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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editorial Board……..iii

1. **RISK ATTITUDE AMONG ENTREPRENEURS VENTURING INTO FAMILY BUSINESSES OF SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (SME)** 1
Siti Nurul Aini Binti Mohd Rodzi, Mursyida binti Mahshar & Siti Nazirah Omar

2. **THE IMPACT OF QR CODE IMPLEMENTATION ON THE LEVEL OF SATISFACTION AMONG RESTAURANT CUSTOMERS** 3
Nurliyana Abas, Hanani Hussin & Law Kuan Kheng

3. **GREEN FINANCE: THE ROLE OF FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS** 8
Shahiszan Ismail, Nor Azira Ismail & Jamilah Laidin

4. **HELPING REFUGEES IN MALAYSIA: HOW ZAKAT IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE** 11
Mohd Fazil Jamaludin, Mohd Shafiz Saharan & Khairul Azfar Adzahar

5. **BEYOND PROFIT: THE IMPACT OF ALTRUISM ON MARKETING** 14
Norhidayah Ali, Azni Syafena Andin Salamat & Suhaida Abu Bakar

6. **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (CE) AND MYRA STAR RATING (MSR): ITS APPLICATION AND SIGNIFICANCE** 17
Norhafiza Hassim & Shamsinar Ibrahim

7. **NAVIGATING TOXIC WORK ENVIRONMENTS: UNDERSTANDING STRATEGIES FOR REMEDIATION** 19
Shamsinar Ibrahim, Hasyimah Razali & Cesya Rizkika Parahiyanti

8. **WAQF LAND MANAGEMENT FOR PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT: A CATALYST FOR WELFARE AND BENEFITS TO THE POOR** 22
Zuraidah Mohamed Isa, Dahlia Ibrahim & Zaiful Affendi Ahmad Zabib

9. **THE INFLUENCING FACTORS OF ONLINE REVIEWS ON PURCHASE DECISIONS** 24
Fatihah Norazami Binti Abdullah, Noriza Binti Mohd Saad & Nor Edi Azhar Binti Mohamed

10. **APPLICATION OF TECHNOLOGY TO IMPROVE WAQF PERFORMANCE** 28
Dahlia binti Ibrahim & Zuraidah Mohamed Isa

11 **ADVANCING QUALITY EDUCATION THROUGH ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE** 30
Hafizah Hammad Ahmad Khan, Noorlailahusna Mohd Yusof & Abdul Bari Khan

12. **JOURNEY THROUGH KEDAH: PERSONALIZED TRAVEL ITINERARY CRAFTED WITH CHATGPT** 32
Nurul Hayani Abd Rahman, Rabitah Harun & Nani Ilyana Shafie

13. **TOURISM UNDER THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN IN MALAYSIA** 36
Muhammad Hanif Othman & Zouhair Mohd Rosli

NAVIGATING TOXIC WORK ENVIRONMENTS: UNDERSTANDING STRATEGIES FOR REMEDIATION

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ABSTRACT

Workplaces with toxic environments succumb to negative behavior, for instance, downgrading, bullying, harassment as well as toxic leadership, which results in performance decrement as well as jeopardizing one mental health condition. Without necessary preventive and curative measures, toxic conditions in the workplace might become the norm in the near future. Therefore, this study intends to delve into toxic work environment concepts and strategies for reducing the condition of toxic workplace environments.

Keywords: toxic work environments; remedy; organization behavior; office management

INTRODUCTION

A toxic workplace environment undermines an individual's sense of security therefore is likely to affect their overall well-being adversely (Rasool et al., 2021). Beyond this, a toxic workplace can pose challenges to an employee's professional life, leading to a decline in job performance (Anjum et al., 2018). The outcomes reveal a clear connection between a toxic work environment and its substantial influence on both job productivity and stress levels. Note that a toxic workplace contributes to heightened stress levels among employees concerning their colleagues, jobs, supervisors, peers, as well as organization. This negativity toward the organization prompts employees to contemplate neglecting their jobs, ultimately resulting in subpar job performance (Anjum & Ming, 2018). A toxic workplace can come in many forms, such as bullying, downgrading, sexual harassment, toxic leadership and many more. A recent local investigation by Omar et al. (2015) in the chosen public service agency uncovered a significant occurrence of workplace bullying, with a prevalence rate of 83.2%. The results of this study indicated a robust connection between destructive leadership behavior and workplace bullying. This research also reinforces the argument that a harmful style of leadership creates a conducive environment for workplace bullying. Regrettably, in Malaysia, the extent of workplace bullying is not emphasized in comparison to other nations. As supported by Omar and Ahmad (2020), academic personnel in Malaysian public universities experienced depression as well as anxiety when dealing with toxic leadership. From a local perspective, studies related to this topic mostly linger around the prevalence of toxic environments and forms of toxic conditions in the workplace. Therefore, this paper aims to explore the lack of exploration in remedial strategies to cope with the toxic workplace environment regardless of the forms it takes to give a basic understanding of how to cater to toxic workplace environments.

STRATEGIES FOR REMEDIATION

Although handling a toxic workplace might be difficult, there are a few coping mechanisms you can try to help things go better. Firstly, recognize the personal effects that the poisonous environment is having on you, for instance increased tension as well as conflicts with superiors or colleagues. Secondly, clearly distinguish between your personal and professional lives by setting boundaries; for example, refrain from reviewing work emails or participating in work-related activities beyond regular working hours. Make an effort to keep the poisoning out of your personal time. Thirdly, concentrate on the things you can manage. For example, keep your attention on doing work you are proud of and set an example for positive interactions with your coworkers. Ascertain that everyone in your care feels comfortable enough to confide in you psychologically. Promote integrity and never punish anyone who does not agree with you. Fourth, stay professional even in challenging situations. For instance, refrain from participating in gossip or negative actions that may exacerbate the atmosphere. In moments of heightened stress, consider taking brief breaks to recenter yourself and preserve your composure. Fifth, develop an exit strategy provided that the workplace toxicity is taking a toll on your mental and physical health, in addition to no trustworthy individual to confide in or if previous attempts to address the issues have been unsuccessful (Visuvasam et al., 2022). For instance, if addressing the matter with colleagues and superiors yields no favorable outcomes, it becomes necessary to devise a plan for departing from a toxic work environment. Last but not least, organizations must take steps to minimize workplace toxicity and enhance the sustainability of organizational performance (Rasool et al., 2021). For example, a leader must provide support to employees by acknowledging work-related challenges and providing essential assistance, particularly for tasks that involve demanding and stressful requirements (Nguyen et al., 2020).

CONCLUSION

A toxic workplace detrimentally affects well-being and job performance, increasing job stress and negative perceptions. The lack of emphasis on remedial strategies in existing literature highlights a crucial gap. Remedial mechanisms involve recognizing personal effects, setting boundaries, maintaining professionalism, and having an exit plan. The support of leadership and organizational initiatives is essential for the well-being of both employees and sustainability. These approaches play a crucial role in fostering enduring employee well-being, heightened productivity, and the development of a more resilient and positive workplace culture.

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