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## REALISING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS VIA ORGANISATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH WORK PLAN: RESOURCE-BASED VIEW PERSPECTIVE

**Corina Joseph<sup>1</sup> , Nur Izyan Ismail <sup>2\*</sup> & Siti Aimi Yasin<sup>3</sup>**

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### ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 outbreak not only hit the world economy but also negatively impacted people's mental health as Covid-19 became a foundation of intense stress for the entire global population. The first objective of this paper is to review the latest strategies related to promoting mental health work plans to stay relevant in this uncertain environment. The second objective is to suggest the importance of an organisational mental health work plan as the organisational capability using the Resource-based View Theory to sustain competitive advantage. This paper recommends several actions that promote the implementation of an organisational mental health work plan i.e. 1) empathetic leadership; 2) proper communication; 3) moral or psychological support; and, 4) promote mental health awareness. This is among the first paper that conceptualises the organisational mental health work plan as the organisational capability. This paper also proposes a hierarchical model of the mental health work plan for the business, national, and sustainable development goals.

## **1. Introduction**

The coronavirus (Covid-19) attacked humans broadly starting in the year 2020 causing great damage and loss of life. Covid-19 is a nightmare to all people worldwide, especially those who are badly impacted by the virus. On March 31, 2020, the World Health Organisation (WHO) stated the virus has spread to 202 countries with 693,224 confirmed cases and 33,391 deaths which means a global illness outbreak threatening and terrifying the entire world. The Malaysian government commenced various measures to prevent the spreading of Covid-19 including travel bans to and from countries with a high level of infection for example Italy, Iran, and South Korea (Wong & Alias, 2021). The Malaysian government also announced the national movement control order (MCO) to control the outbreak on 18 March 2020 including the closing of schools and higher education institutions, prohibition of movements interterritorial and states, prohibition of gatherings across the country including sports, religious, cultural and social activities (Wong & Alias, 2021; Wong et al., 2021).

The execution of MCO gave an undesirable impact on the economy and caused downfalls to businesses especially companies that are struggling to survive. National MCO announced squeezed the global supply chain of goods and services where most businesses show a major reduction in revenue (Joseph et al., 2020). Social distancing policies, self-isolation orders, and travel restrictions caused a decreased workforce for all economic sectors and loss of employment (Wong et al., 2021). The closing of schools and instruction of working from home by the Malaysian government has impacted business operations, and consequently reduction in the demand for commodities (Wong et al., 2021). Nonetheless, certain businesses are allowed to operate such as restaurants and cafes, but their operations are restricted to only takeaways and deliveries (Wong & Alias, 2021). Consequently, all these challenges pushed businesses to face financial difficulties in meeting expenses, putting countless people unemployed and undeniably badly hitting the economy completely.

The Covid-19 outbreak not only hit the world economy but also negatively impacted people's mental health as Covid-19 became a foundation of intense stress for the entire global population. The current pandemic can be connected to numerous stressors that may drain workers' mental health, during and after the pandemic (Hamouche, 2020). A study conducted by Hamouche (2020), stated two mental health outcomes caused by an epidemic outbreak or pandemic which are psychological distress and major depression. Psychological distress refers to a state of an individual's emotional suffering, together with symptoms of depression (e.g. loss of interest and sadness) and anxiety (e.g. restlessness) (Drapeau et al., 2011). Whereas, depression is a psychiatric mood disorder triggered by a person's struggle in surviving stressful life situations, and presents tenacious feelings of sadness, negativity, and difficulty handling routine tasks (Cummins et al., 2015). The severity of mental health problems is similar to other physical diseases as it can influence people's daily lives and family members. Thus, mental health education should be exposed more to the society in order to eliminate prejudice about mental health, and early diagnosis and treatment can be delivered to the mentally ill person.

In Malaysia, Covid-19 undisputedly affected the mental health of citizens because of the series of quarantine orders, and the closure of businesses, industry, and education institutions to curb the spread of the Covid-19 virus. A study conducted by Wong and Alias on Malaysians during the initial phase of the Covid-19 outbreak in Malaysia indicated that study participants were significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic in their family's day-to-day routine for both non-work and work-related travel. The study by Wong and Alias (2021) shows that there are three factors influencing a high anxiety level which are severity and susceptibility, impact, and fear during the early phase of the Covid-19 outbreak. Early diagnosis of anxiety can provide proactive intervention and mental health support to the affected persons (Wong & Alias, 2021).

Mental health problems became one of the health concerns of the Malaysian government due to the constantly growing numbers of mental disorders over the past 10 years even before the Covid-19 pandemic. Consequently, Covid-19 infection significantly has

deteriorated economic, social, and mental health. In Malaysia, there were 78 suicide attempts from March 18 to June 9, 2020, through the early lockdown period as compared to only 64 suicide cases in the previous year, which was not during the Covid-19 period (Koh, 2022). A Malaysian Mental Health Association report issued in October 2020 also indicated mental illness among Malaysians increased "two-fold" during the Covid-19 lockdown, causing more Malaysians to look for counseling; commonly for stress and anxiety-related issues (Yusri, 2022). A survey on mental health and wellness conducted in Malaysia in May 2022 found that 59 percent of the respondents aged between 16 and 24 years and 56 percent of the respondents aged between 25 and 34 years had a higher level of stress or anxiety in the previous 12 months (Statista Research Department, 2022). The results show that the young generation in Malaysia aged between 16 and 34 years who contributed to the economy as human capital highly suffered from mental health problems particularly due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Healthcare workers continuously fought the pandemic as they are involved directly in the management of the patients infected with Covid-19. Consequently, healthcare workers are at risk of suffering psychological symptoms. A study conducted between 1 May 2021 and 31 August 2021 among psychiatric healthcare workers working at the Department of Psychological Medicine, University Malaya Medical Centre (UMMC) revealed that the prevalence of anxiety and depressive symptoms among psychiatric healthcare workers was 22.0 percent and 16.7 percent, respectively (Narendra Kumar et al, 2022). Furthermore, another study conducted involving 200 frontline healthcare workers at UMMC in April and May 2020 discovered a far higher prevalence of anxiety and depression; 36.5 percent and 29.5 percent, respectively (Chow et al, 2021). In the same review, university employees were also exposed to depression, anxiety, and stress symptoms during Covid-19. A study focused on mental health status among staff in a higher institution between September to October 2020 showed that the prevalence of depression, anxiety, and stress symptoms was 26.5 percent, 36.2 percent, and 21.3 percent, respectively (Yusof et al, 2022). All these findings demonstrate that most of the employees are emotionally suffering during a challenging situation, for instance, the Covid-19 pandemic.

Organisations are exposed to a dynamic and uncertain environment specifically due to Covid-19. The changes in technology, political, social, and legal condition provide a great impact on a business's survival (Citeman, 2009). Consequently, companies must come out with a work plan in order to provide direction, lessen waste and redundancy, reduce the impact of change, and set the standards to facilitate control (Citeman, 2009). An effective work plan will drive organisational focus and objectives toward desired results (United Nations, 2015). In facing mental health issues at the workplace, a specific work plan is suggested to be integrated into the overall organisational action plans.

The first objective of this paper is to review the latest strategies related to promoting good mental health work plans to stay relevant in this uncertain environment. The second objective is to suggest the importance of a good mental health work plan as an organisational capability using the Resource-based View Theory to sustain competitive advantage. The definition of a good mental health work plan, the importance of good mental health in the organisation, strategies related to promoting good mental health, Resource-based View Theory, organisational good mental health work plan, and sustainability are discussed in the following sections. The future directions of a good mental health work plan are clarified in the closing section.

## **2. Definition of a Good Mental Health Work Plan**

In Malaysia, similar to other countries, the Covid-19 pandemic has initiated an economic crisis and social disruptions. The social distancing policies, self-isolation order, and travel restrictions, together with employment and financial uncertainty, caused a substantial mental health crisis distressing the well-being of populations all over the world (Wong, et al., 2021). In Malaysia, the

undesirable impact on mental health was proven during the early phase of the Covid-19 pandemic (Wong & Alias, 2021).

Mental health is important since humans need psychological and emotional well-being to be productive and live normally. People need to express and experience their emotions as it is part of life and promotes good mental health. World Health Organisation (WHO) describes mental health as a state of well-being when an individual realises his or her own capabilities, can manage the normal stresses of life, can work effectively and fruitfully, and is capable to contribute towards the community. According to Fusar-Poli et al. (2020), individuals in good mental health are normally sad, unwell, and angry as this is part of a normal life for a human being. There are three mechanisms of mental health which are emotional well-being, psychological well-being, and social well-being (Fusar-Poli et al., 2020). Emotional well-being consists of happiness, interest in life, and satisfaction while psychological well-being involved liking most parts of an individual's personality, being good at managing everyday tasks and responsibilities, having virtuous relationships with others, and being fulfilled with personal life (Fusar-Poli, 2020). Furthermore, social well-being involves positive functioning and contribution to society, feeling part of a community, and considering that society is the finest place for all people (Fusar-Poli et al., 2020). Consequently, to obtain good mental health, an individual should get support not only from family members and friends but also from society by providing adequate support and accepting a mentally ill person as a part of society.

Mental illness does not happen abruptly but arises after a person suffers for a long time because of many factors that lead to and trigger distress and depression. Psychological distress and depression are the impacts of intense or continuous stress which have not been properly managed, mainly due to the person's struggle to handle stressful life situations (Cummins et al., 2015; Drapeau et al., 2011). A study conducted by Wong and Alias (2021) found that people with poorer health status had higher probabilities of developing depression compared to individuals with a higher health perception. Besides, the study also found that young people, particularly students, females, and individuals with bad financial situations, were more exposed to mental health symptoms such as depression, anxiety, and stress. The destructive mental effect of the people continues to increase even though the shift from Conditional Movement Control Order (CMCO) to Recovery Movement Control Order (RMCO) due to unexpected life situations during the pandemic, including job loss, financial difficulty, and extended confinement at home (Wong & Alias, 2021).

Mental illness is not a remote problem but it arises across the world and worsens because of the pandemic Covid-19. The number of cases of mental health problems rises even after the quarantine order was lifted and most businesses and industries are back to normal operation. In China, a study conducted by Hou et al. (2020) found that depression and anxiety increased among the Chinese population during the Covid-19 pandemic. Females, fewer adjusted to the epidemic, spent more than 60 minutes on Covid-19-related information and suffered higher stress would raise the severity of depression and anxiety (Hou et al., 2020). Social media may lead to information overload related to Covid-19, hence, intervention should be executed, such as counseling over hotlines and social media, posters in public, and mental health promotion programmes on television, radio, and social media (Hou et al., 2020; Gao et al., 2020). Therefore, individuals have to take corrective actions to protect themselves from fictitious information, especially from unauthorised or illegal sources such as social media platforms that can initiate unpleasant reactions such as panic and anxiety.

A work plan is a regular tool used by a decent business to plan their particular project or tasks that need to be accomplished in workdays. According to the United Nations (2015), work plans are used by managers to communicate objectives and strategies to employees and develop work agendas for an individual. United Nations define work planning as the process of determining what a company aims to do for a period of the work cycle. The work plans should be developed with the direction and attention of the strategic plan and should encompass

procedures in detail that clarify the services and value that will be provided (United Nations, 2015). A work plan also can be described as an approach designed to resolve problems and increase employees' productivity by listing the goal, strategies, tasks, and procedures for any project (Weedmark, 2019). Indeed, a work plan is vital as a roadmap to employees that describe a project from beginning to end.

Employees are special and unique resources, unlike other business financial property, for instance, employees are the human capital that comprehends social skills, education and technical skills, mental health, and personal emotional state. Covid-19 has a serious negative impact directly or indirectly on employees that may produce various bad consequences and create specific fears known as Stress by Corona (SBC) (Opatha, 2020). The fears include the fear of losing a job; the fear of continuity of business operations; the fear of inability to implement plans developed and the fear of inability of formulating new plans for a better future (Opatha, 2020).

The mental health work plan should be introduced by the organisation to reduce the negative impact of uncertain situations particularly due to Covid-19 on the employees. Mental health problems, such as depression and anxiety, are the main reasons for incapacity and early retirement in various nations and directly become a major burden to economies, demanding policy action by developing mental health work plans in organisations (World Health Organisation, 2015). The managers and human resource experts have to develop an intervention mental health work plan for the period throughout and after Covid-19, to sustain an efficient and productive employee (Hamouche, 2020). Mental health work plans could be defined as strategies or mitigation measures that need to be developed by companies to reduce potential negative impacts on individuals' mental health which consist of short- and long-term organisational plans (Hamouche, 2020).

### **3. Importance of Mental Health Work Plan in an Organisation**

When Covid-19 cases are skyrocketing around the world, the working style in an organisation has changed. It requires staff to continue working remotely and receive more workload burdens which negatively impacted the mental health of employees and leads to decreased performance (International Labour Organisation, 2021). Unsurprisingly, many employees often dealt with mental health in the workplace such as anxiety, depression, stress, and burnout when working in a stressful environment (Cai et al., 2020; Gabriel & Aguinis, 2022). It is crucial to provide a working environment that is psychologically safe to work in to sustain good mental health among employees, besides it is one of the most critical aspects of organisational success.

The mental health work plan is essential to prepare employers in helping employees who are struggling with bad mental health and ensure good corporate well-being. The work plan is helpful to encourage employees to be more open about their feelings, and their job and enable managers to understand and cater to employees' needs. This has become a realisation among employers to prioritise the employees' mental health as people with good mental conditions are more likely to be more productive and perform well while they are working (Hamouche, 2020; World Health Organisation, 2020).

Poor mental health is displaying bad consequences on employers' perspectives in terms of productivity. This can be seen by observing the level of absenteeism and presenteeism of employees (Johnston et al., 2019). Employees that have severe depression symptoms are more likely to be absent from work because of a depressed mood and not getting proper sleep which prevents them from performing their job properly. Potential human error, lack of work accuracy, and high exposure to injuries and accidents can be avoided when they are mentally ready to work (Papandrea & Azzi, 2020).

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Control (2019), working with a good mental state can increase job engagement, build a good rapport with co-workers and enhance physical capability and daily functioning. Employees would feel more engaged in their work which leads to performance improvement when they are able to give full attention to their job for a long period, put more effort into job responsibility, and feel emotionally attached to the job roles given to them (Tisu et al., 2020). The work plan also can help the company in terms of the financial aspect. Employers can lower the expenditure incurred on health care for their organisation and employees as mental health has a connection with physical health, hence poor mental health can contribute to physical sicknesses such as hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, headaches, and others (Papandrea & Azzi, 2020).

The mental health action plan is imperative and can be used as a preventive measure. The work plan is not only applicable to employees who have mental health problems, but it is also useful to employees that are in a good state of mind (Mehta, 2022). This can help employees with what they need to do to keep mentally healthy at work. If employees show early symptoms that worsen their mental health condition, managers can address the issue early and deal with it in the future efficiently to help the employees. As a result, good mental health is imperative for employees to maintain their work performance especially when they are working in a decent workplace, consequently, the company gains benefits in both financial and non-financial aspects.

#### **4. Development of Mental Health Work Plan in an Organisation**

Employers must always be thoughtful in improving employees' mental well-being by addressing mental health issues in the workplace. The employees are facing a few challenges due to the Covid-19 pandemic such as received disturbance at home when working from home, no proper workspace, motivational issues, and more workload burden which contribute the mental health problem among the workers (Hamouche, 2020; Muzammir, 2020). Recognizing and promoting mental health is imperative in creating a safe and healthy workplace in line with sustainable development goal 3 (SDG 3) – Good Health and Well-being, therefore mental health work plans must be developed by organisations during and after the pandemic. To achieve the first objective of this paper, several procedures for developing mental health work plan in the workplace are discussed in this section.

LaMontagne et. al., (2014) presented an integrated approach to mental health work plan as shown in Figure 1, which consists of three (3) main areas that are in line with the World Health Organisation (2022) guidelines.

1. Prevention of mental health problems

Employers who prioritise employees' mental health should access and mitigate any psychological risks that can influence mental illness at every level of management regardless of job position, gender, age, and disability such as workload burden, lack of staff, short deadlines, abuse, and insufficient office equipment. The organisation needs to come up with proper controls in dealing with work-related mental health problems since the emergence of Covid-19 that can ease employees' burdens such as offering flexible working hours, allowing to remotely, modifying work schedules according to situations for those who tested positive for Covid-19 and others.

2. Promotion of good mental health

Organisations need to develop mental health work plans that are able to promote good mental health in the workplace by displaying positive aspects of work and appreciating employees' strengths and capabilities. The manager of each management level and the employees themselves must be equipped with knowledge and skills in handling mental

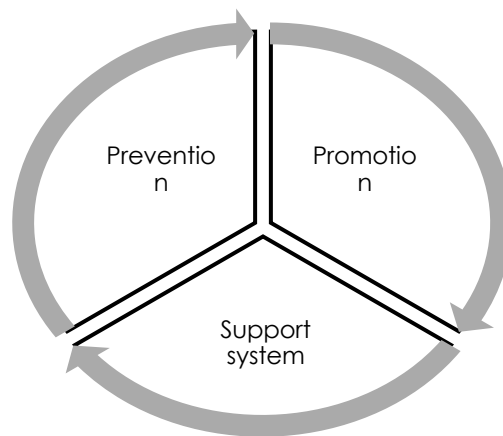


issues to ensure they are capable to overcome any unexpected event that arise due to Covid-19. Employers also must offer open communication and be a good listener to encourage employees to open up about their mental health problems to superiors, hence can keep employees stay longer in the company as they feel connected to the organisation and are pleased to work in a psychologically safe workplace.

For example, one company in Malaysia, Glove Corp Bhd has organised mental health training and talks to their employees and successfully attracted them to accept consultations for counseling dan psychotherapy as they felt comfortable to seek help from professionals (The Malaysian Reserve, 2022).

3. Establishment of a support system

Mental health work plan needs to include any availability of a support system provided to employees who are living with mental health conditions. For example, the proper return-to-work plan offered to employees that went through the quarantine period or working remotely and have suffered mental issues during the period.



*Figure 1: Integrated Approach of Mental Health Work Plan*

Organisations may already develop mental health policies or made a few initiatives to support the mental health of employees. As presented in Figure 2, the following procedures launched by Beyond Blue can be used in improving the existing mental health work plan (Beyond Blue, assessed December 2022).

1. Obtain senior leadership support

Every group of people may have a different goal to address mental issues. Senior leaders, for instance, are motivated by legal, ethical or moral, and financial aspects when dealing with the mental health of their staff, while others are driven by improving productivity, efficiency, risk management, and securing good relationships with clients. Therefore, it is crucial to ensure the work plan has a connection with the goals, values, and key performance indicators (KPIs) of the company. It is also imperative to establish a steering committee where senior leaders are personally engaged in developing a work culture that is accepting and supportive of employees who are struggling with mental health issues.

2. Determine needs

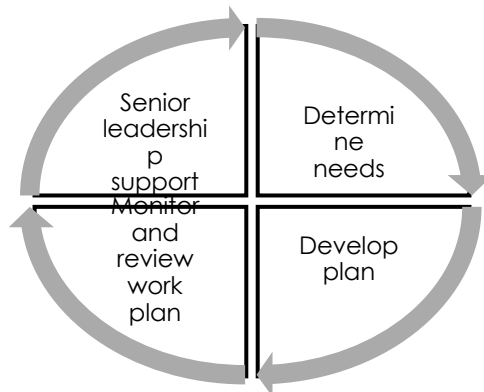
Organisations need to identify the existing policies, programmes, supports, and practices. Subsequently, they need to review and evaluate its policies by accessing existing data and research such as absenteeism rates, turnover rates, and employee performance review feedback to find any loopholes, then consult with employees and other stakeholders to develop an updated mental health work plan.

3. Develop a plan

Prior to revising the existing mental health work plan, an organisation must identify its desired outcomes and goals. They may seek collaborations with internal expertise in the organisation or external expertise if necessary to gain knowledge and find additional support such as psychologists and insurance companies. For example, the collaboration between an insurance provider, AIA Bhd, and ThoughtFull, a Southeast Asian-based digital mental health platform as AIA has launched a first-in-market Mental Health Solution that enables employers to provide mental health support to employees who are struggling with mental illness (Murugesan, 2022).

4. Monitor and review the implementation of the latest work plan

The organisation must monitor the implementation of the most recent mental health work plan to ensure that it is being carried out for the right people with the best methods for the best results. Feedback and the ability to understand employee concerns are important to determine the effectiveness of the most recent work plan at the workplace.



*Figure 2: Procedure for Improving the Existing Mental Health Work Plan*

## **5. Resource-based View Theory, Mental Health Work Plan, and Sustainability**

This section is associated with the second objective of this paper. Resource-Based View Theory (RBVT) is a theory that considers a firm's resources as an important element in designing a competitive advantage. Resource-Based View Theory combines the analysis of the firm's internal and external environment. The three types of resources are tangible resources, intangible resources, and organisational capabilities. Tangible resources are assets that can be identified physically, for example, physical assets, financial resources, organisational resources, and technological resources. Intangible resources are the assets that are not physically identified due to their inclusion in the business's daily activities, such as human capital and the firm's reputation. Human resources involve trust, experience, the ability of staff, managerial skills, and the efficacy of work teams. Innovation resources are technical and scientific expertise and ideas, and

innovation capabilities. Reputation resources include brand names, reputation for fairness with suppliers, and reliable product quality with customers. Organisational capabilities are the capabilities and abilities that the company employs to convert the inputs into outputs such as the capability to employ, influence, and maintain manpower (Dess et. al., 2016).

In creating a competitive advantage, a resource needs to own four key attributes i.e. valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable, and non-substitutable (Barney, 1991). Valuable is a situation wherein the company's resources are able to make use of the outside opportunity or lower external threats (Hesterly & Barney, 2010). In the meantime, a company's resource is rare when there are only a small number of its rivals that possess equivalent resources. Another attribute of a resource's sustainable competitive advantage is imperfectly imitable (Barney, 1991). This happens when the firm's resources are pricey to be emulated by its rivals due to physical uniqueness, path dependency, causal ambiguity, or social complexity (Dess et. al., 2016). The final attribute of a firm's sustainable competitive advantage is non-substitutable i.e. there are no tactically equivalent useful resources that by themselves are not unique or incomparable.

In this paper, the mental health work plan is perceived as an essential organisational capability that permits business stability in the long run. In Malaysia, if the organisations are unceasingly promoting mental health well-being at the workplace by implementing specific work plans, this would help to materialise both the government's National Mental Health Strategic Plan 2020-2025 and the UN sustainable development goals. In this paper, the mental health action plan refers to the capabilities and abilities that the company uses to transform staff that have mental health issues into staff that have improved well-being. Consequently, staff that have improved well-being would be able to work efficiently and productively, which, in turn, contributes back to the organisation.

Consistent with the RBVT, hence, it is put forward that the mental health work plan is vital to create a sustainable competitive advantage, especially during the post-pandemic recovery era. Organisations must ensure that they own four attributes of competitive advantage that need to be embedded into their strategies and action plans which are as follows:

1. Valuable – Organisations could consider planning and employing strategies that improve employees' mental health. Having mental health work plan could indicate the organisational commitment to uphold the well-being of employees in the organisation.
2. Rare – Organisations may consider how to be unusual i.e. unique as compared to other competitors. For example, reading about mental health prevention strategies and continuous upskilling and reskilling by attending seminars and workshops on mental health prevention strategies.
3. Imperfectly imitable - Distinctiveness is vital to value creation because it reduces competition. Hence, being creative is one way to create a competitive edge. This could be assisted by having employees that possess positive well-being, with minimal mental health problems. The organisations must come up with unique mental health work plans that are embedded in the human resource management or policy.
4. Non-substitutable - To be a source of sustainable competitive advantage means there must be no strategically matching valuable resources that are themselves not rare or unique. This may be possible to achieve if organisations are willing to undertake external environment analysis and acknowledge the availability of internal resources and capabilities at all times, including the unique mental health work plan to promote the well-being of staff.

The following explanation is on the conceptualisation of the mental health work plan and sustainability. The mental health work plan as an organisational capability plays an important role in achieving the UN SDGs agenda. Table 1 presents the connection between the mental health work plan and indicators of sustainability.

Table 1

The connection between Mental Health Work Plan (Organisational Capability) and Sustainability

SDG	Indicators explanation	Connection
3 - Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.	By 2030, reduce by one-third pre-mature mortality from non-communicable diseases (NCDs) through prevention and treatment, and promote mental health and well-being. (Target 3.4)	By implementing the mental health work plan, the well-being of staff at organisations could be promoted.
4 - Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.	By 2030, substantially increase the number of youths and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship. (Target 4.4)	Both formal and informal knowledge acquisition contribute to improvement in the well-being of employees in organisations.
8 - Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.	<p>Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity, and innovation, and encourage the formalisation and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services. (Target 8.3)</p> <p>By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value. (Target 8.5)</p>	As a result of the implementation of the mental health work plan, the well-being of employees would be improved. This would certainly provide positive impacts on others, such as job productivity.
10 - Reduce inequality within and among countries.	By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic, and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic, or status.	As a result of implementing the mental health work plan, this would encourage equality by involving all staff in well-being and expand to be involved in the social, economic, and political. Thus, inequalities

	(Target 10.2) Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies, and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies, and action in this regard. (Target 10.3)	could be reduced.
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Finally, Figure 3 proposes a hierarchical model of the contribution of the mental health work plan to the business, national, and sustainable development goals.

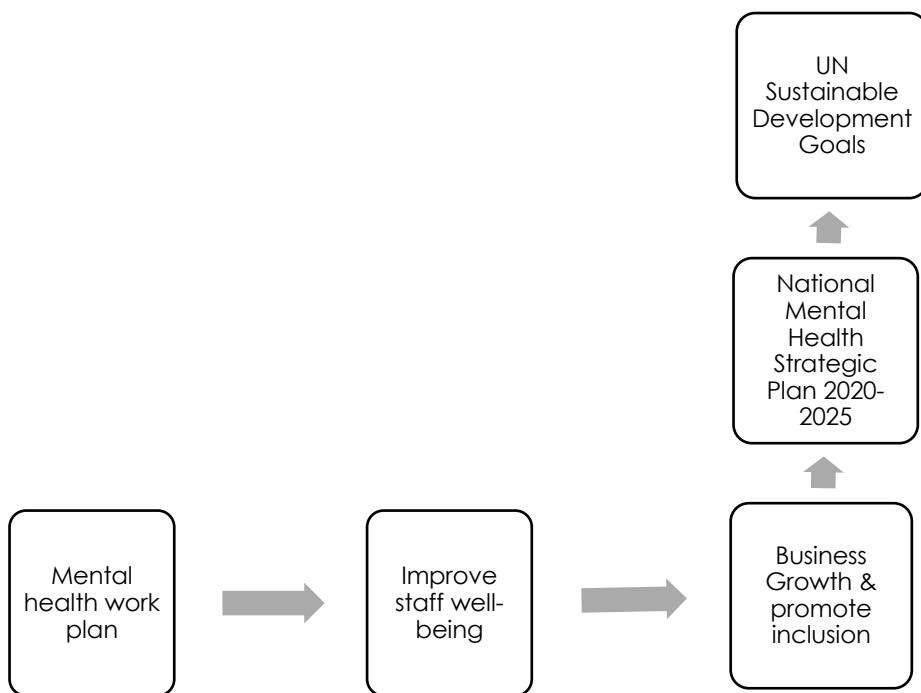


Figure 3: Hierarchical Model of Mental Health Work Plan

## 6. Ways Forward

This paper has reached its objective, which is to suggest several actions to promote good mental health and work plan. The actions are 1) empathetic leadership; 2) proper communication; 3) moral or psychological support; 4) promote mental health awareness. Organisations should implement the latest strategies so as to promote good mental health and work plans to stay relevant in the uncertain environment after the Covid-19 pandemic.

Firstly, managers, as a leader should have empathetic leadership skills by demonstrating the highest level of empathy for their employees at work after Covid-19. Managers should focus on listening to hear the problems employees are facing at the workplace and accepting opinions from employees. For example, providing a flexible working schedule to employees that

allow them to align working hours on the job with their lifestyle, hence can lead to reducing stress level and greater productivity.

Secondly, communication barriers must be prevented between employers and employees. Communication is a key tool in dealing with employees to manage the company's operation. Accurate and up-to-date information about the company's plan and the job should be delivered to the employees when necessary. This can help to ease the feeling of insecurity and uncertainty that crossed employees' minds related to their work. Besides, communicating with professional therapists and attending seminars or workshops conducted by the company also can improve their mental health condition.

Thirdly, offering moral or psychological support is one of the best ways that can support employees emotionally. Employers should offer professional therapist services to employees who have mental health problems such as anxiety, stress, depression, burnout, and others in order to help them in improving their state of mind and motivate themselves to perform well at work in the future. Working with good mental health can increase the performance and productivity of personnel directly.

Lastly, the organisation should actively promote mental health awareness such as conducting seminars or workshops on mental health for the employees. Employers nowadays take employees' mental health into consideration to secure organisational success. Therefore, it is crucial to educate the employees on how to manage properly their stress level and other mental illnesses as bad mental health will affect their performance.

In conclusion, the hierarchical model of good mental health and work plan possibly will contribute significantly to company, nationwide, and sustainable development aims if it is implemented in the government's mental health action plan organised by the Ministry of Health. Furthermore, organisations must be aware and reminded regularly about the importance of good mental health and work plan to stay pertinent in the marketplace. This is because good mental health and work plans provide new opportunities to approach indefinite resources to the organisation.

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### **Authors Contributions**

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### **Conflict of Interest**

There is no conflict of interest associated with this publication.

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