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The Role of Career Function, Quality Relationship on Mentee's Job Satisfaction: A Moderating Model Approach

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ABSTRACT- Mentoring program is an on the job training method implemented by mentors (knowledgeable and experience staff) to facilitate mentees (less knowledgeable and experience staff) to achieve the organizational strategy and goals in an era of global competition. This study was conducted to evaluate the relationship between career function and job satisfaction with quality relationship between mentors and mentees as moderator variable. Based on data collected from a sample of 136 respondents, civil servants who involved in a formal mentoring program at Malaysian civil Service. The Smart Partial Least Squares (SmartPLS) path model analysis was employed to evaluate the validity and reliability of the instrument, as well as test to the research hypotheses. The findings displayed the quality relationship between mentors and mentees does moderate the effect of career function on job satisfaction in the organizational sample. This result demonstrated that the ability of mentors to appropriately implement career functions can enhance mentees' job satisfaction in the examined organizations. Further, this study elaborates a discussion, implications and conclusion.

Keywords: Mentoring; Career Function; Job Satisfaction; Quality Relationship; Public Sector

I. INTRODUCTION

As reported in the survey by Jobstreet.com Malaysia, involving 10,143 employees, more than half of the respondents (58%) reported job satisfaction ranging from neutral to happy. Malaysia had been ranked fourth out of seven neighboring countries. The happiest country of 2017 was Indonesia, then followed by Vietnam and Philippines. The factors affecting job satisfaction in Malaysia are good work location, good colleagues, and reputation of the company (Jobstreet, 2018). The job satisfaction can be affected by intrinsic and extrinsic factors. The attributes for the intrinsic factors are relationship with colleagues, recognition, and advancement. According to Wong et al. (2014), help from the colleagues will create a friendly working environment. Recognition is the extent to which the leaders approve or appreciate the good performance of the employees (Moloantoa, 2015). Meanwhile advancement is the progression towards the actual job duties to develop the career (Saba & Igbal, 2013).

The job satisfaction represents the individual behaviors towards their jobs. Many scholars had given their own definition of job satisfaction and among them is Locke (1969), defined job satisfaction as the individual's cognitive, affective and evaluation as a reaction towards their jobs. In addition, the author classified the definition into satisfied and dissatisfied, whereas job satisfaction pleasurable emotional state drives from the job values and dissatisfaction is the frustration emotional in achieving the job values. Spector (1997) defines job satisfaction or dissatisfaction is when the job meets or not the employee's physical and psychological needs for the things provided by the work, such as salary. Hoppock (1935) defined job satisfaction as the combination of psychology, psychological and environmental circumstances that cause the person's satisfaction towards jobs.

Mentoring is found to be one of the best ways in organizational learning and has a positive impact towards the job satisfaction. The use of mentoring relationship demonstrated a high job satisfaction and reduce the job turnover in the organization (Iverson & McLeod, 1996; Mehra and Tharakan, 2020). A study by Nkomo, Thwala and Aigbavboa (2018) proved that it is important to have a competence

supervisor and a quality relationship may resulting a productivity and effectiveness progress of employee's works. It given a major impact on job satisfaction. In addition, quality mentoring relationship will give a positive social change and improve employee's satisfaction in the organization by providing a good mentoring for technicians and technologists as required by the employees (Fountain, 2018).

The literature studies found out that even though the mentoring programme was systematically organised, it will not achieve the main objectives if the mentor is unable to carry out the mentoring function effectively (Nor Ain, Azman, &Fariza, 2018; Ting, Feng, & Qin, 2017;). Illies and Reiter-Palmon (2020) proved that ineffective mentoring might have a negative impact on the mentees in term of a high turnover and low job satisfaction. Consequently, the organization will bear the costs in terms from employees' absenteeism, moonlighting, cyber loafing and new recruitment. As mentioned by the previous studies, like Ting et al. (2017) and Nor Ain et al. (2018), a mentor has two main functions which are career function and psychosocial. Career functions are usually performed by mentors to provide guidance related to career development to their mentees (Gill et al., 2018; Montgomery, 2017). If the mentor provides the social skills guidance to the mentees, it is called as psychosocial. This paper will only focus on career functions.

In addition, the issues arise on the proper measurement of mentoring program by the mentors. The differences in how mentors are trained or supported will have an impacts on the mentoring program and outcomes to the mentees' performance. That is, mentor often has the capacity to influence on how they are conducting the contact events rather than what they should do with the mentees (McQuilin, Lyons, Clayton & Anderson, 2020). In fact, by having a clear measurement of mentor practices can easily understand the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of mentoring program. It is important for mentors to adopt good behavior that that is more likely to produce a desired outcome to the mentees and organization.

Most of the 21st century research on the mentoring programme revealed that the mentor's ability to perform career function in an orderly manner can have a significant impact on success of mentees, especially in the context of job satisfaction (Lunsford, Baker, &Pifer, 2018; Abdullah, N.A et al., 2020). In spite of the fact that many studies have examined the relationship of mentor roles and job satisfaction, there is very limited studies examining the role of quality relationship as moderating variable in the scope of organizational mentoring programmes (Jyoti& Sharma, 2015, 2017; Washington & Cox, 2016; Nor ain A., 2019). Hence, there are criticisms that the limitation is due to several factors: (1) past studies describe more on internal characteristics of mentoring program conceptually that is to explain the definition, purpose, type, function and importance of having mentoring programme (Kim, Im, & Hwang, 2015;, (2) many previous studies used simple correlation methods, to measure the strength of relationship between the role of mentor and mentees career success, as well as explaining the differences of respondent's views on the role of mentor (Jyoti& Sharma, 2015), (3) most previous studies have not focused on assessing the size of the impact of the role of mentor as a predictor of mentees career success. Therefore, the results of the study only produce general findings and is insufficient to be used as a guide by practitioners to understand the complexity of the mentoring concept program to enhance the ability of mentors to guide mentees to achieve and maintain organizational competitiveness and performance in the global competitiveness and economic based on knowledge (Nor Ain et al., 2016). In the context of the Malaysian civil service, the issue of training in the workplace and its impact on the employees has been extensively studied in the organization (Washington & Cox, 2016; Norain et al., 2019). Nevertheless, the role of mentor act as the moderating variable that are important to the success of mentees is given less attention in the Malaysian civil service sector. Thus, this situation stimulates the researchers to fill in the gap of literature by evaluating the moderating effect of quality relationship in the relationship between career function and job satisfaction. Specifically, the present research was conducted to answer two important objectives:

- 1) To evaluate the relationship between career function and job satisfaction
- 2) To evaluate the quality relationship as a moderating effect between job career function and job satisfaction

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Career Function

Career functions focus on career-enhancing activities that permit mentees to learn about the job while preparing for career growth/advancement (Alejandro et al. 2019; Kwan et al., 2020). Career function refers to the role of mentors who aim for the development of mentees competencies (Nor ain et al, 2018; Rekha and Ganesh 2019; Kwan et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2020). For example, the mentor guides to understand the task, provides guidance in improving job activities and solving work-related issues (Adebayo et al. 2019; Rekha and Ganesh 2019; Kwan et al., 2020). Career functions are practiced in the following five dimensions: challenging assignments, sponsorships, coaching, protecting and exposure (Abby Jingzi Zhou et al. 2019; Rekha and Ganesh 2019; Liu et al., 2020). Challenging assignments refer to mentors providing an opportunity to carry out important and high-risk tasks requiring a mentees to learn new skills (Kwan et al., 2020). The definition of sponsorship is that mentors help career development of mentees through recognizing the ability of mentees in the organization. Furthermore, mentors aid in the learning process by coaching their mentees. This activity provides valuable information on how to solve problems and perform duties, both of which relate to the socialization of the mentees to the organizational culture. Coaching also involves providing feedback concerning the mentee's performance and help to correct the mistakes (Alejandro et al. 2019). As mentees develop and interact with individuals within and outside the organization, mentors may provide protection. This might involve a mentor stepping in to provide aid when mentee's perform unsatisfactorily. Finally, exposure is defined as a mentor to provide the opportunity to support the emotional, communication and competence of the participants to demonstrate their ability and collaborate with top management and colleagues (Alejandro et al. 2019). Recent studies advocate that the ability of mentor to apply these five dimensions in the process of guiding mentees in career development can encourage a proactive individual of learning and practicing new skills, creating new ideas, becoming highly motivated and understanding the goals of the organization and contributing to the career success (Lunsford, Baker and Pifer, 2018; Gill, Roulet&Kerridge, 2018;Ho Kwong Kwan et al. 2019; Zhou Ziang et al. 2020;Nor' ain et al., 2020). Based on recent studies conducted on mentoring programs, it is evident that career function may act as an important antecedent of job satisfaction (Norain et al., 2020; Zhou Ziang et al. 2020).

2.2 Quality Relationship

The key challenge to build a quality relationship among mentor and mentee comes from the organization members. Employees' quality relationships were determined to be crucial to their overall wellbeing and performance ratings at work (Khoa et.al 2018 & Gisela et al. 2019; Conny et. al 2020). Quality relationship is an important aspect of mentorship effectiveness. Quality relationships as manifested in shared goals, knowledge, and mutual respect create a positive social context in which people feel safe to perform and act. People act in positive ways toward each other and enabled to act by shared and communal structures. cultures, and processes (Laura et. al., 2018). In a quality relationship, employee feel the sense of valued and appreciated and safe to occupy in work processes and tasks; they are active participants, not outsiders, in their organization, and can communicate what they think and feel (Gisela et al. 2019). Previous research indicates that quality relationship is an vital relational resource in the working context because of its ability to foster positive individual outcomes through instrumental and psychosocial support (Iqbal et al. 2020). Mentoring which leads to quality relationship will signifies pairing a knowledgeable, skilled or experienced person with a mentee with the goal of assisting in the career development and personal growth of mentee (Laura et. al, 2018 & Conny et. al 2020). The mentor delivers support, direction, and feedback to the mentee in dealing with personal, work, and career issues (Zhou Ziang et al. 2020).

2.3 Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is the result of an employee's perception of how his or her job has had a positive impact on his or her career (Arti, 2019 and Ahmad et al. 2020). There are many studies that have proven that when individuals have achieved job satisfaction and the environment, will contribute towards increasing employee productivity that affects the productivity of employee career success and organizational success (organizational commitment and desire to quit). Based on a recent study proves that job satisfaction is an important effect in relationships that exist in the role of mentor (Arora andRangnekar, 2016; Nor Ain et al., 2018; Tonya et al. 2019 && Zhou Jiang et al. 2020). In fact, job satisfaction among mentors can be produced if mentors play a role in mentee career development such as

helping to improve skills and maintaining a positive attitude in work (Asibon et al. 2019 & Zhou Jiang et al. 2020).

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX) oleh Dansereau et al. (1975)

Influence of quality relationship between the relationship of mentor's roles and mentee job satisfaction is consistent with the notions of Dansereau, Graen and Haga's (1975) Leader-Member Exchange Theory. Dansereau, Graen and Haga's (1975) Leader-Member Exchange Theory describes that quality of leaders is developed based on caring, mutual trust, respect, and honesty of competent leader towards the employees. For example, if the leader accept the followers as colleague and provide guidance on career development by practicing an open communication, itmaythe enhance follower's career outcomes.

The application of this theory in mentoring program shows that the ability of mentor in building a quality relationship with mentees by having a mutual trust and respect will enhance mentee's job satisfaction (Nor ain et al. 2016; 2019).

Figure 1 shows the theoretical framework of this study. Career function is the independent variable, job satisfaction is the dependent variable and the quality relationship is the moderating variable.

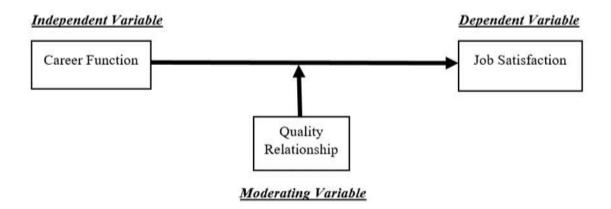


FIGURE 1. Research Framework

IV. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CAREER FUNCTION AND JOB SATISFACTION

${\bf 4.1. Explain}\ Empirical\ studies\ about\ the\ relationship\ between\ career\ function\ and\ job\ satisfaction$

Findings on the relationship between career function and mentee's job satisfaction are not consistent, for example, Halcomb, Smyth, andMcInnes (2018) conducted a meta-analysis study on the job satisfaction of nurses. This study highlighted that the level of job satisfaction are different according to the factors such as professional function, honor, recognition and autonomy. Mixed results on the relationship between career function and job satisfaction have been obtained from previous studies, for example, Mendez et al., (2017), investigated career function using perception of engineer in United State, Nor ain et al, (2018; 2020) using perception of 136 employees in public sector in Malaysia andMehra and Tharakan, (2020) conducted research using perception from employees of RadissionBlu, Greater Noida. Result from these surveys reported that the ability of mentor to appropriately support mentees in career development may lead to an enhanced mentee's job satisfaction in the organization. Hence, the hypothesis is:

V. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CAREER FUNCTION, QUALITY RELATIONSHIP AND JOB SATISFACTION

5.1 Explain Empirical studies about the relationship between career function, quality relationship and job satisfaction

The role of quality relationship as a moderating variable on the relationship between career function and job satisfactionare not consistent, for example, Byrne, Dik andChiaburu (2008) founded that ability of mentor to appropriately support mentees in career development either in formal or informal mentoring program will not enhance mentees' job satisfaction due to mentor and mentee failed to build good relationship between them. This finding occur due to mentor's personalities and mentee are not proactive. Latest studies show that the effect of quality relationship as moderating variable between the relationship of career function and job satisfaction, for example, Nor ain et al. (2018) (2019)conducted a research on career function and mentees outcome in Islamic perspective using the perception of 136 employees in public sector. The findings from this study reported that the ability of mentor to provide the opportunity to mentee in performing the challenging assignment, exposure and visibility, protection and sponsorship may leads to mentees' job satisfaction. This happen when mentors play their roles effectively like practicing a good communication. It shows that, the ability of mentor encouraging mentee in term of career function will give positive impact on mentees job satisfaction when mentor and mentee have a quality relationship.

H2: The positive relationship between career function and job satisfaction will be stronger when practices of quality relationship are greater

VI. METHODOLOGY

6.1 Research Design

A cross-sectional research design is employed to collect the data once within the duration of this study. This research design may help the researcher to collect accurate data, decrease bias data and increase quality data (Cresswell 2014; Lomand, 2016; Sekaran&Bougie 2016). This research was conducted at the public organization in Malaysia. At the initial stage of this research, the survey questionnaire was drafted based on the mentoring program literature.

6.2 Measurement

The survey questionnaire consists of three section: First is career functionwas assessed using challenging assignments, sponsorships, coaching, protecting and exposure. There were 13 items were adopted from Mentor Role Instrument (MRI) (Ragin and Mcfarlin1990). Second, quality relationship consist of 8 itemsadoptedfrom Noe, Noe, andBachhuber (1990). Last section is job satisfaction consist of 13 items adopted from Warr, Cook, and Wall (1979). All items used in the questionnaire were measured using a 7-item scale ranging from "strongly disagree/dissatisfied" (1) to "strongly agree/satisfied" (7). Respondent characteristics were treated as controlling variables because this research focused on employee attitudes.

6.3 Sampling

Researcher had distributed 363 questionnaire to mentees involved in the public sector's mentoring program and only 136 questionnaires had been answered completely, yielding 37.4 % percent response rate. Researcher had adopted the purposive sampling method to distribute the questionnaires. The sampling method is chosen as researcher only distributed the questionnaires to mentees with deemed experienced and knowledgeable in the mentoring program in their respective ministry.

6.4 Data Analysis

The SmartPLS was employed to analyze the survey questionnaire data because it may provide latent variable scores, avoid small sample size problems and assess complex models that have many latent and manifest variables (Henseler, Christain, Ringle, &Sinkovics 2009). The procedure of data

analysis is: first, construct and item validities were evaluated using convergent and discriminant validity analyses. Second, construct reliability was evaluated using composite reliability analysis. Third, the structural model was evaluated by examining the path coefficients using standardized betas (β) and t statistics (one tail test: t > 1.65; two tail test: t > 1.96).

Fourth, the moderating effect proposed by Chin et al., (2013) was used to evaluate the effect of moderating variable based on the following steps: 1) the main effects model is estimated to obtain the scores of the latent variable. 2) the latent variable scores of the exogenous latent variable and moderator variable from stage 1 are multiplied to create a single-item measure used to measure the interaction term. All other latent variables are represented by means of single items of their latent variable scores from stage 1.

In the fifth step, the value of f^2 was used as a measure to evaluate the effect size of predicting variable in the model [i.e., 0.02 (weak), 0.15 (medium), and 0.35 (large)] (Hair, Hult, Ringle&Sarstedt 2017). In the sixth step, the value of R^2 was used as an indicator of the overall predictive strength of the model [i.e., 0.19 (weak), 0.33 (moderate), and 0.67 (substantial)] (Chin, 2001; Henseler, Christain, Ringle&Sinkovics, 2009).

VII. FINDINGS

7.1 Characteristics of the Respondents

The findings of the respondents' profile shows that most respondents are female (55.1%), aged between 25 to 34 years old (69.1%), their education level is degree (39.7%), salary between 1000 to 2499 (47.1%) and their work tenure is less than 5 years (61.0%).

7.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Table 1 shows the validity and reliability of the constructs. The factor loading value for every item exceeds 0.7, career function (0.71-0.84), job satisfaction (0.73-0.87) and quality relationship (0.81-0.92), showing that the items for every construct have reached the standard of the validity and reliability analyses determined (Hair et al., 2017). Next, every construct has the composite reliability value that is greater than 0.80, career function (0.91), job satisfaction (0.88) and quality relationship (0.94), which means the measurement scale has high internal consistency (Henseler et al., 2009; Hair et al., 2019). Furthermore, convergent and discriminant validity test shows the value of the convergent validity test (AVE) for every construct is greater than 0.5, career function (0.59), job satisfaction (0.59) and quality relationship (0.73),it shows that the study constructs are able to explain the average of change among the items (Henseler et al., 2009; Hair et al., 2017).

Construct	Item	Loadings >0.70	Composite reliability >0.7	AVE >0.50	
	A01	0.71	0.91	0.59	
	A04	0.77			
Career Function (CF)	A05	0.76			
	A07	0.78			
	A10	0.73			
	A11	0.84			
	A12	0.80			
Job Satisfaction	C05	0.85	0.88	0.59	
(JS)	C06	0.84			
	C07	0.73			
	C10	0.74			
	C11	0.71			
Quality	F03	0.83	0.94	0.73	
Relationship	F04	0.89			

Table 1: Summary results for model measurement

(QR)	F05	0.86		
	F06	0.81		
	F07	0.92		
	F08	0.84		

Table 2 shows the discriminant validity was evaluated by using Heterotrait-Monatrait ratios (HTMT), which are the mean value of all item correlations across constructs relative to the mean of the average correlations for the items measuring the same construct. Using the HTMT as a criterion, it is suggested that values are compared to a threshold of 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2009). If the value of the HTMT is higher than this threshold, one can conclude that there is a lack of discriminant validity. Since all indicators are lower than 0.85, the discriminant validity of this model is well-confirmed.

Table 2:Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Construct	Quality Relationship	Career Function
Quality Relationship		
Career Function	0.551 CI.90 (0.408,0.6)	
Job Satisfaction	0.551 CI.90 (0.38,0.722)	0.658 CI.90 (0.533,0.77)

7.3 Hypothesis Testing Results

As depicted in table 3, CR contributed to 34 percent of the variance in JS. The result showed CR was significantly related with JS (β =0.58; t>1.65). Hence, H₁ was accepted. Second, CR contributed to 44 percent of the variance in JS. The result showed moderating variable (CR X QR) was significantly related with JS (β =0.19; t>1.65). Hence H2 was accepted. The result presents that the QR does moderate the effect of CR function on JS.

Table 3: Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	β	t value	f^2	R ²	Results
H ₁	0.58	10.26	0.51	0.34	Accepted
CR→JS					
H _{2 CR→(QRXCR)→JS}	0.19	3.09	0.09 (Small)	0.44	Accepted
(Moderating)					

As an extra test, effect size (f^2) were further conducted through Bootstrapping and Blindfolding procedures. The result of the test yield f^2 value of 0.51 for H1, which was greater than 0.02 indicating a weak effect on JS (Hair et al., 2017). For H2, the f^2 0.009 that was smaller than 0.02 indicating that the effect of moderating variable to the JS are small (Hair et al., 2017).

VIII. DISCUSSIONS AND IMPLICATONS

The findings of this study indicated that quality relationship is an important moderating variable for the career function and job satisfaction. In the context of this study, mentors have appropriately planned an implemented mentorship activities and build the quality relationship between mentees according to broad policies and procedures formulated by the stakeholder. According to the majority of

respondents, the levels of support and quality relationship between mentor and mentees on career development are high in the organization. This situation indicates that the ability of mentors to appropriately implement career function and quality relationship in mentorship activities may lead to an enhanced mentees' job satisfaction in the organization.

Three important inferences are derived from the research: theoretical contribution, robustness of research methodology and the practical effect. From the perspective of theoretical contribution the results of this study exposed that quality relationship is an important moderating variable in the relationship between career function and job satisfaction. This finding is consistent with the principal meanings of Leader-Member Exchange Theory (Dansereau, Graen and Haga, 1975). This theory reveal that the ability of leaders to properly provide various aids, such as concern about mentee's emotions and well being as well as encouraging and facilitation mentees' skills development have enhanced the mentee's job satisfaction. The principal meanings of this theory has also received strong support from the studies Kim et al. (2015), nor ain et al. (2016) ,Hartmann et al. (2016) Tonidandel et al., (2015),Jyotidan Sharma (2015) and (Nor ain A., 2019) .

Besides, due to the robustness of the research methodology, the survey questionnaires used in this study have met the acceptable standards of validity and reliability analyses. This attribute may lead to the production of accurate and reliable findings.

With regard to practical contribution, the findings of this study may be used as guidelines by practitioners to improve the management of mentoring program in organization. In order to realize these objectives, management should consider the following aspects: firstly, to improve content and methods for mentors in order to enhance their competencies in interpersonal communication, teaching, counseling and guiding different mentee backgrounds. Secondly, pair the mentor and mentee according to their willingness. Thirdly, to motivate the mentees to commit with the programs. If the management pay special attention to the suggestions, the organization may be able to strongly encourage mentor and mentees to support the goals of mentoring program in organization.

IX. CONCLUSION

The research tested a conceptual outline established in mentoring support research literature. The SmartPLS path model analysis's results affirmed that quality relationship plays a vital role as a moderating variable between career function and job satisfaction in the studied organization. Hence, existing research and practice of the mentoring program in organization studies must view that quality relationship between mentor and mentee should be incorporated as a vital dimension of mentor's role. This study further suggests that the capability of mentors to appropriately build a positive relationship with mentee will induce subsequent positive mentee outcomes. Thus these positive outcomes may help to maintain and enhance the level of mentee's job satisfaction in the organization.

X. LIMITATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This research has some restrictions: first, this research did not measure a specific characteristics for the independent construct, the dependent construct and the moderating construct. Second, a cross-sectional research design has only taken data once within the period of this study. Third, demographic variables have been used as controlling variables in his research. Fourth, this research only explains the general perceptions of mentees in the public agencies in Malaysia. Finally this research uses purposive sampling method and this method could decrease bias in the selection of respondents. Therefore, the findings of this research is important for all working organizations, but they could not be generalized into different types of organizations.

The above limitations can be used as road map to improve future research. First, some important mentee's features such as age, education, position and gender should be further analyzed because we can enhance our understanding about how differences and similarities of mentee perceptions may directly and/or indirectly affect the mentor's roles in mentoring program. Second, researchers are recommended to look into longitudinal research method to further explore changes in variables and provide more meaningful insights. Third, future research should be done in private sector to illustrate the effect of quality relationship between mentor and mentee. Fourth, apart from career function, future research should consider other elements in career function construct like challenging assignments and

sponsorships. This is because these elements are often discussed in recent mentoring program literature. Finally, other variables such as organization support and mentoring culture should also be taken into consideration as moderating variables in the relationship between mentor's roles and mentee outcomes in different organizational settings. For the future research the suggestions need to be addressed in order to produce more robust and meaningful research outcomes.

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