

**20M1280 REPORT**

REFLECTIVE ESSAY FOR SEMESTER 1 AUGUST/2020  
BM-5102: ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOUR

MASTERS IN MANAGEMENT BY COURSEWORK  
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS  
UNIVERSITI BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

## **BEFORE EXPERIENCE**

I had started my Masters of Management by Coursework in August 2020, in the midst of COVID-19. My classes were at first all online, using platforms such as *Canvas*, *Zoom* and *Microsoft Teams*. After some time, some classes were made offline due to the situation in Brunei becoming more controlled and there were no local cases of COVID-19. Adapting to the online classes was difficult. Lessons were harder than usual due to the temptations that online classes have, such that the ability to turn off the camera during classes allowed students, although discouraged, to eat or sleep or do other kinds of things instead of focusing on the classes and actually learning. Thus, students find it difficult to study online if they do not have self discipline. I, myself, find it difficult to focus as looking at the screen for long periods without much changes is tiring and taxing for my eyes. Furthermore, it is more difficult to ask questions during online classes, hence students and myself included ended up sending emails to our lecturers, which overwhelms them and ends up delaying replies and causing various misunderstandings. This happened for my module, BM-5102 Organizational Behaviour, as well where students were slightly confused on the assignments and ended up making several mistakes in report writing. However, I would like to point out that our lecturer for this module, as well as other modules, did their best in replying to enquiries, even though it was well outside their working hours, which I am thankful for. The module had two main assignments, an individual analysis report as well as a group case study report.

For my individual analysis assignment, I had initially thought to investigate the impact of stress towards job satisfaction of primary teachers in Brunei as well as the factors that influence both stress and job satisfaction levels. “Stress” in my study uses the definition that the individual is placed in situations that give more demands than what they can do and cope with, which burdens and overexerts their personal and social resources (Ratnawat & Jha, 2014). Meanwhile job satisfaction refers to how fulfilled and content the employees are in regards to their needs and desires at work including the work environment as well as the work itself (Sageer, 2012). Teachers in Brunei, especially in public schools, have various classes to teach along with other duties. For instance, being the class teacher, head of department, part of the disciplinary committee, additional managerial work and such. Some even had to have additional classes after school hours in order to cover the syllabus and teach students that need additional help. Hence, my study was initially aimed to investigate whether these additional work would affect the stress levels of these teachers and compare them to those with less or no additional work as well as literature from other studies. By conducting this study, I had hoped that it could help the teachers in Brunei, especially those who’s stress coping abilities are lower than average, as it can be referred to when changes in the government are to be made. Therefore, the study needed quantitative and qualitative primary data from primary teachers in Brunei to get the statistics as well as the details regarding the topic in addition to literature from secondary data as a comparison and support for my discussion. The individual analysis assignment that was given by our lecturer aimed to develop our research and report-writing skills and it should be on a topic within the scope of our module. A few of the topics in the module include motivation as well as stress and conflict, which I think relates with my individual analysis topic. Stress levels are often connected to the motivation of individuals as according to Fray and Gore (2018), most teachers chose the profession for reasons that are intrinsic and/or altruistic rather than extrinsic.

As for my group case study assignment, in addition to developing our research and report-writing skills, it would also help develop our ability to work in a team. Our group case study at first was on the exploration of issues regarding organizational culture and subculture

with a focus on multinational companies in Brunei, which relates to cross-cultural organizational behaviour, one of the topics in the module. However, due to circumstances, it changed to a topic that discusses the impact of the pandemic, COVID-19, on nurses and their mental health and places a focus on the strategies that can be implemented by organizations to manage their mental health issues as they may affect the performance, turnover, and various other factors of the organization (Labrague & McEnroe-petite, 2017; Zhou et al., 2018; Zeng et al., 2020). COVID-19 had caused massive changes in the ways people live their daily lives, which includes organizations and their work processes. It is evident that people that work in healthcare organizations are most affected by the pandemic as they have to be aware and be more careful in doing their work due to the nature of the pandemic, which also causes strains and anxiety among these healthcare workers. Hence, the reason behind the chosen topic is mostly due to the immediate impact of the pandemic and the need to manage these impacts. Due to our inability to go out and gain primary data, we had to make do with literature findings from all over the world to discuss on the topic.

At that point in time, after the announcements of my assignments from all of my modules for the semester, I had already predicted the amount of stress that I would go through due to the great workload. Hence, I made it a priority to properly manage my time and to schedule my days well so that it is easier to keep track of my progress and due dates. It is necessary to balance my university work, social life, as well as overall health. As with Maslow's theory of human needs, when the needs of an individual are fulfilled, such as the physiological needs and social needs, they are more able to perform better in order to continue fulfilling their needs up the hierarchy (Maslow, 1970). Preparing my days early and keeping track of my progress through the use of my bullet journal allows me to stay motivated and passionate. As with various motivation theories, performance increases with great motivation, especially the intrinsic ones.

### **DURING EXPERIENCE**

For my individual analysis assignment, I first searched for basic articles regarding my topic to get the overall gist. I would then make a literature table to gather the data that I needed, which also helps me track the papers that I have read as well as to note down the main findings. I had also used the comment function in Microsoft Word to help me link the articles to the article sites such as science direct, scopus and the like, as downloading the papers was fine and all, however, it is difficult to keep track. I had also taken a considerable amount of time to come up with the methodology and researched on which surveys I should use or if I should make my own with the reference of a well-used survey. However, two to three months into the semester, circumstances had made it that we were unable to gather primary data and were told to use secondary data instead. Hence, changes were made to both individual analysis and group case study assignments, which led to the change in topic for the group case study as it was difficult to gather secondary data on multinational companies in Brunei.

I have made adjustments towards the methodology of my individual analysis paper, but nonetheless I felt thankful that I did not need to completely change my topic entirely. I changed my primary data to secondary data and continued on to find more articles which gathered primary data from various different countries to find similarities and differences in the stress and job satisfaction levels. The process in gathering these articles was difficult and very tedious. I read article after article. I kept on thinking about my paper day after day, until the day came that the due date was quite soon. Thus, there was the need to continue on with the report writing even though I still find my articles to be lacking, in depth and in the range

of countries the articles I found are from. I had wanted to include at least 30 countries, however, I could only put in 21 countries. The number of articles for each country was also lacking, as some only had one article to the country, which may cause some bias in my study. The report also did not evaluate all of the findings that I gathered through the literature reviews. Some factors that had influenced the levels of stress and job satisfaction in a few articles were not elaborated. Only a selected few were discussed on in my report, although they are one of the most studied on factors. Additionally, there was also a word limit, hence it was also a way to limit myself and make sure that I did not overload the report with too much information.

On the other hand, I had high expectations towards myself at the beginning of the study. I had a clear picture of how I wanted to do my report, where I wanted to make various tables and graphs to better showcase the findings and ease the process of reading through my report. However, time was limited, thus I had ended up with a more subpar report, in my standards, that I am not fully satisfied with, which I regret not putting in more effort at the start of the report writing. I was too wrapped up with all of my assignments from my other modules, which I felt was quite numerous. Although in the end, I can only blame myself for underestimating the amount of time I should put in my individual analysis report. With the frustrations that I felt in the process, I learned that I should evaluate and judge the weight of my assignments and better manage my time and workload.

As for my group case study, my group mates and I first collected general information through a brief websearch before continuing on with our literature table. Similar to the process of my individual analysis report writing, more and more articles were read, however, the burden was shared between group members. Although the number of articles and the number of countries used in the report was slightly lacking in my opinion, there are limited articles available as COVID-19 is a recent and on-going pandemic. Hence, it is more understandable and more acceptable. Moreover, mental health is a difficult subject to study on, as diagnosis of the nurses' mental health were mostly through surveys or based on their own feelings. Thus there may appear errors in the findings and may not be representative of the country. Furthermore, some countries are quite large, hence the validity and representativeness will always be questionable, unless it is a wide scale study that involves the whole country, which is rarely the case. Thus, I feel that my group report is slightly biased and lacked depth and comparative analysis between countries.

Being in a group is also not as smooth sailing a process when compared to individual work. One must make sure that each member does not feel left out nor lost about the report writing. However, it proved to be difficult as we had four members, but one was overseas while the rest rarely met offline due to difference in schedules as well as other life commitments. Therefore, we had all relied on online meetings and discussions, whether through our group chat in *Whatsapp* or through *Google Docs*, which have greatly been utilised in our report writing.

As for my contribution in the group, I had led the discussion on the topic and relayed my ideas and perspectives whilst organizing and delegating parts of the report to the other group members, searching for the content and supportive studies, as well as to check the grammar and flow of the report. The reason behind why I led the group was that most of the members were shy to talk about their opinions or felt it hard to communicate, especially online and in a mixed nationality group with only English as our main communicating language, which is not the native language for all four members. Thus, I took the initiative as

the report needs to be done one way or another, hence, I did not mind leading at all and would like to develop my leadership skills in the process as well. However, I did keep everyone updated and asked for their constant opinions. I did not want to take away their freedom to speak out and I find that different opinions make better report writing as a single person may be biased in their own perspectives and opinions. Everyone was helpful and did their part. As for the report writing, we had distributed the discussion so that it was more efficient and less time was needed on arguing about our own opinions. After the discussion was complete, however, we would then recheck the whole discussion so that it flowed well and that no parts of it were conflicting with each other. Areas that seemed lacking were also added on by other members and if there were some parts that some people did not agree with, it would then be discussed on, and the part would then be adjusted if necessary. However, it proved that no conflicts occurred on the content between all the members and everyone was satisfied with it.

### **COMPLETION OF EXPERIENCE**

In regards to my individual analysis report, after submission, I felt that it was quite a pity to not be able to conduct proper primary data gathering. There are quite a limited number of studies in Brunei. Even if there are, they are not published as of yet or are difficult to access or are simply unknown. My study could have led a way for proper research to be done on the job satisfaction of teachers and how stress could affect them with a focus on Brunei. I feel that it is important to understand the teachers as well as their mental and physical health, as they are an important asset in an organization and a country as a whole. Teachers have an important role in educating the future working generation which would decide on the fate of a country. Hence, the slight regret I felt after my report submission. However, I felt that my individual analysis report could be used as an article that shows the general stressors and factors that influence job satisfaction, as well as show the general trend in the relationship between them. Even though some bias could be present in the report, it is still a step forward in studies relating to stress and job satisfaction, which could be supported by various other articles and could also be further improved in the future.

For my group case study report on the other hand, after submission, I was happy that it was completed in time, even though various circumstances and events delayed the report writing. There were some things that I would do better if I were given a chance, such as making graphs and listing down the journals used in the report as well as elaborating and discussing more on several parts of the discussion. However, for this assignment, it has been completed and has already been submitted, so I can only use this experience to prepare myself earlier for similar studies in the future. On another note, I feel that our paper contributes to the current issues that are occurring throughout the world due to the pandemic and I am proud of such work. I am satisfied with the outcome as not only did it reach the goal of recommending strategies to manage the mental health issues of the nurses that are constantly working hard and are at high risks, it also shows the efforts and sacrifice of the nurses. It should be properly acknowledged and when required, they should be properly supported in terms of their needs, mentally, physically, or even socially, by their healthcare organization and their surroundings.

All in all, I learnt that I should manage my assignments well and give leeway in my time management in case things go in an unexpected direction. It is better to overestimate the time and work needed on an assignment than to underestimate them and end up with a satisfactory report that I am not as proud of. In the near future, I would do my best to organize my schedule and manage my time well in addition to starting early and asking my

lecturers more questions on the subject and assignments. However, I also understand that I had done my best with the limited amount of time and resources that I had, notwithstanding the clashes in due dates and important events that I had to balance with. Moreover, I also found that I am decent in leading my group towards finishing the report, with minimal arguments. However, I learnt a lot in the process, such that different people have different pace and different work ethics. It is important that when doing group work, it is better to assess the way your group mates work and make plans around the situation in addition to finding out the optimum way in leading them. It takes much effort to find out their habits and make adjustments in the process of report writing, thus getting to know each other and discussing the ways they usually work is something that I will do from now on.

Meanwhile the process of report writing has challenged my motivation in continuing my postgraduate studies again and again, especially when things did not go the way they were supposed to. I had to assess myself as well as my motivation multiple times, yet in the end, I feel that my motivation in continuing my studies won over the hardships that need to be gone through. I had aspired since the beginning of my postgraduate journey to gain the necessary skills that can allow me to better manage either my business or other organizations that I may work at after graduation. Furthermore, Musa and Idris (2020) have noted that there are increasing numbers of unemployed youths in Brunei and that the youths are lacking in terms of skills such as leadership, communication, and the ability to handle stressful situations, as well as lacking understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses in addition to their limitations. This experience has actually made me grow as a person and developed my mind and my heart to be more tough and to always look at things critically without giving up. Moreover, as with the skills that are in fact necessary for youths in the current times, this experience has also allowed me to lead when there are no leaders and to properly communicate with others. In the near future, I am motivated to further develop my leadership and communication skills, such that I would not overpower people, yet also have the ability to make people work well together. Leadership is a skill that I find to be quite useful and can be used in most parts of our lives. I find that it is better to take the initiative than to waste time on bad discussions with no leads. Moreover, in regards to report writing, I also hope to further develop my report writing skills as well as my investigation skills, for instance, to learn how to read and digest articles in a more efficient way with minimal time as doing research may take tens, hundreds or even thousands of articles depending on the subject. However, I would also like to point out that although I aim for further development and growth in various aspects of my life, actually executing and making progress on these self development would take effort, time and resilience. Hence, there is a need to constantly assess myself as well as my priorities, aspirations and motivations. Only with enough willpower will there be progress.

Lastly, I find that reflective reports are quite useful when it comes to closure as well as to learn more about yourself. It is useful to reflect on the ways that I should have done better on, and on what parts of myself and what I have done that I should keep. There are plenty to learn through this reflective report, some I only understood once I sat down and started writing. This reflective report has also shown me the strengths and weaknesses that I have as well as the things that I can further improve and develop on. Thus, I can conclude that experience makes the man. Only through experience does a person learn and grow and I find myself improving with each experience, even if it is only a miniscule amount.

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