Hypotheses Development**

This study empirically investigates the influence of Japanese work cultures on Malaysian workers' work stress and their turnover intention as per the research framework illustrated in Figure 1.

This study integrates the concept of psychological fulfilment into a Social Exchange Theory (SET) process framework (Blau, 1964). The basic premise of SET is that how people feel about a given interaction or relationship depends fundamentally on the outcomes that they perceive to be associated with it (Birtch, Chiang & Van Esch, 2016). Therefore, such integration can potentially shed new light on the job characteristics and outcomes relationship. Based on the above proposition, several hypotheses were proposed. Precisely, three sub-hypotheses are predicting the relationship between the independent variable (hard work and loyalty, work ethics, work practices) and the dependent variable (employee workplace stress). Hypothesis one predicts the relationship between Japanese work cultures and employee workplace stress. Next, the second hypothesis predicts the impact of workplace stress and turnover intention. The third hypothesis tests the relationship between



**Figure 1**  
Research Framework

Japanese work cultures and turnover intention, and the fourth hypothesis test the mediating effect of workplace stress on the relationship between Japanese work cultures and employee turnover intention.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Sample and Population*

A quantitative approach through a cross-sectional with a self-reported and self-administered survey questionnaire is applied for information gathering. The study unit of analysis is Malaysian who work in Japanese restaurants in the Klang Valley. The study chose employees working in Japanese restaurants to control for any possible bias that might stem from involving multiple industry sectors. Based on short field observation, there are 25 independent outlets of Japanese restaurants in the Klang Valley with more than ten employees working at each restaurant outlet. The non-probability sampling technique was employed. The respondents are those conveniently available and working at the Japanese restaurants in the Klang Valley at the time of the study being conducted

### *Research Instrument*

The survey instrument consists of four sections; Section A probes the respondent demographic profile. Section B investigates the Japanese work culture attributes, while Section C examines their workplace stress. Finally, Section D attended the employees' turnover intention. Survey items were adapted from the previous studies relating to Japanese work culture (Batyko, 2012), workplace stress (Kafashpoor et al., 2014) and turnover intentions (Bakhtiar et al., 2016). The questionnaire was validated through a face validity assessment as per proposed by Taherdoost (2016); the instruments were reviewed by researchers with hospitality and human resource background to obtain comments on the structure and clarity of the questions. After completing the pre-test, a pilot test was carried out to test and refine the questionnaire's reliability by using internal consistency reliability. Forty questionnaires were distributed to respondents to verify and confirm the reliability of the survey items. Based on the reliability test, the instruments were found to reliable as it produces Cronbach alpha value higher than 0.70, which is higher than the minimum threshold (Taber, 2018).

### *Data Collection and Analysis*

Before carrying out the data collection, a survey introduction along with the cover letter from the university were mailed to Japanese quick restaurant managers asking permission to conduct the research. The questionnaires were subsequently distributed to 400 restaurant employees which include front of the house-service and back of the house-kitchen workers, and a total of 318 respondents participated in the study. The respondents were briefed on the aim and purpose of the research and how to fill the questionnaire, and they were requested to opine using a Five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The surveys also stated that participation is voluntary, and information was kept confidential and anonymous through a non-disclosure agreement.



Out of 400 distributed questionnaires, only 318 surveys were valid and usable for further analysis. More than half ( $n=187$ ; 57 percent) of the respondents are female, whereas male respondents contributed 43 percent to this study. Meanwhile, 35 percent of the respondents are below 25 years old, and 33 percent of them are between 26 to 30 years old. Forty-two percent of them only work for less than one year while 25 percent of them have been working there between 1 to 3 years. In terms of educational level, 50 percent possessed a Diploma, while 26 percent of completed their undergraduate degree and the rest, 24 percent possessed a certificate.

The data were then coded and keyed using a Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS). First, it is essential to determine underlying constructs for a set of measured variables. By performing exploratory factor analysis (EFA), the number of constructs and the underlying factor structure were identified. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was employed to identify the underlying structure or dimensions in the independent variables in this study. Next, both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were performed to achieve the research objectives. Regression analysis was utilised to examine the relationship between the Japanese work culture and workplace stress and turnover intention. The hierarchical regression analysis was also utilised to test the mediating effect of workplace stress.

## ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This section discusses the analysis and findings of the data gathered., The final data were analysed using the SPSS version 23 software, and the analysis procedure was conducted. A series of statistical methods were explicitly applied Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), regression and hierarchical regression analysis.

### *Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)*

As each item in the construct of this study either newly developed or adapted, they are passed through the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) as part of the goodness of measure. The purpose of this method of analysis is to identify whether a common factor or more than one factor were available in response to the items. In other words, EFA is applied to recognise the most parsimonious set of variables and to form the goodness of approaches used for hypotheses testing as well as to identify the underlying structure of the data matrix. Factor analysis is also often the process used to shrink down the data. According to Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, (2014), there are several assumptions that need to be considered when dealing with the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). First, the Eigenvalues should be more than one, and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy values must exceed .50. The minimum requirement of factor loading is .30 based on .05 or 95% significance level, and lastly, Bartlett's test of sphericity is at least significant at .05.

Exploratory principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation was employed to identify the underlying structure or dimensions in the independent, mediating, and dependent variables in this study. The underlying relationships between items were statistically tested with EFA via the Principal Component Analysis (PCA). The PCA with varimax rotation and Kaiser Normalization on 36 items was

executed. Items with factor loadings below 0.5 and commonalities of less than 0.5 were removed. Also, factors with eigenvalues of less than 1.0 were removed. Table 1 reported the EFA results and the mean score of each item.

Code	Items	Factor Loading	Mean Score	S.D.
<b>Work Ethics (Eigenvalues: 5.379)</b>				
JW6	Working in this company has given me a positive attitude	0.878	4.11	1.096
JW7	I like working in the Japanese organisation background	0.868	4.20	1.103
JW1	I like the way how Japanese work	0.868	4.22	1.113
JW4	I envy the way that employees have to finish their work before the shift end	0.859	4.12	1.069
JW2	Working extra hours is normal this restaurant	0.855	4.11	1.159
JW8	Seeking approval from superior is a must in this restaurant	0.847	3.98	1.051
JW3	I envy the way that the management inculcate discipline among their staff in this restaurant	0.831	3.96	1.078
JW9	This restaurant embraces the SOP while working	0.823	3.93	1.116
JW5	The management of the restaurant encourages a self-motivated attitude	0.813	3.97	1.057
<b>Work Practices (Eigenvalues: 2.670)</b>				
JWP3	I always finish my work and task given early	0.869	4.23	1.003
JWP2	I understand and willing to accomplish the company vision, mission and goal	0.852	4.39	0.922
JWP5	I don't mind finishing the task given in a short period	0.851	4.36	1.007
JWP4	I will finish all the task and work in perfect condition.	0.828	4.24	1.004
JWP1	I can adapt the working practice in this restaurant	0.801	4.28	0.898
JWP6	I always get support from the company in doing my job.	0.732	4.32	0.899
JWP7	I can contribute my idea to my superior on how to perform a task	0.688	4.17	0.965
<b>Hardworking &amp; Loyalty (Eigenvalues: 2.190)</b>				
JL3	I plan to stay in this company to learn more about the organisation system	0.902	1.97	1.035
JL4	I often obey what has been instructed by my superior.	0.900	2.09	1.159
JL2	I don't plan to work in another organisation	0.881	3.83	1.120
JL5	This company is the best place for me to end my career	0.853	3.86	1.142
JL6	I don't encourage my family and friends to work in this company	0.798	1.88	1.030
JL1	I plan to work in this company for an extended period of time	0.735	3.92	0.975
<b>Workplace Stress (Eigenvalues: 2.064)</b>				
WPS5	My working environment is pleasant and safe.	0.840	4.28	0.981
WPS7	I tend to have frequent arguments with superiors, co-workers or customers.	0.837	4.24	0.917
WPS8	I have very little control over my work.	0.836	4.28	1.022
WPS3	There is little flexibility in the scheduling of my work.	0.821	4.21	1.005
WPS2	Long and extended working hours make me stress	0.795	4.28	0.933
WPS1	Handling heavy workload in this restaurant makes me stress	0.784	3.27	0.916
WPS4	I do not receive an adequate amount of acknowledgement and appreciation when my work performance is good.	0.775	3.41	0.931
WPS6	I have always been discriminated at work.	0.740	4.25	0.962
WPS9	I have a proper amount of workload to do in this restaurant.	0.729	2.28	0.990
<b>Turnover Intention (Eigenvalues: 2.011)</b>				
TI3	I plan to stay with this restaurant to develop my career in the long run	0.869	1.73	0.862
TI1	I wish to stay longer in this restaurant instead of looking for a job elsewhere.	0.831	4.27	0.955
TI2	I may leave this restaurant and work for another restaurant in the near future.	0.829	2.39	0.904
TI4	I may not have a promising future if I stay with this organisation	0.800	4.31	0.845
TI5	I am thinking to work in another company	0.540	4.27	0.862
<i>KMO=.871</i>				
<i>Bartlett's Test of Sphericity=1024.859***</i>				
<i>Total Variance explained=61.27%</i>				
<i>N=318</i>				

**Table 1**  
Exploratory Factor Analysis  
output

Table 1 reports that the KMO measure of sampling adequacy value was 0.871, indicating that the items were interrelated, and they shared a common factor. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was also found to be significant (Chi-Square=1024.85;  $p < .001$ ) indicating the significance of the correlation matrix, and thus factor analysis undertaken as appropriate. From the EFA, only five elements were extracted with six items deleted. The five factors were: i) hard work and loyalty (HWL=three items deleted); ii) work ethic (WE=one item deleted); iii) work practices (WP= one item deleted); iv) workplace stress (WPS=one item deleted) and v) turnover intention (TI).

### *Descriptive Analysis*

Referring to Table 1, this section descriptively explains the respondent's perception towards the Japanese restaurant working culture, workplace stress and their turnover intention. These dimensions were analysed accordingly looking at the mean scores and the standard deviation rated by the respondents. Majority of the respondents agree that they like the way how the Japanese work (M= 4.11, item JW1). For them working extra hours is a norm in the restaurant (M= 4.20, item JW2). Most of the respondents agree that they like to work in a Japanese oriented organisation (M = 3.96, item JW7). Several working ethics is commendable in the Japanese organisation as management encourage self-motivated attitude (M= 4.11, item JW5), instilling discipline (M= 4.22, item JW3), employee finishing work before shift end (M= 4.12, item JW4) and all the job done is in accordance with the established SOP (M= 3.97, item JW9). In addition, an employee must always seek approval from the superior before deciding anything (M= 3.93, item JW8). Finally, the respondent believes that working in the company has endowed them with a positive attitude (M=3.98, item JW6).

In term of the construct of hardworking and loyalty, the majority of the respondent agree that they do not encourage their family and friend to work in this company (M= 3.92, item JL6). However, they still obey the instruction given by the superior (M= 3.86, item JL4). This is seen as a way to learn more about the organisation system (M= 3.83, item JL3). Nonetheless, they disagree that the company is the best place to end their career (M= 1.88, item JL5). The statement is supported as they plan to work in other organisation (M= 2.09, item JL2) and disagree to work in the company for a long period of time (M= 1.97, item JI1). Next, most of the respondents agree that they can adapt the work practices in the restaurant (M= 4.23, item JWP1). They are also willing to accomplish the vision, mission and goal set by the company (M= 4.39, item JWP2). In order to achieve that, they always finish the task and work given early (M= 4.36, item JWP3), in a short period of time (M= 4.28, item JWP5) and perfect condition (M= 4.24, item JWP4). Furthermore, they always get the support in finishing the job (M= 4.32, item JWP6) as well as contributing idea on how to accomplish a task to my superior (M= 4.17, item JWP7).

Focusing on workplace stress, most of the respondents agree that handling heavy workload stress them out (M=4.28, item WPS1). They also agree that prolonged and extended working hours make them stress (M= 4.24, item WPS2). This no-

tion is supported as they believed that they do not have the appropriate amount of workload in the restaurant (M= 2.28, item WPS9). Furthermore, is it evident that there is little flexibility in the scheduling of work (M= 4.28, item WPS3), and they have very little control over their work (M= 4.25, item WPS8). In addition, they also agree that of not receiving ample amount of acknowledgement over the performance of a good job (M= 4.21, item WPS4). On the other hand, the respondents slightly agree that they always been discriminated at work (M= 3.27, item WPS6) and tend to argue with superiors, co-workers or customers (M= 3.41, item WPS7). Nonetheless, they agree that the working environment is pleasant and safe (M= 4.28, item WPS5).

Lastly, in term of turnover intention construct, majority of them disagree on wishing to stay longer without looking for another job (M= 1.73, item TI1) and staying in the long run to develop a career in the restaurant (M= 2.39, item TI3). In this matter, the respondents agree that they are thinking of working in other company (M= 4.27, item TI5) and they might not have a promising future staying with the organisation (M= 4.31, item TI4). They also agree on the intention of leaving the restaurant and work for another restaurant in the near future (M= 4.27, item TI2).

### *Regression Analysis*

In response to the study hypotheses, regression analysis was utilised. This technique was proposed to examine the relationship between one continuous dependent variable and a number of independent variables or predictors. It is a realistic procedure in measuring the connections among the variables, and it helps to inscribe a variety of research questions as it facilitates the researcher to examine on how the variables able to predict a particular outcome (Gunst, 2018). The central hypothesis and three sub-hypotheses were tested. Table 2 reports the regression analyses output.

Based on the regression analysis output as per Table 3, the Japanese work culture is able to explain 36.4 percent ( $R^2=.244$ , F-change=140.477\*\*\*) of the observed variance in workplace stress. The Beta value ( $\beta=.494$ \*\*) demonstrated that Japanese work cultures significantly contributed to the prediction of the employee workplace stress. Therefore, hypothesis one ( $H_1$ ) is accepted as Japanese work culture would affect employee workplace stress. On the first sub-hypothesis ( $H_{1a}$ ), the regression analysis implies that hard work and loyalty able to explain 18.4 percent ( $R^2=.184$ , F-change=134.695\*\*\*) of the variance in employee workplace stress. The beta value ( $\beta=.290$ \*\*) demonstrated that hard work and loyalty influence employee workplace stress; thus, hypothesis  $H_{1a}$  is accepted. Next, the result of the second sub- hypothesis ( $H_{1b}$ ) confirms that work ethics produced 17.4 percent ( $R^2=.174$ ,

**Table 2**  
Regression analysis between  
(Japanese work cultures and  
employee workplace stress)

Predictors	Work Culture	Hard work & loyalty	Work Ethics	Work Practices
<i>Dependent variable: Employee Workplace Stress</i>				
B	0.494***	0.290***	0.272***	0.223***
R <sup>2</sup>	0.244	0.184	0.174	0.150
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.238	0.181	0.174	0.147
F – Change	140.477***	134.695***	130.394***	119.826***

Note: \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

F-change =130.394\*\*\*) of the variance in the employee workplace stress. The value of ( $\beta=.272^{***}$ ) demonstrated that Japanese work ethics significantly influence employee workplace stress, thus hypothesis  $H_{1b}$  is accepted. Referring to the third sub-hypothesis ( $H_{1c}$ ), work practices can explain 15 percent ( $R^2 =.150$ , F-change=119.826\*\*\*) of the variance in the employee workplace stress. Again, the beta value ( $\beta=.223^{***}$ ) shows that work practices as part of Japanese work cultures influence employee workplace stress; thus, hypothesis  $H_{1c}$  is accepted.

Next, this study analysed the relationship between workplace stress and employee turnover intention. Table 3 reports the regression analyses output.

Table 3 reports that workplace stress is able to explain 73.9 percent ( $R^2=.739$ , F-change=1074.692\*\*\*) of the observed variance in the turnover intention. More specifically, workplace stress ( $\beta=.860^{***}$ ) were found to be significantly and positively influence the employee’s turnover intention. This result indicates that workplace stress attribute strongly influences employee’s turnover intention; thus, hypothesis  $H_2$  is accepted. In response to the third hypotheses, regression analysis was utilised. One main hypothesis and four sub-hypotheses were tested. Table 5 reports the regression analyses output.

Based on the regression analysis output as per Table 4, the Japanese work culture is able to explain 36.4 percent ( $R^2 =.364$ , F-change=171.811\*\*\*) of the observed variance in turnover intention. The Beta value ( $\beta =.603^{***}$ ) demonstrated that Japanese work cultures significantly contributed to the prediction of the employee turnover intention. Therefore, hypothesis one ( $H_3$ ) is accepted as Japanese work culture would affect employee turnover intention. On the first sub-hypothesis ( $H_{3a}$ ), the regression analysis implies that hard work and loyalty able to explain 14.9 percent ( $R^2 =.149$ , F-change=66.395\*\*\*) of the variance in employee turnover intention. The beta value ( $\beta=.386^{***}$ ) demonstrated that hard work and loyalty influence employee’s turnover intention; thus, hypothesis  $H_{3a}$  is accepted.

Next, the result of the second sub- hypothesis ( $H_{3b}$ ) confirms that work ethics produced 16.1 percent ( $R^2 =.161$ , F-change=24.500\*\*\*) of the variance in the employ-

Predictor	Workplace stress
<i>DV: Turnover intention</i>	
$\beta$	0.860***
$R^2$	0.739
Adj. $R^2$	0.739
F – Change	1074.692***

**Table 3**  
Regression analysis between employee workplace stress and turnover intention

Note: \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

Predictor	Work Culture	Hard work & loyalty	Work Ethics	Work Practices
Dependent variable: Turnover Intention				
$\beta$	0.603***	0.386***	0.246***	0.305***
$R^2$	0.364	0.249	0.161	0.193
Adj. $R^2$	0.359	0.247	0.158	0.191
F – Change	171.811***	166.395***	124.500***	138.841***

**Table 4**  
Regression analysis between (Japanese work cultures and employee turnover intention)

Note: \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

ee turnover intention. The value of ( $\beta=.246^{***}$ ) demonstrated that Japanese work ethics significantly influence employee turnover intention; thus, hypothesis  $H_{3b}$  is accepted. Referring to the third sub-hypothesis ( $H_{3c}$ ), work practices can explain 19.3 percent ( $R^2 =.193$ ,  $F\text{-change} = 38.841^{***}$ ) of the variance in the employee turnover intention. Again, the beta value ( $\beta=.305^{***}$ ) shows that work practices as part of Japanese work culture influence employee turnover intention; thus, hypothesis  $H_{3c}$  is accepted.

**Mediation Analysis**

The fourth hypothesis ( $H_4$ ) predicts the mediating effect of workplace stress on the relationship between Japanese work cultures and employee turnover intention. The mediation analysis was conducted through the PROCESS using 1000 bootstrap samples for bias correction and to establish 95 percent confidence intervals (Hayes, Montoya, & Rockwood, 2017). The result is exhibited in Table 5.

Table 5 reports that the path between Japanese work culture and workplace stress produced a significant relationship ( $\beta=.257^{***}$ ). Meanwhile, the path between workplace stress and turnover intention is significant ( $\beta=1.501^{***}$ ). The total effect is also found to be significant ( $\beta=.2890^{***}$ ). Moving to the direct effect (c'), the result showing an insignificant coefficient ( $\beta=.1676^{***}$ ) and considering the indirect effect (a\*b) showing significant confidence interval due to the absence of zero between the lower CI and upper CI; thus this study proposes a mediation effect (Hayes et al., 2017). Specifically, workplace stress mediates the relationship between Japanese work cultures and employee turnover intention. Therefore, hypothesis four ( $H_4$ ) is accepted.

**MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS IN THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN CONTEXT**

This study shed lights on understanding the influence of foreign work cultures toward local employee’s turnover intention. In this context, the Japanese work cultures namely work ethics, hardworking and loyalty and the work practices inter-related in harbouring the Malaysian employees’ turnover intention. This, in other

	Hypotheses	Coefficient ( $\beta$ ) t-value	Results
Path (a)	Japanese work culture → Workplace stress	$\beta = 0.257^{***}$ t = 5.182	Significant
Path (b)	Workplace stress → Turnover intention	$\beta = 1.501^{***}$ t = 31.666	Significant
Path (c)	Japanese work culture → Turnover intention	$\beta = 0.2890^{***}$ t = 4.949	Significant
Path (c')	Japanese work culture + Workplace stress → Turnover intention	$\beta = 0.1676$ t = 4.5399	Significant
Indirect Effect (a*b)	Japanese work culture * Workplace stress	$\beta = 0.3751$ LCI: 0.534 UCI: 0.193	Significant
$H_4$	Workplace stress mediate the relationship between Japanese work culture and employee turnover intention	Since there is no 0 in the indirect effect (a*b) CI, partial mediation is confirmed (Zhao et al., 2010)	Mediation effect exists

**Table 5**  
Mediation analysis

Note: \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

words, indicates that the Malaysian employees who work in quick Japanese restaurants are slightly less comfortable with the work cultures, thus tending to leave the organisation. This is evidenced when more than half of the respondents in this study are having experience working with the Japanese restaurants for less than three years. Turnover intentions would lead to actual quitting, and it is costly; thus, it is crucial to understand the causes of turnover intentions. The influential hierarchical culture which requires employees to respect their superiors strongly, practice the long work hours and overtime work are not applicable in the modern world and with younger generations.

These scenarios were undoubtedly drawn several practical implications to the employees and management of the restaurant. The Japanese restaurant management should be more tolerated with the local employees need and wants, especially in regard to the hierarchical culture and long work hours. The cultural interaction affects work attitude and performance; specifically, on employee loyalty towards the organisation. They need to improve their human resource management systems and make them friendly to work and family life. By improving the employee work status and environment, it may lessen their on-job psychological stress. The research findings also may assist the translation of work stress prevention theory into practice by highlighting the need to control employees work stress in order to enhance the performance of the organisation.

### **THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS**

This study tested the relationships among Japanese work cultures on Malaysian workers' work stress and their turnover intention. This is in line with the propositions and findings in prior studies (Batyko, 2012; Gordon, 2018; Goydke & Herbes, 2016; Takagi & Tagami, 2019). The results provide a strong indication that Japanese work culture positively contributes to turnover intention. It was found that Japanese work cultures namely work ethics, hard work and loyalty, and the work practices thrive Malaysian employees' turnover intention. The regression analysis confirms that hard work and loyalty, work ethics, work practices influence employee turnover intention. Likewise, Batyko (2012) and Takagi and Tagami (2019) claimed that hard work, loyalty, work ethics, and work practices are some of the essential characteristics of Japanese work cultures. Thus, the study results offer strong support for the assertion that hard work and loyalty is the primary determinant of staff turnover in the Japanese restaurant in Malaysia.

Many researchers propose that Japanese employees work harder and are loyal to their employers because of the social pressures of their families and the environment (Aljaji et al., 2016; Ono, 2018). Long workdays became the norm and an indicator of loyalty and commitment to the company (Ono, 2018) in exchange for some degree of job security and benefits (Ali & Rana, 2017; Demerouti et al., 2013). Similarly, this study found that most Japanese restaurant in Malaysia expect the employees to work hard and loyal to management (Takei & Alston, 2018). However, this study found that Japanese loyalty and hard work elevated workplace stress among their employees (Bakhtiar et al., 2016; Franklin, 2017; Iwasaki et al., 2006).

The result of this study also suggests that long work hours are the biggest reason why job turnover is high among Japanese restaurant workers.

The present study also aimed to reveal how Japanese restaurant works ethics turnover intention. In term of work ethics, employees in Japan are generally known for their obligation to their places of work, and they work to succeed and prosper (Bakhtiar et al., 2016; Tsutsumi et al., 2001). However, the personal responsibility of the Japanese employee is in most cases point towards workplace stress and eventually health concerns (Cheng et al., 2012; Iwasaki et al., 2006; Kuroda & Yamamoto, 2016). Consistent with the findings of several studies, this study showed that Japanese work ethics influence the employee intention to search for another job. Another significant result is that work practices are the second strongest predictor for turnover intention. The present study found that Japanese work practices thrive employees' turnover intention. Such widespread discussion and consensus are a distinctive characteristic of Japanese employee work practices and management style (Yanase & Limpaphayom, 2017; Gill & Wong, 1998). As the Japanese work culture is too demanding, they tend to leave the organisation prematurely (Nakagawa et al., 2014; Liu-Farrer, 2011; Peltokorpi, 2013).

One more important finding is that work stress is found to mediate the effect of Japanese work culture on turnover intention. It is plausible for an employee who works in ever-demanding Japanese work culture to experience work stress; leading them towards intention to quit and search better job prospect. This finding is in line with similar studies; work with fussy guests and arguments and tensions among fellow employees or co-workers turned out to be more prevalent in term of stress (Hon, Chan, & Lu, 2013; Jung & Yoon, 2014; Ross, 1995). Various studies also claimed that workplace stress is a leading variable of workers' exhaustion and affect their job satisfaction and overall performance (Anthony-McMann et al., 2017; Bakhtiar et al., 2016; Jung & Yoon, 2014; Ross, 1995; Zhao & Ghiselli, 2016) and would lead them searching for new employment.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that there is a need for employees work stress prevention. It is the employer responsibility to explores ways of reducing workplace stress and enhance their businesses competitiveness. Future researchers should always integrate the role of culture in the aspect of job satisfaction, job performance and organisational withdrawal. Besides, it is essential to note that the current study inherently has limitations. The present study does not cover all Japanese restaurant in Malaysia as the researchers focus on the Klang Valley setting. There could be an element of possible biases; thus, future study should try to broaden the scope of future research by including other Japanese-based restaurants in Malaysia. Besides, although this study has highlighted a range of exciting and significant findings on the influence of Japanese work cultures toward Malaysian employee's turnover intention, the result could not be generalised as this is only undertaken in the Japanese restaurants who operated in Malaysia.



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