Antecedents and consequences of wandering scholars' affect: The case of the multi-cultural Malaysia in the internationalization era

Abstract

Objective:
This study, drawing upon affective events theory (AET), examines the relationships between work environment features, work events, affective states, and attitudes in the Malaysian academic environment. Specifically, we examine the impact of supervisory support and welfare on role conflict, the impact of role conflict on affective states, and the impact of affective states on job satisfaction using data collected from the international faculty.

Design/methodology/approach:
We collected data from 152 respondents through an online platform and given this study's causal predictive-explanatory nature, we apply partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) for data analysis. In addition, we complement our analysis by examining the nonlinear effects within the model as a robustness check.

Findings:
From an explanatory perspective, we find support for all the hypotheses, implying the applicability of AET in academic contexts. Regarding the predictive perspective, our model exhibits a high out-of-sample predictive power. Importantly, the robustness check provides additional support for our model.

Originality:
This paper is one of the first papers focusing on the verification of AET in the context of international higher education. It applies the recent evaluative guidelines for a solid and rigorous PLS-SEM analysis and proves that the wandering scholars' emotions matter in achieving desirable organizational outcomes in cross-cultural institutions of higher learning.

Implications:
Given that the international faculty comes from different countries, our findings suggest that university managers should formulate and implement policies, which encourage and celebrate cultural diversity to increase the international faculty's job satisfaction. Additionally, policies that improve the process of job designs and descriptions need amendments in a way that reduce the role conflict faced by the multi-cultural faculty which, in turn, leads to negative affect, and ultimately job dissatisfaction.

Keywords: Affective States, Job Satisfaction, Wandering Scholars, Malaysian Higher Education, PLS-SEM

1   Introduction

Higher education literature is replete with studies documenting Higher Education Institutions' (HEI) role in countries' overall advancement and nation building (Symaco and Wan, 2017). Moreover, HEIs play an important role in the technological transfer, talent development, and preparation of skilled and empowered labor force in the current globalization era (Wan and Morshidi, 2018a). Consequently, the notion of a borderless knowledge-driven economy has considerably increased HEI's need to attract international talents (Wildavsky, 2010), while becoming more globalized. Indeed, the role of academics in the borderless knowledge-driven economy is inevitable and the conceptions of academic staff exchange and mobility (Mok, 2012) constitute a global vista that is complex, varied and vast (Saltmarsh and Swirski, 2010).

Many factors encourage the international faculty's mobility, such as economic and non-economic decisions and access to facilities and funding (Mihut et al., 2017). The presence of international faculty in a higher education system is an indicator of the system's degree of internationalization (Wan and Morshidi, 2018b). However, it is more expensive to recruit these wandering scholars than local academics (Altbach and Yudkevich, 2017). Notably, 'wandering scholars' refers to the academics who travel to other countries to work and has been an old feature in higher education (Wan and Morshidi, 2018b), dating back to the Medieval Period (Pietsch, 2010). As reported by Altbach and de Wit (2015), universities generally became less international in the 18th and 19th centuries and then, the 20th century brought a new burst of internationalism in higher education. In this context, the multicultural Malaysia has exhibited its aspiration for a first-rate higher education ecosystem with global prominence. This developing country has been making a serious and concerted effort to internationalize its higher education ecosystem, which is one of the ten changes required for improving higher education as highlighted in the Malaysia Education Blueprint Higher

Education or MEBHE (2015-2025). Being an educational hub in the Southeast Asia (Zin, 2013, Knight and Morshidi, 2011) as a tool to enhance its national competitiveness in the global market (Mok, 2012), this country has maintained a balance between its internationalization and localization needs, albeit with a focus on nation-building and the preservation of its language, culture, and identity (Wan and Morshidi, 2018b). Importantly, the internationalization of higher education in Malaysia started with politically motivated policies and later, it was influenced by economic motivations (Zin, 2013). The term international faculty in the Malaysian higher education system refers to individuals with a foreign passport and being employed full-time on the basis of a one to three-year contract (Wan and Morshidi, 2018b). Since the major role of the international faculty in achieving the predefined goals documented in MEBHE (2015-2025), universities need to understand the international faculty and increase efforts to select, hire, and retain them. This motivated Wan and Morshidi (2018b) to investigate the international faculty' recruitment, integration, and retention at three Malaysian public research universities, which led to categorizing of the international faculty into three groups, namely (1) those recruited to enhance academic programs, (2) those recruited to boost universities' global rankings, and (3) those recruited to meet special needs. These results were consistent with the arguments made by Tham (2013) in terms of recruiting international academic staff and research collaborations to increase the ranking of the universities as well as the findings of Ghasemy et al. (2018) with respect to identifying the top five priorities in the Malaysian academic environment.

Nonetheless, if international faculty are not emotionally prepared, they might not help promote universities and advance societies effectively since there is theoretical and empirical evidence for the influence of emotions on attitudes and behaviors (Weiss and Beal, 2005). Additionally, the culturally diverse international faculty come from different countries and it is well known that emotions' frequency and intensity vary across cultures (Uhl-Bien et al.,

2014). Because the universities have been international organizations (Altbach and de Wit, 2015), the emotion-related issues (e.g., mood contagion, the norms for emotional expression, and emotional labor) in cross-cultural settings can be more complicated (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). This is quite critical since emotions and moods are messages that can be invaluable if heard and understood (Cosmides and Tooby, 2000). Therefore, studying wandering scholars' emotions in multi-cultural universities is crucial in providing a better picture of the antecedents and consequences of their affective states.

Among the existing frameworks to study emotions, affective events theory (AET) (Weiss and Beal, 2005, Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996) has guided several empirical studies. According to AET, the affective responses of individuals (international faculty in our case) to affective work events are the key determinants of their job performance and job satisfaction (Weiss and Beal, 2005). With respect to the affective work event concept, the literature mentions conflict (e.g., role conflict and interpersonal conflict) as one of the widely debated work events and highlights the disruptive effect of low and high levels of conflict in reducing job performance and job satisfaction (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Even though the role of work events and affective states in contributing to job satisfaction has been addressed by numerous studies (e.g., Judge et al. (2006) and Niklas and Dormann (2005)), only few studies (e.g., Wegge et al. (2006)) focused on non-physical work environment features' contribution to individuals' job satisfaction. More specifically, while AET addresses the causal effects of work environment features, events, affect, personality traits, behaviors, and attitudes, higher education researchers have not sufficiently verified its propositions. Hence, the applicability of AET in the international higher education domain is still in question and the area of international faculty's affective states in higher education literature remains unexplored.

Building upon this background, our study examines the basic tenets of AET. We frame our research question as: *What role do affective states play in the relationship between*

work environment features and job satisfaction? For this purpose, we use a sample of 152 international faculty members in the Malaysian higher education and test the relationships in our theoretical model using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). We have different reasons to focus on wandering scholars, which are mainly related to their role in enhancing academic programs and boosting universities' global rankings (Wan and Morshidi, 2018b) and the issues related to cultures and emotions (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014) in cross-cultural universities. Moreover, the implications of the relationship between affect and emotional intelligence (Cherniss et al., 2006) provided us with more substantial rationale for conducting this study.

Our article offers a few main contributions. First, it enriches the literature of affect in the international higher education domain. Second, it highlights affective states' importance and their implications for lives in general and for workplace behaviors (Hazen, 2008) in university settings. Third, it addresses the frequent occurrence of affective reactions to work events that are seen in a diverse range of organizations.

2   Theoretical framework

AET, as this study's basis, implies that work environment features (e.g., welfare, supervisory support, and workload) cause affective work events (e.g., role and interpersonal conflicts) and attitudes (e.g., job satisfaction). The theory also explains how affective work events influence affective reactions and how these, in turn, determine affect-driven behaviors (e.g., job performance) and attitudes. Moreover, AET highlights the moderating role of personality predispositions in the relationship between affective work events and affective reactions, and explains attitudes' importance in influencing judgment-driven behaviors (Weiss and Beal, 2005, Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996).

Given the complexity of this theory's macrostructure, we focus on verifying the AET's basic tenets. More specifically, as exhibited in Figure 1, we assess the impacts of two work environment features, namely supervisory support and welfare, on wandering scholars' job satisfaction, as an attitude. Additionally, we investigate these predictors' effect on role conflict, the effect of role conflict on affective reactions, and the effect of affective reactions on the international faculty's job satisfaction. Furthermore, we add age and tenure, as two of the mostly used covariates (Bernerth and Aguinis, 2016), to our model as a means to address the issue of endogeneity (Sarstedt et al., 2020).

Figure 1 here

In our study, welfare refers to the degree to which the employees are valued and cared for by the organization (Patterson et al., 2005). Supervisory support is viewed as the degree to which employees are supported and understood by their immediate supervisors (Patterson et al., 2005). Role conflict is defined as a situation where an individual cannot respond to conflicting role expectations (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Affective states (e.g., emotions and moods) are experienced as mental states of action readiness arising from cognitive appraisals of events, social interactions, or even thoughts (Frijda, 2008). And last, job satisfaction, as an attitude, is defined as the extent to which a person judges positively or negatively about a job or a job situation (Weiss and Beal, 2005).

2.1 *The link between work environment features and attitudes*

Although the link between work environment features and attitudes is one of the main paths in the AET macrostructure, our review of the literature shows only a scarce number of studies investigating this causal effect. For instance, Eatough et al. (2016) showed that a negative relationship can be expected between illegitimate tasks, as a recently introduced stressor in work environments, and job satisfaction. Additionally, Zacher et al. (2014) found empirical

evidence for the impact of time pressure and coworker support, as work environment features, on employees' job satisfaction. Moreover, the study by Zaniboni et al. (2016) showed that decision authority – as a work environment feature – positively contributes to the workers' job satisfaction in the construction industry.

These findings, consistent with the AET assumptions (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996) and the discussions led by Weiss and Beal (2005), support the idea that work environment features can directly influence job satisfaction through evaluating the "cognitive" judgment part of job satisfaction. Therefore, we postulate the following two hypotheses:

H1: Supervisory support positively influences the international faculty's job satisfaction.

H2: Welfare positively influences the international faculty's job satisfaction.

2.2 *The link between work environment features and work events*

Work environment features play a significant role in generating either positive or negative work events (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996). For example, Lam and Chen (2012) found empirical evidence for the positive linkage between supervisory support, as a work environment feature, and supervisory interactional justice, as a work event. In addition, Matthews et al. (2010) identified a negative causal relationship between social support and work-family conflict. Moreover, Ashkanasy et al. (2014) proposed that physical work environments' situational factors are the immediate determinants of conflict/cohesion, as work events.

These findings provide support for the idea that work events (job-related and nonjob-related) can activate emotional states at work and, as a result, have work consequences (Weiss and Beal, 2005). Therefore, concordant with the AET propositions (Weiss and Beal,

2005, Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996) and consistent with other theoretical arguments about AET, we developed the following two hypotheses:

H3: Welfare negatively influences role conflict experienced by the international faculty.

H4: Supervisory support negatively influences role conflict experienced by the international faculty.

2.3 The link between work events and affective states

Regarding the event-affect association, Kiffin-Petersen et al. (2012) found that helping customers solving their problems, as a work event, was the most important trigger of the sale employees' positive emotions. Einarsen and Nielsen (2015), as another example, concluded that workplace bullying, as a work event, was a serious long-term threat to workers' health and well-being. Moreover, Starzyk et al. (2018), found evidence for employees' problem-focused voice in meetings, as a work event, being associated with a decrease in employees' negative affect at the end of the next workday.

These findings, in alignment with the AET assumptions (Weiss and Beal, 2005, Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996), substantiate that affective events are the proximal causes of affect and, thus, can drive changes in affective states. Hence, we consider the following two hypotheses:

H5: Role conflict negatively influences positive affect experienced by the international faculty.

H6: Role conflict positively influences negative affect experienced by the international faculty.

2.4 The link between affective states and attitudes

In terms of the affect-attitude relationship, Beasley and Jason (2015) found empirical evidence for the relationship between person-environment fit, as an affective experience, and job satisfaction as well as commitment, as two attitudes. In another recent study, two work events, namely management communication and information flows, were debated to be triggering positive and negative emotions (Zagelmeyer et al., 2018). Moreover, Ryan et al. (2015) found empirical evidence for the negative causal relationship between negative moods and satisfaction. Last, Guenter et al. (2014) suggested that the negative affective states, caused by delay in information exchange, lead to a decrease in job satisfaction.

These findings corroborate the AET assumptions by substantiating the point that job satisfaction is not an emotion, but in fact, is itself caused by affective states (Weiss and Beal, 2005, Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996). In line with the previous research findings and guided by AET, we developed the following hypotheses:

H7: Positive affect positively influences the international faculty's job satisfaction.

H8: Negative affect negatively influences the international faculty's job satisfaction.

3 Method

3.1 Research design and analytic procedure

This survey study is a quantitative research which focuses on testing the AET's basic tenets (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996) using data collected from the international faculty working at Malaysian universities. We apply PLS-SEM to test our model due to three reasons namely (1) testing a theoretical framework from a prediction-explanatory perspective, (2) the model's complexity, and (3) the need for the latent variable scores for follow-up analyses (Ghasemy et al., 2020b). We consider the latest guiding principles for a rigorous PLS-SEM analysis proposed by Ghasemy et al. (2020b) in their review study of the application of PLS-SEM

methodology in higher education research and employ the SmartPLS 3 statistical package (Ringle et al., 2015).

3.2 Participants and sampling

The wandering scholars working in Malaysian institutions of higher learning constitute this study's target population. Based on the 2019 statistics published by the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia[1], 4.6% of academics in public universities (N= 1472) and 10.10% of academics in the private sector (N= 2623) are international academic staff. Overall, the 2019 statistics indicate that 7.11% of the academics' population in Malaysian higher education system came from foreign countries (e.g., Iran, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Indonesia, India, Nigeria, China, and Iraq).

We created a database of academics' email addresses, distributed our survey using an online platform, and adopted a simple random sampling method to select the international faculty as the participants. In total, we collected 152 questionnaires that seemed suitable for data analysis. Owing to the small number of missing values within the dataset, we replaced them with the median of the items (Hair et al., 2017). We then focused on detecting multivariate outliers (Ghasemy et al., 2020b) and did not identify any outlying cases. Since the normalized multivariate kurtosis statistic in our analysis was above five (26.47), as highlighted by Bentler (2006), we considered our data to be multivariate non-normal. This provided us with more substantial evidence for the applicability of the non-parametric PLS-SEM method in our study (Ghasemy et al., 2020b). Also based on a power analysis (Cohen, 1988), the adequacy of our sample (n = 152) was confirmed to achieve the required statistical power of 80% to detect minimum R^2 values of at least 0.1 (with a 5% probability of error).

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[1] The statistics are available here: https://www.mohe.gov.my/en/download/awam/statistik/2019-1

Last, we ran a full collinearity assessment to account for common method bias (CMB). Our assessment's results revealed that the maximum full collinearity variance inflation factor (VIF) value was 2.47, thereby implying no cause for concern (Kock, 2015).

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the international faculty at Malaysian institutions who participated in this study.

Table 1 here

3.3 *Measures[2] and covariates*

We operationalized *work environment features* using the Organizational Climate Measure validated by Patterson et al. (2005). This measure consists of seventeen scales; in our study, we employed two of them, namely *welfare*, with four items, and *supervisory support*, with five items. Each of these items was rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (definitely false) to 5 (definitely true). With respect to *role conflict*, we used the three-item version of the role conflict scale by Singh et al. (1996). We also provided the respondents with a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always) to rate the items. In addition, we used the positive and negative affect schedule (PANAS) by Watson et al. (1988) to measure *positive* and *negative affect*. This scale consists of twenty words describing different positive and negative emotional reactions, such as being enthusiastic, inspired, nervous, and hostile. We asked the respondents how they, on average, feel at work and provided them with a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (very slightly) to 5 (extremely) in order to rate the items. We also used the ten-item scale that Macdonald and Macintyre (1997) developed to measure *job satisfaction*. The respondents rated the items using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

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[2] We changed the term "company" to "institution" in a few items of the original scales to make them consistent with the university domain.

Last, age and tenure, as two widely used ordinal covariates in social science research (Bernerth and Aguinis, 2016), were introduced to the model to address the issue of endogeneity (Sarstedt et al., 2020), as a source of bias in the primarily explanatory PLS-SEM applications. Notably, scholars have long been intrigued with the investigation of the relationships between age, tenure, and job satisfaction (as examples, see Hunt and Saul (1975), Dobrow Riza et al. (2018), and Castellacci and Viñas-Bardolet (2020)).

We have provided the items of the final model in Appendix A.

4   Results

4.1   Measurement model evaluation

This evaluation comprised of examining the indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validities (Ghasemy et al., 2020b).

We assessed the indicator reliability by examining the loadings and removed sixteen non-contributing indicators with loadings below 0.7 from all the constructs. We subsequently evaluated the internal consistency reliability through evaluating three measures, namely Cronbach's alpha, the composite reliability (CR), and ρ_A. The reliability estimates' evaluation showed that all the estimates were in the range of 0.7 to 0.95, indicating that there were no internal consistency reliability issues. In addition, we computed the one-sided 95% percentile confidence intervals of the reliability estimates (Ghasemy et al., 2020b). The results provided more evidence for the measurement models' reliability as the lower and upper bound of the confidence intervals were within the recommended range.

Next, we focused on assessing the constructs' convergent validity through examining the average variance extracted (AVE) measures, which should be above 0.5 (Ghasemy et al., 2020b). The examination of the AVE measures revealed that all the AVEs and the lower

bound of their one-sided 95% percentile confidence intervals were above the acceptable minimum value.

Thereafter, we assessed the constructs' discriminant validity based on the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) criterion. Specifically, we considered the guidelines by Franke and Sarstedt (2019) for evaluating HTMT values and computed the HTMT values' one-sided percentile confidence intervals. Our evaluation showed that the upper bound of two HTMT values (precisely, the HTMT values between job satisfaction and the two work environment features) were above 0.85, but below 0.9. Hence, we concluded the establishment of discriminant validity based on $HTMT_{0.90}$ criterion.

We have provided the detailed statistics about our measurement models in Appendix B and Appendix C.

4.2   Structural model evaluation

We evaluated the structural model through examining the collinearity among the exogenous constructs, testing the path coefficients' significance and relevance, assessing the effect sizes, evaluating the model's in-sample and out-of-sample predictive powers, and, finally, the predictor variables' unique contribution to the R^2 of the endogenous constructs (Ghasemy et al., 2020b). In addition, we examined the nonlinear effects between the latent variables in our model as a robustness check (Sarstedt et al., 2020).

To assess collinearity among the constructs, we focused on the VIF values of each exogenous construct, which, ideally, should be less than 3 (Ghasemy et al., 2020b). The examination of the VIF values showed that all of them were less than 2, indicating that there were no critical collinearity issues.

Next, we ran a one-tailed bootstrapping test at a significance level of 0.05 with 10,000 subsamples to check the paths' significance and to generate percentile confidence intervals.

With respect to the assessment of the covariates' effects, we applied a two-tailed test. Table 2 summarizes the results.

Table 2 here

As displayed in Table 2, all the eight hypotheses are statistically significant as evidenced by the percentile confidence intervals. In addition, we found the path coefficients to be practically relevant due to their size (Ghasemy et al., 2020b), thereby enabling evidence-based theory-rooted policy making.

Focusing on job satisfaction as the key target construct in our model, our analysis showed that 68.5% of the variation within this construct (R^2 = 68.5%) is explained by the predictors in the model. Contrasting this amount of variation in the endogenous construct with the cut-off points highlighted by Ghasemy et al. (2020b) revealed that the in-sample predictive power was almost at a substantial level. We observed that the coefficients' sizes of the paths running from welfare (β = 0.232) and supervisory support (β = 0.291) to job satisfaction were comparable. Also, our analysis showed that the coefficients' magnitudes of the paths heading from positive affect (β = 0.272) and negative affect (β = -0.250) to international faculty' job satisfaction are relatively equal. However, while the path coefficient of supervisory support to job satisfaction was slightly larger than the other three path coefficients, the evaluation of the f^2 effect sizes showed that positive affect (f^2= 0.145) has the largest effect on the R^2 of job satisfaction. Notably, based on the guidelines provided by Cohen (1988), this effect was medium in size. Moreover, supervisory support had the highest unique contribution (20.1%), and welfare had the lowest unique contribution (15.2%) to the variation in job satisfaction.

Regarding the effect of work environment features on role conflict, our analysis showed that supervisory support (β = -0.248) and welfare (β = -0.248) are equally important

in influencing role conflict and, together, explain 19.6% of the variation in role conflict. Therefore, 80.4% of the variation in role conflict is determined by other factors that are not present in our model.

With respect to the positive affect ($R^2 = 13.3\%$) and negative affect ($R^2 = 20.1\%$), our analyses indicated that role conflict' effect on negative affect ($\beta = 0.431$) was stronger than its impact on positive affect ($\beta = -0.328$). This implied a strong association between role conflict and negative affect. In other words, our model shows that while role conflict decreases positive affect, it plays a more important role in increasing the wandering scholars' negative affect.

Furthermore, we found age to have a significant impact on positive affect ($\beta = 0.151$), while this control variable did not show an effect on either negative affect or job satisfaction. Tenure, on the other hand, did not show any influences on the affective states as well as job satisfaction.

Next, we performed PLS$_{predict}$ analysis (Shmueli et al., 2019) to assesses the model's out-of-sample predictive power. More specifically, we examined the $Q^2_{predict}$ values for the PLS results and the root mean square error (RMSE) values, as the prediction errors, for the PLS and the linear model (LM) results.

Table 3 presents the results. Given that the $Q^2_{predict}$ values were positive and the prediction errors of the items based on the PLS results were smaller than the prediction errors based on the LM results, we concluded that our model shows a high level of out-of-sample predictive power.

Table 3 here

Figure 2 presents the final model with the factor loadings, path coefficients, and the R^2 values.

Figure 2 here

4.3   Robustness check

Last, we examined the PLS results' robustness in terms of detecting the nonlinear relationship (Sarstedt et al., 2020). Specifically, we created the quadratic effects between the constructs through the two-stage approach and ran a two-tailed bootstrapping test to assess their significance. The results showed that none of the quadratic effects were statistically significant, providing a considerable evidence for the proposed model's robustness (see Appendix D for more details).

5   Discussion and implications of the findings

5.1   Theoretical implications

From a theoretical perspective, our study provides considerable support for the applicability of AET, indicating the meaningfulness of this theory, from an explanatory-predictive perspective, in an international higher education context. In addition, based on AET (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996), we developed and validated a model that explains the relationships between the selected antecedents and consequences of affective states in the international higher education context.

Our study revealed that issues such as *understanding individuals and their problems* as well as *being friendly and easy to approach* are the main aspects of supervisory support that can trigger the international faculty' job satisfaction. In addition, we found *paying attention to the individuals' interests*, *caring about the people in the institution*, and *being fair in actions towards employees* to be the main aspects of institutional welfare perceived by the wandering scholars, which leads to job satisfaction.

Although based on our model, supervisory support and welfare influence job satisfaction, in general, the proposition that all the work environment features directly and

indirectly influence the employees' work attitudes (e.g., job satisfaction) might not be generalizable and requires further testing (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996). Arguably, in the higher education context, institutional characteristics, such as institutional size, location, or control as well as cultural aspects, such as collegiality and campus climate have been known to be significant determinants of the faculty's satisfaction and productivity (Ambrose et al., 2005). This is in alignment with the proposed linkage between work environment features and job satisfaction in our model (Figure 1). In addition, while the contributions of positive and negative affect to job satisfaction were large, they are not incompatible with each other. For instance, at the same time, an individual can be highly enthusiastic and angry (Volmer et al., 2018).

Given the wide range of negative affective states, our results showed that feeling *scared*, *afraid*, *distressed*, *nervous*, *guilty*, *irritable*, and *hostile* were the main negative affective states in reducing the international faculty's job satisfaction. Furthermore, the results identified the feelings of *enthusiastic*, *determined*, *alert*, *strong*, and *proud* as the main positive affective states increasing the wandering scholars' job satisfaction. Moreover, we found issues such as *recognition*, *salary*, *institutional climate*, and *effectiveness* as a few sources of the wandering scholars' job satisfaction.

Overall, the study results were in line with prior research studies. For instance, consistent with Ghasemy et al. (2020a) and Rezvani et al. (2016), this study verified affective states' contribution to job satisfaction. In addition, in line with Besen et al. (2013), our results exhibited the correlation between work environment features and job satisfaction, providing further substantiation of AET in the international higher education context. With respect to the causal link between work environment features and work events, our results were in line with the findings of Lam and Chen (2012), Ghasemy et al. (2019), and Matthews et al.

(2010). Last, regarding the link between work events and emotional reactions, our results were similar to the findings of other studies (e.g., Cho and Yang (2018)).

5.2 Practical implications

Our study provides a general picture about the affective states' antecedents and consequences and all the significant paths in our theoretical model are practically relevant. Importantly, while the awareness of theories can change the assumptions and improve the perceptions of the policy makers, we managed to move one step further and provide the policymakers with the evidence-based information they need for planning practices and actions.

For instance, based on our results and in accordance with the discussions made by Uhl-Bien et al. (2014), university leaders may consider our findings in making new policies or adjusting the existing ones in a way that changes the level of conflict among the faculty, and specifically the international faculty, to an acceptable or constructive level. Our model shows that assigning a task to the wandering scholars without providing them with the manpower to complete the task is the major source of role conflict among these scholars. Role conflict can simultaneously increase the level of the negative affect and decrease the level of positive affect and, as a result, it leads to job dissatisfaction among the wandering scholars. This situation is critical for at least two reasons. First, an item comparison based on our model shows that the scope of wandering scholars' negative affect with seven different feelings is wider than their scope of positive affect with five feelings. Second, job satisfaction runs with overall life satisfaction (Judge, 2004) and is related to psychological withdrawal behaviors, such as daydreaming and cyber loafing, that are forms of work disengagement (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014).

It is paramount to note that the factors influencing faculty' job satisfaction are often institutionally specific (Kim et al., 2011) and one of the key results accomplished by effective

managers is to help the staff achieve job satisfaction (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Our model shows that, generally, while issues related to recognition, salary, institutional climate, and effectiveness are the facets of the international faculty's job satisfaction, supervisory support (e.g., showing friendly behaviors) plays a more vital role in influencing these scholars' job satisfaction than welfare (e.g., paying attention to academics' interests). Given that these scholars come from different countries and have different cultural backgrounds, this issue becomes more important since there is evidence that the frequency and intensity of emotions vary among cultures (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Moreover, our model shows that older wandering scholars experience higher levels of positive affect than their younger counterparts. This observation might have implications for policymaking, for example, in terms of wandering scholars' recruitment, selection and retention.

6   Conclusions and future research

Wandering scholars play an important role in hitting the borderless knowledge-driven economy targets. We focused on this group of scholars, examined the basic tents of AET (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014), and provided evidence for applicability of the theory in the context of international higher education. Our findings were in line with the propositions of AET and had theoretical and practical implications. More specifically, our study examined the impact of two work environment features, role conflict, and affective states on job satisfaction. We used a sample of international faculty members in the Malaysian higher education sector. We found that both work environment features equally influence role conflict, while the effect of supervisory support on job satisfaction was larger than the impact from welfare on our target construct. We also found strong effects between role conflict and affective states as well as between affective states and job satisfaction. Noteworthy, the impact of role conflict on negative affect was the strongest in our model. Furthermore, we observed a relationship

between age and positive affect in our model, indicating that the level of positive affect was higher among older international faculty members.

Nevertheless, our study is not without limitations. Although the focus of this study was job satisfaction, as one of the main attitudes in workplaces (Mitchell, 2011, Uhl-Bien et al., 2014), researchers are, however, recommended to consider other important attitudes, such as job involvement or organizational commitment. Researchers might also examine attitudes' impact on judgement-driven behaviors (Weiss and Beal, 2005), such as turnover or absenteeism. Additionally, the mediating role of affective work events, affective reactions, and attitudes as well as the moderating role of personality predispositions within the AET macrostructure (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996) should be investigated in future research. Moreover, we recommend researchers to integrate AET with other theories to build more comprehensive theoretical models for verification purposes (e.g., Schindler and Burkholder (2016)).

Remarkably, due to the high out-of-sample predictive power of our model (Shmueli et al., 2019), while our findings might largely apply to other countries which have similar higher education systems to the one in Malaysia, caution should be given when transferring these results to other cultures and countries. In fact, future studies should build on our model by testing it in different cultural settings.

In terms of the analytical and methodological recommendations, together with PLS-SEM, future research could use new complementary analytic tools, such as necessary condition analysis (NCA) (Richter et al., 2020) to assess the extent to which predictors of satisfaction are indeed prerequisites for achieving high levels of satisfaction. In addition, considering cross-sectional designs' limitations, and in line with suggestions made by Mitchell (2011), a longitudinal design (e.g., latent growth curve modeling (Bentler, 2018)) that addresses emotional responses' fluctuation over time, should might provide more precise

insights about emotions' antecedents and consequences in a causal manner. Moreover, we strongly encourage considering the multilevel structure of the data through multilevel analysis (Bentler, 2006). Finally, we recommend researchers to estimate their models using the robust PLSe2 estimator (Bentler and Huang, 2014, Ghasemy et al., 2021). Importantly, PLSe2 offers the advantages of maximum likelihood and PLS methodologies combined and its performance has been verified under normality and non-normality conditions (Ghasemy et al., 2021).

7 References

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