

## Adapting Work Dynamics in the VUCA Environment to Ensure Industry Acceleration and Economic Sustainability

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### Abstract:

In today's volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environment, it is crucial to consider employees as an integral part of the broader picture. The COVID-19 outbreak has brought about significant changes in employment practices. Remote work, shortened workweeks, and hybrid work arrangements are increasingly common. Some argue that these changes have led to higher job satisfaction, better work-life balance, and improved mental health. However, some leaders and industry stakeholders are apprehensive about this transition. Therefore, this study aims to determine a balanced approach that can safeguard employee well-being without compromising the industry's interests and the country's economic stability.

**Keywords:** VUCA, sustainability, leadership, employee preferences, work dynamics

### Introduction

The working environment has changed dramatically since the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) outbreak assaulted the world in 2020. The government's mobility restrictions and social-distancing policies have forced most organizations to adopt flexible working environments. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), nearly 93% of workers lived in countries that implemented workplace closure policies, especially in the first half of 2020 [1]. Further, the pandemic forced employees and organizations to adapt to the changing environment, which resulted in the emergence of diverse working methods. It has changed lifestyles and working habits by sparking new diverse working methods and allowing workers to work flexibly. Among them, working from anywhere, working from home, and the four-day working method began to gain momentum. This method is expected to increase not only employees' job satisfaction but also work-life balance, and mental health. According to [2], flexible working results in employee loyalty and engagement, increased organizational commitment, and higher job satisfaction, also flexible working packages help to recruit and retain talented employees for the organization. Furthermore, increased productivity, reduced employee turnover and absenteeism have been identified as advantages of flexible working for employers. Many have started using the phrase "new normal" to characterize the current situation on the planet. It will never be the same again, and we must adjust to the new reality. Malaysia's government has enacted several policies, including the Work from Home Policy for Public Service Officers and Flexible Working Hours. Still, questions arise, such as whether this policy is strong enough to meet the true desire to balance life and work or if there is potential for improvement. Employers also expressed reservations about the workweek being four days and working from home. The implementation of remote work or alternative working methods in Malaysia, as in any other country, can indeed raise concerns and present challenges, particularly for employers who are still recovering from the impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak and other crises such as floods. These interventions are having a substantial impact on socio-economic activities. Therefore, it is important to consider the specific context and circumstances of each country and organization when evaluating the feasibility and effectiveness of these working methods.

According to [3], 32% of Malaysian workers prefer to work from anywhere because they value their employer's work schedule and flexibility. The belief among Malaysian employees is that flexibility addresses their needs, including productivity, engagement, and a stress-free workplace. This goes against the global trend of making workplaces more stressful. Employers should be accommodating and considerate of the employees' demands to avoid losing personnel, good talent, and, in the worst-case scenario, the entire organization. However, despite the many expected benefits, there are some concerns among leaders, industry players, and even employees themselves about the shift in working style. According to a study conducted among 1,100 Malaysians of all races, regions, and ages, 77% claim that working from home is challenging and tough [4]. One of the common reasons for their claims is an unstable internet connection,

difficulties communicating with teams, and challenges in accessing the office database. While some industries, such as the service industry, which requires a physical presence, may not have the option to work remotely, in contrast, other sectors have the potential to allow and make remote working arrangements. It is very important for leaders and industry players to cautiously consider their employees’ needs and preferences. Effective leaders seek solutions about how to survive in a continuously changing environment. To be successful, a leader must understand and effectively manage internal and external social changes to ensure survival. Furthermore, leaders must comprehend the phenomenon of leadership and discover effective strategies to deal with the chaos that surrounds them to go forward, achieve, and make progress within and outside of their businesses.

**2. Literature Review**

**2.1 Theoretical Foundation**

According to [5], modern approaches to leadership theory also include Contemporary Traits Theory. For example, The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, [6] offers seven traits that make a person an effective leader: (a) be proactive; (b) begin with the end in mind; (c) put first things first; (d) think win/win; (e) seek first to understand, then to be understood; (f) synergize; and (g) sharpen the saw. Another modern approach to leadership was put forth by Daniel Goleman. His approach deals with the leader’s emotional intelligence quotient (EQ). Goleman’s approach focuses on (a) self-awareness, (b) self-regulation, (c) motivation, (d) empathy, and (e) social skills [7]. For many years, people subscribed to the traditional transactional leadership approach. [8] noted transactional leaders complete transactions through a focus on administrative work and giving rewards for good performance. Kouzes and Posner referred to this type of leader as simply a manager [9]. Leaders fitting this label tend to focus on the most basic of human needs identified in Maslow’s hierarchy: physical, safety, and belonging needs. [10] indicated this type of leader is a passive one who establishes reward criteria while attempting to maintain the status quo.

Besides effective leadership, job satisfaction among employees is equally important. There are many ways to define job satisfaction. Most people agree that it is a psychological reaction with three main parts: cognitive, emotional, and behavioural [11]. By interpreting our feelings, thoughts, and behaviour, we form attitudes toward our work. [12] range of affect theory, which has its origins in organizational psychology, is possibly the most well-known model of job satisfaction. Locke’s idea acknowledged the significance of how much people value certain components of their profession, as well as how well their expectations are satisfied. In sum, our values shape our expectations, and the closer they are to reality, the more satisfied we are.

The subsequent employment satisfaction theory adopts a different perspective. Barry and colleagues created the dispositional approach in light of research showing that affective disposition predicts job satisfaction [13]. They argued that the tendency of individuals to experience positive or negative emotions reflects differences in job satisfaction. The dispositional approach has drawn criticism because of its primarily empirical methodology. Nonetheless, personality researchers have demonstrated that personality traits are largely stable over time, and the same holds for job satisfaction, even in different jobs and careers [14]. Staw’s research on job satisfaction inspired the development of new theories. Among these is the Core Self-Evaluation Model, for which solid evidence exists.

Researchers have demonstrated four self-evaluations mediating stability in job satisfaction, independent of job attributes [15], such as self-esteem: with higher levels linked to greater job satisfaction; self-efficacy: with higher levels linked to greater job satisfaction; locus of control: the tendency toward an internal rather than external locus of control is linked to job satisfaction; and neuroticism: with lower levels linked to greater job satisfaction. Referring to Figure 1, five core characteristics have been reported, along with three psychological states acting as a sort of ‘gateway’ to satisfaction:

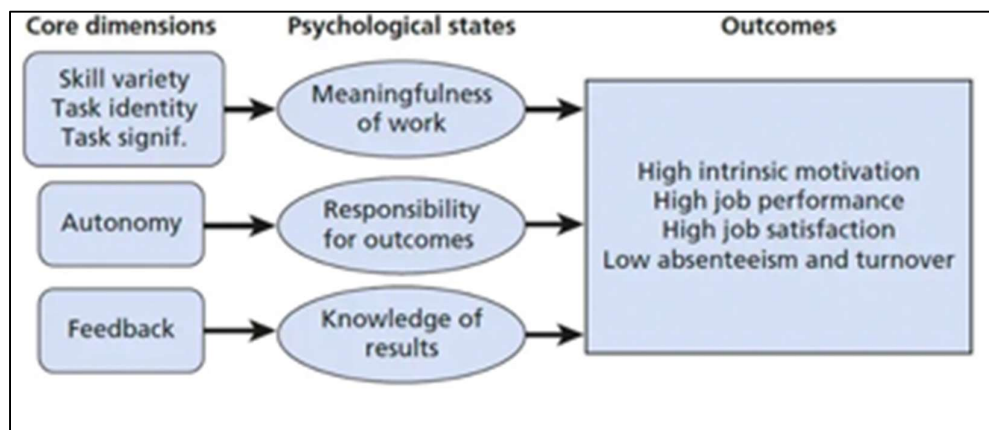


Figure 1: Occupational psychology

Skill variety relates to the presence of many types of problems at work, whereas task identity reflects the degree to which a job requires the execution of discrete, 'complete' pieces of work. Meanwhile, task significance describes whether the

job has a significant impact on other people's lives or work, autonomy describes the degree of freedom or independence provided by the job, and feedback describes how explicitly an individual is notified about their performance.

**2.2 Research Framework**

This study was conducted based on Figure 2 as a Research Framework.

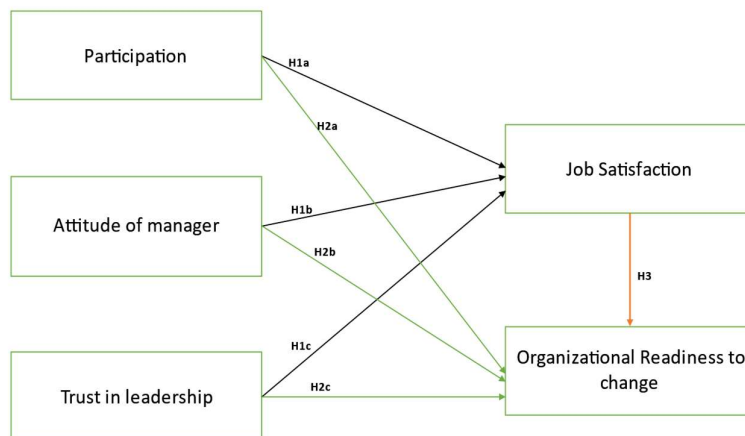


Figure 2: Research Framework

**2.3 Effective Strategies for Coping with Turbulence and Its Impact**

The effects of globalization, technological advancement, and demographic shifts have indeed had a significant impact on labour markets. These factors brought about changes such as the number of employees, the nature of occupations, and the characteristics of the workforce. While these megatrends create unprecedented opportunities, they also pose enormous obstacles for the future workplace. Policymakers must prioritize the implementation of flexibility and adaptation in the labour market, which will facilitate a smoother process and maximize the benefits for employees and countries. Due to the pandemic, the new normal for all industries around the globe has been shifted to a virtual paradigm. People have changed the way they do things, meeting, purchasing, working, and even criminalizing; they are also doing it differently [16].

The United States military came up with the term VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous) in the 1990s to characterize the increasingly complex geopolitical environment in which it was engaged. Since then, VUCA has made its way into boardrooms and conference rooms across the globe. The acronym VUCA has been used often in the context of leadership theories [17]; The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [18], and the US Army originally used the term to refer to the increasingly VUCA-esque world following the Cold War [19]. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [18]. According to the [18], volatility refers to the liability of something to rapid and unpredictable changes; for example, the stock market tends to fluctuate rapidly, and the inherent challenge of predicting the movement accurately. Uncertainty refers to the quality of information one has or the degree to which the outcome of an event is known in advance. Complexity increases when there are a greater number of relevant variables or intricate interrelationships, and the more variables, the more complex the situation becomes. Ambiguity occurs when an event, situation, or context is unclear, either due to missing information, inconsistencies, contradictions, or obfuscation. The components of VUCA influence are less predictable for both humans and machines. Subsequently, VUCA has become a constant adaptation in today's world.

**2.4 Survival in a Continuously Changing Environment**

In this age of constant flux and unpredictability, the obligations of a leader go much beyond those of a managerial position. The role of a leader in facilitating change is multidimensional and complex, involving foresight in strategy, skill in communication, and confidence in empowering others. It is crucial for a leader to be open to change and to comprehend the significance and meaning of transition as much as possible. Their ability to invest effort towards the objective despite the journey not always being interesting, gratifying, or joyful is crucial. The openness to change and transformation of an organization's leaders determines its success, evolution, and adaptation to its environment, as well as the acquisition of new skills and ways of thinking. Furthermore, if leaders are willing to accept change and development, we may be able to liberate ourselves from restrictive attitudes and behaviours that are holding us back. According to [20] change is difficult if employees resist, and leaders should be decisive and set priorities that support change. According to [21], this requires flexibility and quickness in decision-making. As such, leaders must focus on continuous shifts in people, processes, technology, and structure without compromising on clarity and direction. The leader, in effect, must manoeuvre with agility and adjust to the requirement of addressing the broader picture to reach a consistent conclusion.

**2.5 An Equilibrium Between an Employee's "Inputs" and "Outputs" Leads to Job Satisfaction and Motivation**

To adequately prepare for the future of work, organizations need to fully understand the nature of the work they do, who is needed to perform that work, and where that work is done. Getting this right will determine the winners in the post-pandemic world. For example, the millennial generation is a tech-savvy workforce that is tolerant of living at home until they find a job they value. In other words, organizations must shift from creating an environment where they assume that people need to work there to one where people want to work there. Millennials are projected to represent a significant number of the labour force, with almost half by 2020 and the majority by 2025. This highlights that the millennials will entirely introduce new methods, ideas, attitudes, and ways of working. According to [22], 70% of prospective leaders may reject the traditional method and prefer to operate independently using digital methods. Millennials, who are already emerging as leaders in technology and other industries, will make up 75% of the global workforce by 2025 and will prefer to work for organizations that stimulate innovative thinking, develop talents, and make a meaningful contribution to society. This situation indicates that the work environment has a more significant impact on transformational leadership than employee attitudes and organizational commitment to job satisfaction. Millennials are on the rise and will soon be taking over leadership roles in various industries. To improve job happiness and employee loyalty, leaders of any organization should pay greater attention to the way their millennial employees are seen and treated in the workplace. Another challenge is dealing with the complexity of disruptive technologies. Exposing employees to new working methods can fix this. Using digital initiatives to drive change will inspire creative and new solutions. A learning culture encourages its members to take risks and minimizes the stigma associated with making mistakes. Companies should create opportunities for their employees to learn, give them access to free Internet access and information, and provide financial affordability, such as tuition support. Curricular alignment with Industry 4.0 skills is recommended as urgent action. The curriculum design needs to emphasize demand-driven skills and offer broad assessment criteria [23]. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the rise of automation and new technologies transformed the world of work, resulting in an urgent need for large-scale upskilling and reskilling. Now this need has become even more critical. The World Economic Forum projected in its Future of Jobs Report 2020 that half of all employees worldwide would need reskilling by 2025 [24][25].

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Population and Sample**

A convenient sampling approach has been used to choose the participants because it allows the study population to come from any segment and region [26]. In this study, a convenient sampling approach was employed to distribute questionnaires among MBA students enrolled in both part-time and full-time study modes at one of the public universities in Malaysia. The choice of a convenient sampling method allows for flexibility in selecting participants from various segments of the student population. To analyze the collected data, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was utilized. PLS-SEM is particularly well-suited for studies with smaller sample sizes, and its compatibility with the chosen convenient sampling method enhances the appropriateness of its application in this study context. As suggested by [27][28], PLS-SEM can be used with small sizes of more than 100 samples. Hence, with 150 respondents, PLS-SEM was determined using the G\*power tool, and ( $f^2$ ) is the effect size used in statistical analysis. It indicates the strength of the relationship or the difference between the groups. ( $c$ ) is the degree to which the independent variable can explain the dependent variable's variability. It helps researchers understand the practical relevance of their findings [29]. Alpha probability ( $\alpha$ ) is the level of significance used in hypothesis testing. It is set to 0.05, meaning that there is a 5% chance that the observed result would be as extreme as it is due to random variation (i.e., chance). Using the parameters (effect size ( $f^2$ ), prob ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.05,  $p$  (1-beta err prob) = 0.95, and predictors ( $n$ ) = 7). This study randomly collected responses from 150 MBA students who are currently pursuing their studies in a part-time or full-time mode at public Universities in Malaysia. Written informed consent from participants was obtained for the survey. In summary, keeping employment status and sector confidential in the study is likely a proactive measure to address privacy concerns, maintain the trust of participants, and adhere to ethical considerations in research.

#### **3.2 Data Collection**

Data was collected online through WhatsApp, Facebook, and WeChat between February and May 2023 using a structured questionnaire. It was designed to identify the preferences, readiness, and challenges of individuals and leaders in organizations to deal with VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous) environments. Only respondents who meet the listed conditions are allowed to participate in the study. (1) The respondents should be 18 years old and older; (2) they should be studying MBA at a public university; (3) the respondents should declare their employment status and sector. The data has been collected using a questionnaire via Google Forms (<https://docs.google.com/forms>). A total of 176 questionnaires have been collected online, and after eliminating the outliers, a total of 150 responses have been incorporated into the statistical data analysis. All the personal information collected from the respondents was kept confidential throughout the survey.

#### **3.3 Multivariate Normality**

The multivariate kurtosis and multivariate skewness were examined using the online statistical tool 'Web Power'. All variables had a non-normal distribution. The  $p$ -values for multivariate kurtosis were  $<0.05$ , as suggested by [30].

**3.4 Data Analysis Methods**

PLS-SEM analysis was chosen as the data analysis technique because of the multivariate non-normality data set [31]. The data in this study were evaluated using SmartPLS V4. Variety-based structural equation modelling to analyze the non-norm data set, and the dependent constructs recommend using variance-based structured equation modelling. The exploration method is an exploratory method of analysis. It considers integrated latent variable path correlations. It is also a small data set exploratory method [32]. PLS-SEM analysis does not have to have a specific goodness-of-fit standard. It can be used to evaluate complex causal relationships between multiple components [31][33]. This is the main reason why we chose PLS analysis as a data analysis technique.

**4. Findings**

**4.1 Demographic Details**

Table 1 shows the demographics of the respondents. Most respondents (64%) were female. The majority (61%) were aged 26-33 years. The majority (52%) were 18-25 years old. The majority (34%) were aged 34-41 years old. Marital status: 61% married; 54% unmarried; 4% divorced. Employment: 50% are employed in the private sector; 44% are employed in the public sector; and 6% are self-employed. Child-free: 46% have no child, while 54% have a child.

Table 1: Demographic of Respondents

	N	%		N	%
Gender			Childrens		
Female	96	64	Living with children	81	54
Male	54	36	No children	69	46
Total	150	100	Total	150	100
Age Group			Sector		
18-25	52	35	Public sector	66	44
26-33	61	41	Private sector	75	50
34-41	18	12	Self employed	9	6
42-49	17	11			
50-57	2	1			
Total	150	100	Total	150	100
Marital Status			Country of origin		
Single	54	36	Malaysia	53	35
Married	92	61	China	93	62
Divorced	4	3	Tunisia	1	1.5
Widowed	0		Yemen	1	1.5
Total	150	100	Total	150	100

**4.2 Common Method Bias**

The common method bias will be tested to evaluate the effect on the research model, and the same response technique will be used to measure the independent and dependent variables within one survey [34]. While according to [35], the issue of common method bias will occur when a single component accounts for over half of the variance, this study found two components with 33.89% and 45.49 % of the variance, which demonstrated that there is no significant effect. To confirm the absence of a common method bias issue, a complete collinearity analysis was conducted [36], as shown in Table 2. The VIF values for all constructs were lower than the cutoff value of 3.3 aa suggested by [36]. This test is to confirm that there are common method bias issues in this data set.

Item codes	Measurement items	Source	VIF
ATM1	Top management has a positive vision of the future.	[63]	2.028
ATM2	Top management is actively involved with the changes.		1.873
ATM3	Top management supports the change process unconditionally.		1.279
ATM4	Leaders have trouble adapting their leadership styles to the changes.		1.448
JS1	The benefits we receive are as good as most other organizations offer.		2.541

JS2	I find I must work harder at my job because of the incompetence of people I work with.	[64]	3.389
JS3	I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work I do.		2.888
JS4	I am not satisfied with the benefits I receive		4.559
JS5	I am satisfied with the change in the working environment of the organization		1.306
TIL 1	Top management consistently implements its policies in all departments.		1.950
TIL 2	Top management fulfils its promise.		2.281
TIL 3	If I make mistakes, my superior holds them against me.		2.057
TIL 4	Leaders speak up for employees during the change process.		2.529
PRE 1	Staff members were consulted about the reasons for the change.		2.319
PRE 2	Changes are always discussed with all people concerned.		2.682
PRE 3	The way change is implemented leaves little room for personal input.		2.356
PRE 4	Staff members are sufficiently involved in implementing the changes by our department's senior managers.		2.347
PRE 5	My department's management team takes account of the staff's remarks.		1.241
RTC1	My department is very open.		1.825
RTC2	I experience the change as a positive process.		1.532
RTC3	I think that most changes will have a good effect on customers.	1.961	
RTC4	Plans for future improvement are motivating me to work the extra mile.	1.669	
RTC5	I am willing to make a significant contribution to the change.	1.479	

Note: ATM: Attitude of Managers; JS: Job Satisfaction; RTC: Resistance to change; PRT: Participation; TIL: Trust in leadership.

Table 2: Collinearity test inner model (VIF)

Variables	VIF
ATM -> JS	1.026
ATM->RTC	1.094
JS -> RTC	1.155
PRT -> JS	1.030
PRT -> RTC	1.143
TIL -> JS	1.007
TIL -> RTC	1.014

Note: ATM: Attitude of Managers; JS: Job Satisfaction; RTC: Resistance to change; PRT: Participation; TIL: Trust in leadership.

**4.3 Measurement Model (Outer Model)**

To ensure robustness, [33] proposed that the measurement model shown in Figure 3 should be evaluated before the structural model. The internal consistency, reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity have been evaluated before the external model.

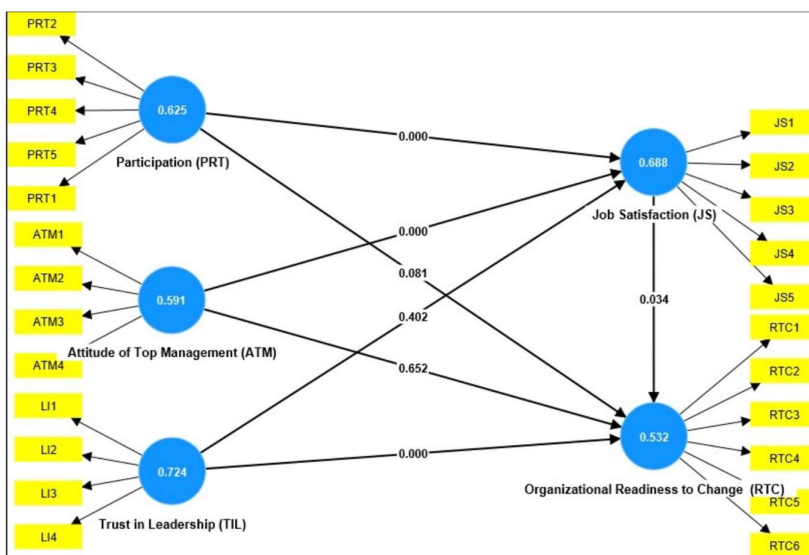


Figure 3: Measurement model

4.4 Internal Consistency and Convergent Validity

Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability are used to determine the integrity of the scale measure structure. For convergent validity, AVE and internal consistency are used. AVE should be higher than 0.5, and the minimum composite reliability is 0.8. In this study, ATM5 is 0.109 and TIL 5 is 0.269 because the minimum threshold is not achieved. In Table 4, AVE values range from 0.532 to 0.724. For collinearity in multiple linear regression models, the VIF index is used. The higher the VIF rating, the higher the likelihood of commonality among several factors. The VIF index ranges from 0.1 to 10, meaning there is no conflict between variables. VIF values ranged from 3.389 to 4.559, not exceeding the suggested threshold value of 5 proposed by [28]. Consequently, the VIF values were within the acceptable range.

Table 4: Reliability and validity test

	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho a)	Composite reliability (rho c)	The average variance extracted (AVE)
ATM	4	0.773	0.905	0.850	0.591
JS	5	0.880	0.915	0.915	0.688
RTC	6	0.795	0.825	0.856	0.532
PRT	5	0.844	0.869	0.891	0.625
TIL	4	0.874	0.880	0.913	0.724

Note: ATM: Attitude of Managers; JS: Job Satisfaction; RTC: Resistance to change; PRT: Participation; TIL: Trust in leadership.

4.5 Discriminant Validity

The discriminant validity criterion was used to evaluate the model based on the square root AVE value of a construct for each component. This criterion exists since the square root of a construct must be greater than the difference of the variances for any other latent variable in the corresponding line and column [33]. Table 5 shows that the values of each component of the criterion are greater than any correlation in the corresponding lines and columns. HTMT ratio and cross-loadings were also

used to assess the model's discriminant validity. The HTMT value for all variables must be less than 0.90 for the model to be considered highly discriminant [37]. All the HTMT values in Table 5 are below 0.90 for each component. All the variables meet the maximum threshold. Finally, cross-loading is used to compare the exterior loads of the structures with the values of all the loadings. The values of cross-loading should be above 0.60 to support the high level of statistical validity of the model [37].

Table 5: Reliability and validity test

	ATM	JS	RTC	PTM	TIL
<b><i>Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)</i></b>					
ATM					
JS	0.218				
RTC	0.186	0.170			
PTM	0.231	0.308	0.185		
TIL	0.126	0.119	0.435	0.101	
<b><i>Fornell-Larcker Criterion</i></b>					
ATM	0.768				
JS	-0.192	0.830			
RTC	0.137	-0.131	0.738		
PTM	0.154	0.269	0.119	0.791	
TIL	0.030	0.047	0.394	-0.072	0.851

Note: ATM: Attitude of Managers; JS: Job Satisfaction; RTC: Resistance to change; PRT: Participation; TIL: Trust in leadership.

**4.6 Structural Model (Inner Model)**

In this study, the structural model was evaluated according to the [33] recommendations. Path coefficient ( $\beta$ ) was used, coefficient of determination ( $r^2$ ) was used, and effect size ( $f^2$ ) was used. The p values, t values, and path coefficients were obtained by bootstrapping for each relationship within the model.

**4.7 Hypothesis Testing**

Table 6 shows the hypotheses test results. The analysis indicates that the statistical value for participation in job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.078, t = 4.020, p = 0.000$ ) and for the attitude of top managers toward job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.063, t = 3.856, p = 0.000$ ) have a significant impact on job satisfaction. Hence, the results support hypotheses H1a and H1b. While trust in leadership was reported to have no statistically significant preference for job satisfaction with the following values: ( $\beta = 0.092, t = 0.829, p = 0.407$ ), this also means that hypothesis H1c is rejected. On the other hand, statistical values for participation and attitude of top managers ( $\beta = 0.103, t = 1.860, p = 0.063$ ), ( $\beta = 0.088, t = 0.665, p = 0.506$ ), showed that the prediction of organizational readiness to change was not supported, which means that the hypotheses H2a and H2b are rejected. Simultaneously, trust in leadership and job satisfaction had a significant positive impact on organizational readiness to change with the following statistical values:  $\beta = -0.077, t = 5.402, p = 0.000$ , and  $\beta = -0.097, t = 1.969$ , and  $p = 0.049$ . Thus, the result confirms that hypotheses H2c and H3 are supported. The effect size, also referred to as  $f^2$ , is a measure of the magnitude of the effect on endogenous variables caused by exogenous factors. Effect size is based on specific variances rather than on shared variances (51). According to [37], the scale of effects can be classified as small ( $\geq 0.02$ ) medium ( $\geq 0.15$ ) contagious ( $\geq 0.35$ ) because the framework and the study area are different, it can be difficult to determine whether general guidelines have a significant and noticeable effect [28]. The results of the analysis on the influence size were small.

Table 6: Hypothesis testing

		Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	f <sup>2</sup>	r <sup>2</sup>	Result
<i>Factor affecting Job satisfaction</i>									
PRT > JS	H1a	0.312	0.325	0.078	4.020	0.000	0.110	0.135	Significant
ATM > JS	H1b	0.243	-0.255	0.063	3.856	0.000	0.066		Significant
TIL > JS	H1c	0.076	0.074	0.092	0.829	0.407	0.007		Not Significant
<i>Factor affecting Organizational Readiness to change</i>									
PRT > RTC	H2a	0.191	0.196	0.103	1.860	0.063	0.035	0.216	Not Significant
ATM > RTC	H2b	0.059	0.065	0.088	0.665	0.506	0.002		Not Significant
TIL > RTC	H2c	0.415	0.418	0.077	5.402	0.000	0.216		Significant
JS > RTC	H3	0.190	-0.187	0.097	1.969	0.049	0.048		Significant

**4.8 The Coefficient of Determination**

The coefficient of determination (r<sup>2</sup>) is a metric that demonstrates how well a linear model explains the variance in the dependent variable. Endogenous latent variables are classified as strong, medium, or weak, depending on their r<sup>2</sup> values, which are 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25, respectively [28]. Table 6 presents the r<sup>2</sup> values for the two endogenous constructions in the study model. The r<sup>2</sup> value of job satisfaction (0.135) suggests that all related exogenous factors explained only 13.5% of the variation in job satisfaction, indicating weak explanatory power. Accordingly, the r<sup>2</sup> values for the organizational readiness to change (0.216) indicate that all exogenous factors explained 21.6% of the variation, indicating weak explanatory power.

**5. Discussions**

The outcomes of this research have provided insight into the identifying factors affecting job satisfaction among employees and factors affecting the organization to change in the face of the VUCA world we live in now. However, the results should be interpreted with caution due to the limitations of the current research. The limitations and potential consequences of the design are discussed, as well as the implications for the interpretation of the results.

The analysis of this study indicates that the statistical value for *participation (PRT)* ( $\beta = 0.078, t = 4.020, p = 0.000$ ) has a significant impact on *Job Satisfaction (JS)*. Hence, the results support hypothesis H1a. Many theorists support the hierarchy of needs approach. According to [38], people are motivated to meet five levels of needs. If lower-level needs are unmet, the individual will only be motivated to meet those needs, and higher-level demands will be of no concern. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs can be connected to factors influencing the organizational change process (self-actualization, esteem, belonging needs, safety needs and physiological needs). According to [39], esteem needs are connected with a positive self-image and with self-respect. In a general sense, recognition by others is enough to satisfy this need. However, in a continuous change process, only the employee's participation in organizational decision-making can help to maintain this positive self-image, allowing the employee to feel a sense of accomplishment. On the other hand, the statistical values for *Participation (PRT)* ( $\beta = 0.103, t = 1.860, p = 0.063$ ) of this study showed that the prediction of *organizational Readiness to Change (RTC)* was not supported, which means that hypothesis H2a is rejected. The findings of this study are supported by [40] in their study, who say that participation in change planning and implementation processes has been acknowledged for its positive impact on change readiness and potential for minimizing resistance [41][42][43] the current study found only limited support for these relationships. The findings of the study indicated that there were significant correlations between participation, change readiness, and resistance, as revealed by correlation analyses. However, when perceptions of change communication adequacy were considered in hierarchical multiple regressions, these associations became statistically non-significant.

*The Attitude of Top Managers (ATM)* ( $\beta = 0.063, t = 3.856, p = 0.000$ ) was also found to have a significant impact on *Job Satisfaction (JS)*, and therefore the results supported hypothesis H1b. This study aims to improve our understanding of the relationship between these variables. The findings indicate that there is a positive correlation between the attitudes of top managers (leaders) and job satisfaction. This suggests that leaders can influence the psychological well-being of organizational members through their inspirational and motivating actions. According to [44], leadership has a stronger effect on the attitude of employees towards their jobs. The role of leaders in today’s organizations has changed, and the success of any organization relies on the leadership styles practised by the leaders. On the contrary, this study found that the statistical value for the *Attitude of Top Managers (ATM)* ( $\beta = 0.088, t = 0.665, p = 0.506$ ) shows that the prediction of *organizational Readiness to Change (RTC)* is not supported, which means that H2b is rejected. Previous studies have primarily concentrated on a leader’s behaviour that is specific to change, particularly when the leader assumes the role of change initiator. The existence of a pre-established connection in the context of a leader's attitude towards externally imposed change, specifically when the leader is responsible for implementing rather than initiating change, remains uncertain. Recently, [45] investigated whether and to what extent leader attitudes towards change content, their resistance to change implementation and their change-specific support impact follower resistance to change following a large-scale policy change in the German education sector. Findings support the claim that follower resistance to change

implementation does not occur (fully) independently from the specific leader. This confirms prior research claiming the importance of leaders during organizational change [46,47][48][49][45]. In her hypothesis 2, the relationship between leader attitudes towards change content and follower resistance to change implementation, was not confirmed. The directionality of the (marginally significant) coefficient was negative, indicating that teachers displayed higher levels of resistance to change implementation in schools where principals had more positive views of inclusive education. Hence, given the inconclusive nature of the research findings about this matter, it is recommended that future studies delve deeper into the leader's attitude towards content change and its impact on employees' readiness to change.

The findings of this study found that *Trust in Leadership (TIL)* had a significant positive impact on organizational *Readiness to Change (RTC)*, with the following statistical values:  $\beta = -0.077$ ,  $t = 5.402$ ,  $p = 0.000$ . Thus, the result confirms that hypothesis H2c is supported. According to [50], if the level of trust in leadership increases, then the level of work engagement should also increase. Some contend that many businesses fail because of a poor approach to leadership and mistrust [50][51] and that organizational success or failure may depend on the level of trust between leaders and their followers [50][52]. A trusting organizational environment has been shown to contribute to high levels of cooperation and knowledge sharing [50][53]. A powerful motivator, trust in leadership fuels organizational performance [50][54]. Moreover, in times of uncertainty, such as during periods of organizational change, trust in leadership plays an essential role in alleviating the insecurities and fears of employees. Accordingly, it is frequently suggested that organizational leaders should build trusting relationships that enable their followers to effectively deal with change in the working environment [50][55]. Therefore, to enhance the level of work engagement, organizational managers, particularly those in an environment that is undergoing sudden or radical change, should pay careful attention to the antecedents of trust in leadership. However, in this study, we found no evidence that *Trust in Leadership (TIL)* has a significant impact towards *Job Satisfaction (JS)* since it was reported to have no statistically significant preference for the following values: ( $\beta = 0.092$ ,  $t = 0.829$ ,  $p = 0.407$ ), which also means that hypothesis H1c is rejected. This finding is echoed by [56][57], who once examined extraversion and introversion as moderators of relationships between the quality of leader-member exchange, performance, and intent to leave in new executives. The said researcher found that the quality of leader-member exchange had no relationship with performance or intent to leave for those high in extraversion. Researchers did find a relationship between leader-member exchange quality and intent to leave overall and for introverts specifically.

Establishing an employee's readiness to change can help prevent any potential resistance from employees when change is implemented later. Therefore, it is important for any organization to assess individual and organizational readiness for change and to understand the factors that influence individual and organizational readiness for change [58][59]. One factor that can influence readiness is job satisfaction. This study proves *Job Satisfaction (JS)* was found to have a positive impact on organizational *Readiness to Change (RTC)* with the following statistical values  $\beta = -0.097$ ,  $t = 1.969$ , and  $p = 0.049$ . Thus, the result confirms that hypothesis H3 is supported. Therefore, we use the job satisfaction variable in this study to understand the aspects of job satisfaction that affect readiness for change. [60] defined job satisfaction as individuals' views, attitudes, and sentiments toward work, either overall or in terms of specific components of work that cause an unpleasant emotional state for the individual. He classified job satisfaction into nine categories: salary, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, operating conditions, co-workers, nature of work, and communication. Figure 4 shows the research framework and findings.

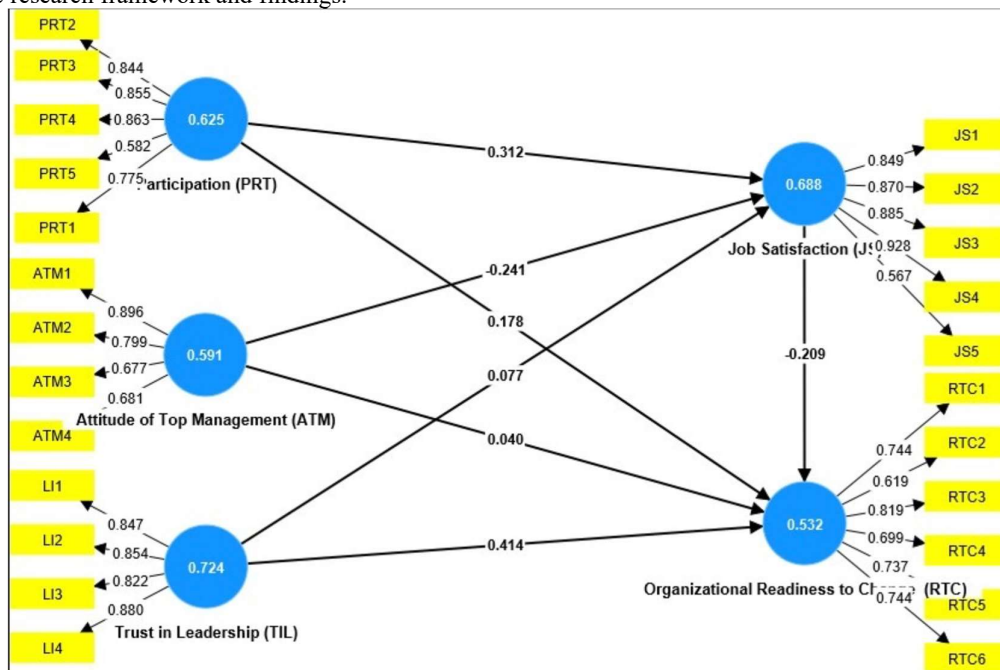


Figure 4: Research framework with findings

## 6. Limitations and Future Recommendations

While this research makes a valuable contribution to the corpus of knowledge, it is important to acknowledge several limitations. One such drawback is the relatively small sample size of 150 participants in the present study. It is anticipated that a larger sample size is expected to generate more accurate and precise results, hence leading to smaller confidence ranges. However, it is important to note that attention should still be directed towards results, even if the p-value is not statistically significant. The absence of statistical significance does not necessarily indicate the absence of an effect or difference in the data. Rather, it suggests that the observed data does not provide enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis. It is plausible that a legitimate effect or differentiation may persist, albeit perhaps of reduced magnitude or increased variability, beyond the detection capabilities of the investigation. The sample size, study design, and measurement accuracy are a few examples of factors that can affect the p-value. The sample size or the power of the study is directly related to the Effect Size (ES) of the study. The ES provides important information on how well the independent variable or variables predict the dependent variable. Low ES means that independent variables don't predict well because they are only slightly related to the dependent variable. Strong ES means that independent variables are very good predictors of the dependent variable. Thus, ES is clinically important for evaluating how efficiently clinicians can predict outcomes from the independent [61].

## 7. Conclusions

In a VUCA world, the willingness of leaders to be agile in the face of change is extremely important. Leaders must begin to place higher importance on outcomes and repercussions while giving employees more flexibility in achieving their goals. Humility, trustworthiness, and openness are just a few of the qualities that leaders may demonstrate and promote to create a trustworthy workplace. A trustworthy and united work atmosphere is critical to developing creative problem-solving skills and driving innovation. Millennials want to work for organizations that foster innovative thinking, develop their skills as leaders, and see them making a positive contribution to society. However, many Millennials find business lacking in these areas [22].

Overall, the findings of this study have answered all the research questions that have been presented and subsequently successfully achieved the objectives. There is evidence that trust in the leadership has a significant impact on the organization's readiness to change. It has also been shown that top managers' (leaders') attitudes have a significant influence on job satisfaction. It has been demonstrated that the organization's readiness to change is significantly influenced by trust in the leadership. Additionally, this study revealed that job satisfaction is associated with positive effects on an organization's readiness to embrace change. As a result, it is possible to conclude that leaders can influence the psychological well-being of organizational members through inspirational and motivational activities. The role of leaders in today's businesses has evolved, and the success of any organization is dependent on the leadership styles employed by the leaders. Moreover, in times of uncertainty, such as during periods of organizational change, trust in leadership plays an essential role in alleviating the insecurities and fears of employees. Accordingly, it is frequently suggested that organizational leaders should build trusting relationships that enable their followers to effectively deal with change in the working environment. Therefore, to enhance the level of work engagement, organizational managers, particularly those in an environment that is undergoing sudden or radical change, should pay careful attention to the antecedents of trust in leadership.

The openness and willingness of the industry, its leaders, and the nation to adopt a flexible nature of work can bring numerous benefits to both employees and employers. Flexibility in the workplace allows employees to engage in activities outside of their job description and assists them in achieving a healthy work-life balance. Looking from the employer's point of view, flexibility in the workplace also brings some important benefits. Higher satisfaction with the work and employer, better employee performance, greater organizational commitment, and lower employee turnover and absenteeism are all outcomes of flexible working practices that, in the end, lead to increasing the company's productivity and profitability. Equity theory was outlined in the 1960s by workplace and behavioural psychologists [62]. He hypothesized that positions require a continuous evaluation of the amount of 'give and take' between employer and employee. The fundamental premise of this model is that job satisfaction and motivation result from a balance between an employee's 'inputs' and 'outputs.' The greater the imbalance (or 'inequity') between employer and employee, the less likely a strong, productive relationship will develop. Furthermore, dissatisfaction can intensify if the ratio between inputs and outputs is deemed to be more unbalanced than that of other organizations. Hard work, skill level, enthusiasm for the job, supporting coworkers, and personal sacrifice are common examples of input. Whereas, common examples of output include financial compensation, recognition and reputation, praise, job security, and other intangible benefits.

The results of this study are expected to provide valuable insight into the perceptions and experiences of industry players and individuals related to the challenges of facing the complexity and uncertainty of the future. It is also expected to help policymakers shape future strategies. It will also serve as a springboard for further research and analysis to improve adaptability and readiness in the face of a dynamic and challenging business landscape.

## Author's contribution

Ina conceptualized the central research idea, provided the theoretical framework, and wrote the manuscript with support from Suguna. Suguna contributed to the analysis and interpretation of the data. Mazzlida was involved in contributing

ideas to the planning and formatting of the manuscript. All authors contributed to the final version of the manuscript and approved it for submission.

#### Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors affirm that this research was conducted without any self-benefits or commercial or financial conflicts. They declare the absence of conflicting interests with the funders.

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