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(IJEPC)**<https://gaexcellence.com/ijepe>**INFLUENCE OF FIVE KEY PSYCHOSOCIAL ELEMENTS
(5K) ON EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION IN A UNIVERSITY
RETREAT PROGRAM**

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Abstract:

University retreat programs are a growing popular way to promote professional development and employee well-being. However, little attention has been given to research that systematically examines the influence of psychosocial aspects on employee motivation in retreat learning environments. Most of the previous research has looked at staff development interventions in typical corporate settings, not in experiential retreat programs. This study therefore examined the impact of five psychosocial variables (Family Bonding Orientation, Affectionate Values, Enjoyment Motivation, Creativity Orientation and Urgency Preference or 5K) on the university employee motivation in a retreat program. The design was quantitative and cross-sectional, with

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1,354 participants from a university retreat program. Data were gathered via a structured questionnaire and analysed through Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The measurement model was reliable and valid and the structural model explained 83.7% of the variance of employee motivation ($R^2 = 0.837$). The results indicate that the most important predictor of employee motivation was the enjoyment motivation followed by urgency preference. Values of affection and a focus on creativity demonstrated notable positive impacts, albeit with lesser contributions. Nonetheless, family bonding orientation did not show a considerable effect on employee motivation. These results emphasize the significance of inherent enjoyment, urgency, emotional ties, and creativity-related values in enhancing employee motivation. This study theoretically expands the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, Psychological Capital (PsyCap), and experiential learning perspectives by emphasizing the importance of psychosocial resources in boosting employee motivation in retreat-based learning settings. The results offer universities direction in creating engaging and values-driven retreat programs that enhance employee motivation and organizational learning.

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Keyword:

Employee Motivation, Five Key Elements (5K), Learning Outcomes, Psychosocial Factors, University Retreat-Based Intervention



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Introduction

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are increasingly called upon to develop human capital that is intellectually competent, emotionally resilient, and socially responsible. The Malaysian Education Blueprint (MEB) 2015-2025 (Higher Education) emphasises holistic development that integrates knowledge, ethics, and spirituality while fostering leadership, critical thinking, and national identity (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2015). In this regard, employee motivation within HEIs plays a critical role in ensuring the effectiveness of institutional programs, particularly those involving staff development and capacity building (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017; Bakker & van Woerkom, 2018). University retreat programs have become an increasingly popular approach for enhancing employee motivation, engagement, and well-being. These programs provide immersive environments that differ from conventional workplace settings by promoting reflection, collaboration, and interpersonal connection. However, despite their widespread implementation, there remains limited empirical evidence on the psychological and social factors that drive employee motivation within such retreat-based contexts. In particular, contemporary literature on positive organisational psychology suggests that workplace and experiential interventions should focus on psychosocial resources

and Psychological Capital (PsyCap), which have been demonstrated to influence employee well-being and performance outcomes (Luthans et al., 2007; Lupşa et al., 2020). This study, therefore, investigates the influence of five main psychosocial aspects, namely Family bonding orientation, Affectionate values, Enjoyment motivation, Creativity orientation, and Urgency preference, on employee motivation in a university retreat program. The study aims to provide a clearer understanding of how these psychosocial elements contribute to enhancing motivation among university employees in experiential development settings.

Literature Review

Recent organisational and psychological literature suggests that five key psychosocial elements, namely Family bonding orientation, Affectionate values, Enjoyment motivation, Creativity orientation, and Urgency preference, play an important role in shaping employee motivation, well-being, and performance in organisational contexts. Each of these things has different motivations and effects. Family bonding orientation is a social support system that helps individuals to feel psychologically safe and to achieve work-life balance (Blom et al., 2025). The values of care, compassion and trust that build workplace relationships and commitment (McAllum et al., 2023; Harris & Jones, 2023; Nie et al., 2023). Enjoyment motivation is the positive and enjoyable work environment that increases engagement and intrinsic motivation (Pap et al., 2025; Zhang & Henke, 2024). Creativity orientation is the capacity to create new ideas and solutions that allow innovation and adaptability (Amabile, 1983; Dhir & Vallabh, 2024). Urgency preference is the time pressure and goal-driven energy, which, if well managed, can improve performance, but if it is too much, it can increase stress (Xu et al., 2021). These components together constitute important psychosocial drivers that affect how employees experience and respond to organisational environments.

The importance of these psychosocial factors could be better explained through PsyCap, which is a combination of positive psychological resources such as self-efficacy, resilience, hope, and optimism that influence employee attitude, motivation, and performance (Luthans et al., 2007; Youssef-Morgan & Luthans, 2015). Numerous studies have linked PsyCap with increased motivation, job satisfaction, commitment, innovation and psychological well-being (Da et al., 2020). In addition, the Conservation of Resources theory states that people are motivated to obtain, retain, and protect valuable resources. In contrast, loss of such resources may result in stress and reduced functioning (Hobfoll, 1989). In this sense, PsyCap is an important psychological resource that allows employees to cope with demands and maintain motivation in difficult organisational contexts.

These theoretical perspectives are also supported by the Job Demands-Resources Model (JD-R) which explains employee motivation as a result of the interaction between job demands and job resources (Demerouti et al., 2001). In the present context, Family bonding orientation, Affectionate values, Enjoyment motivation and Creativity orientation are considered as job resources that promote engagement, well-being and motivation. Urgency preference, on the other hand, is a job demand that can either facilitate or hinder performance depending on its intensity and management. The model is also underpinned by the literature on experiential learning and outdoor adventure training, which shows that immersive experiences that incorporate physical activity, immersion in nature, risk taking and teamwork, can enhance psychological resources such as self-efficacy, resilience, leadership and motivation (Hattie et al., 1997; Holland et al., 2018; Bowen & Neill, 2014; Mutz & Müller, 2016; Houge Mackenzie & Brymer, 2020). However, the existing literature is largely within the context of traditional

organisational interventions, with limited focus on structured experiential contexts such as university retreat programs, especially in understanding integrated psychosocial drivers of motivation.

Therefore, this study provides new information to the literature in three ways. First, this is the first time the 5K psychosocial motivating characteristics have been assessed in a retreat-based learning setting rather than in typical workplace interventions. Second, it employs the JD-R Model, PsyCap, and experiential learning to further investigate how psychosocial resources and demands influence motivation for university staff attending retreats. Third, it offers significant evidence regarding the potential of such initiatives to enhance employee motivation within higher education, based on an analysis of data from more than 1,300 university employees. Based on all of this, we propose the following hypotheses:

- H1 Family bonding orientation is significantly related to employee motivation,
- H2 Affectionate values is significantly related to employee motivation,
- H3 Enjoyment motivation is significantly related to employee motivation,
- H4 Creativity orientation is significantly related to employee motivation, and
- H5 Urgency preference is significantly related to employee motivation.

Research Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research approach to examine the influence of lifestyle value orientation on employee motivation. A cross-sectional survey design was adopted to collect data from 1,354 academic and non-academic staff members at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI). The collected data were subsequently analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) through SmartPLS version 4 to examine the hypothesised relationships among the constructs proposed in the research model.

A quantitative approach was selected as it is appropriate for testing theoretically developed hypotheses and examining statistical relationships among variables within a large sample (Ghanad, 2023). This approach enables the utilisation of structured measurement instruments, numerical data collection, and systematic statistical analysis, thereby enhancing the objectivity, replicability, and generalisability of research findings (Mulisa, 2022). Furthermore, the cross-sectional design allowed data to be gathered at a specific point in time, providing an overall understanding of the relationship between lifestyle value orientation and employee motivation among academic and non-academic staff (Maier et al., 2023). This design was also suitable for identifying patterns of association between different dimensions of lifestyle value orientation and employee motivation, as well as comparing motivational tendencies across different groups of employees.

For data collection purposes, this study utilised a structured questionnaire to ensure consistency in the measurement process across all respondents. The research instrument comprised six main constructs: family bonding orientation (7 items), enjoyment motivation (4 items), affectionate values (5 items), urgency preference (7 items), creativity orientation (6 items), and employee motivation (5 items). All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The measurement items were adapted from previously validated scales in prior studies and refined to suit the context of the present research and the characteristics of the study population.

Subsequently, the measurement model was tested to determine the reliability and validity of the constructs used in this study. Convergent validity was assessed using composite reliability (CR), Cronbach's alpha (CA), outer loadings and the average variance extracted (AVE). The suggested threshold values were used, where CR and CA should be greater than 0.70, outer loadings should be higher than 0.70, and AVE should be higher than 0.50. For discriminant validity, the Fornell-Larcker criterion was utilized to confirm that each construct had stronger relationships with its specific indicators than with other constructs in the research model (Hair et al., 2017).

PLS-SEM analysis was conducted to test the proposed hypotheses and assess the structural model by using the bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples. The t-statistics and p-values obtained from the analysis established the significance and strength of the relationships between lifestyle value orientation dimensions and employee motivation. PLS-SEM was chosen as it is suitable for the analysis of complex research models with multiple latent constructs, reflective measurement models and datasets which do not necessarily meet the assumptions of normality (Hair et al., 2017).

Results

Respondent's Characteristic

Table 1 gives the respondent characteristics and indicates a relatively gender-balanced sample with a slightly higher proportion of females (53.2%), suggesting gender diversity in the workforce surveyed. The majority of respondents (69.9%) are non-academic personnel. In contrast, only 31.1% are academic, suggesting that the outcomes might be dominated by the values and motivational characteristics of administrative and support staff rather than those of teaching or research faculty. Most respondents are relatively well-tenured in terms of tenure: 43.2% have 11 to 20 years of experience, 22.7% have 21 to 25 years of experience, and only 5.6% have less than 1 year of experience. The presence of long-serving employees indicates a stable and experienced sample likely to have well-formed perceptions of the alignment of the workplace with personal values.

Table 1: Respondent Characteristics

Criteria		Percentage
Gender	Male	46.8
	Female	53.2
Group	Academic	31.1
	Non-academic	69.9
Length of service	Less than 1 year	5.6
	1 to 5 years	16.2
	6 to 10 years	12.2
	11 to 20 years	43.2
	21 to 25 years	22.7

Instrument Validity and Reliability

The convergent validity results presented in Table 2 indicate that all constructs meet and exceed the suggested thresholds, evidencing high internal consistency and validity of the measurement model. The outer loadings of all items are much higher than the acceptable minimum of 0.70 (ranging from 0.742 to 0.958 across constructs), suggesting that individual items are well correlated with their respective latent variables. CA values, which assess internal consistency, are all above 0.90, indicating excellent reliability. Similarly, CR values, which provide a more precise estimate of reliability in PLS-SEM, are consistently above 0.90, reinforcing the stability of the constructs (Hair et al., 2017). The AVE values for all constructs also exceed the 0.50 benchmark, with the lowest being 0.686 (Urgency preference) and the highest 0.890 (Enjoyment motivation), confirming adequate convergent validity (Hair et al., 2017). These results collectively demonstrate that the indicators explain a substantial portion of variance in their corresponding constructs, providing strong empirical support for the reliability and validity of the measurement model used in this study.

Table 2: Convergent Validity

Construct	Outer loading	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted
Family bonding orientation	0.743 – 0.916	0.947	0.951	0.760
Affectionate values	0.745 – 0.916	0.916	0.926	0.750
Enjoyment motivation	0.921 – 0.958	0.959	0.959	0.890
Creativity orientation	0.852 – 0.903	0.944	0.946	0.782
Urgency preference	0.742 – 0.888	0.923	0.929	0.686
Employee motivation	0.829 – 0.949	0.948	0.951	0.830

Based on the Fornell-Larcker criterion results presented in Table 3, the measurement model demonstrates adequate discriminant validity. In accordance with the criterion, the square root of the AVE for each construct (demonstrated on the diagonal) exceeds the corresponding inter-construct correlations, indicating that each construct shares more variance with its own indicators than with other constructs in the model. This confirms that the constructs are empirically distinct and sufficiently independent from one another (Hair et al., 2017). As such, the model meets the required standards for discriminant validity, supporting the structural integrity of the measurement model and validating the use of these constructs as separate theoretical dimensions in subsequent hypothesis testing and structural analysis.

Hypotheses Testing

The results of hypothesis testing are shown in Table 4. These results provide significant insights into the predictive influences between lifestyle value orientations and employee motivation. The model accounted for a large amount of variance in employee motivation ($R^2 = 0.837$) indicating that the model had high explanatory power. Four of the five hypothesised influences are accepted and statistically significant; one is not supported by the data. Enjoyment motivation is the strongest predictor of employee motivation ($\beta = 0.583$, $t = 19.516$, $p = 0.000$). This means that if employees are motivated by enjoyment and derive pleasure from their work, then their motivation is significantly higher. This finding points to the importance of positive affective experiences to sustain engagement in the workplace. Urgency preference also had a

large and statistically significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.300$, $t = 6.649$, $p = 0.000$), implying that employees that desire immediacy and finishing tasks are likely to be highly motivated. Therefore, H3 Enjoyment motivation is accepted, and H5 Urgency preference is accepted.

The paths from Affectionate values ($\beta = 0.071$, $t = 2.607$, $p = 0.009$) and Creativity orientation ($\beta = 0.061$, $t = 2.223$, $p = 0.026$) to employee motivation are also significant, but with smaller effect sizes. The findings indicate that emotional bonding and creative expression are positive contributors to employee motivation. H2 Affectionate values are accepted H4 Creativity orientation is accepted. On the other hand, Family bonding orientation and employee motivation have no significant relationship ($\beta = -0.036$, $t = 1.033$, $p = 0.302$) meaning that the effect is not statistically significant. So, H1 Family bonding orientation is not accepted. This result can be interpreted as family values being meaningful on a personal level but not necessarily leading to motivation in the work context, perhaps because of a presumed separation of family and work.

The hypothesis testing supports that the Enjoyment motivation, Urgency Preference, Creativity orientation and affection-related values have positive effects on employee motivation, while Family bonding orientation has no significant direct effect. The findings offer strong empirical support for the conceptual model and suggest the importance of aligning some lifestyle values, particularly Enjoyment motivation and Urgency preference, with organisational practices to enhance motivation among employees.

Table 4: Results of Hypothesis Testing

Direction	β value	t-statistics	p-value	R ²	Decision
Family bonding orientation and employee motivation	-0.036	1.033	0.302		Reject
Affectionate values and employee motivation	0.071	2.607	0.009		Accept
Enjoyment motivation and employee motivation	0.583	19.516	0.000	0.837	Accept
Creativity orientation and employee motivation	0.061	2.223	0.026		Accept
Urgency preference and employee motivation	0.300	6.649	0.000		Accept

Discussion

This section critically evaluates the findings of the study in terms of the research objectives, existing literature and practical context. The research offers a valuable perspective into the association of lifestyle value orientation dimensions and employee motivation and the influence of personal life values on motivational dynamics at the job. Theoretical, practical and social implications of the results are also discussed and areas where the findings converge, diverge or extend previous research are pointed to. The results indicate that four of five dimensions of lifestyle value orientation including Enjoyment motivation, Urgency preference, Affectionate values and Creativity orientation have a significant and positive effect on employee motivation. Strongest predictor was enjoyment motivation, followed by Urgency preference. However, Family bonding orientation did not show a statistically significant relationship with employee motivation, so this aspect of values may not translate directly into

motivation in the workplace. The model's high explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.837$) further underlines the robustness of lifestyle value orientations as predictors of motivation.

These results are important because they challenge traditional models of motivation which tend to focus on external incentives or general psychological needs. Instead, they emphasise the importance of individual value alignment to shape motivational responses. The strong effect of Enjoyment motivation and urgency related values suggests that employees are more motivated when their work allows them to satisfy their desire for positive experiences and efficiency (Fisher-Fox et al., 2024). The importance of Affectionate values and creative orientations also highlights the role of emotional and intellectual engagement in motivation. However, the non-significance of the Family bonding orientation indicates that although family is highly valued by people, this does not necessarily motivate their work motivation directly, possibly owing to role segmentation between personal and work domains (Ji et al., 2025).

From a theoretical perspective, the study contributes to the JD-R Model, PsyCap and experiential learning perspectives by showing that psychosocial resources and demands that exist in retreat-based learning settings are critical motivational factors influencing employee motivation beyond traditional workplace strategies. The findings support the JD-R Model regarding the effects of the interaction of job demands and resources on employees' motivational outcomes and extend the PsyCap and experiential learning perspectives by demonstrating the importance of psychological resources and experiential contexts in promoting employee motivation. The present study fills a gap in the existing motivational literature outside the traditional workplace setting by empirically confirming such relationships in the context of university staff members participating in a retreat program and highlights the role of psychosocial and experiential factors in explaining employee motivation.

The study offers useful implications for practitioners. The findings have practical implications for universities in the development of values-based and emotionally engaging retreat programmes that can enhance employee motivation and organisational learning. Such insights can assist human resource managers, organisational leaders and policymakers to design work environments and employee development programmes that are in line with the lifestyle values of employees and thereby enhance motivation and productivity. Specifically, organisations may create enjoyable, values-based work environments that support creativity and respond to employees' desire for meaningful and timely work habits (Horvat et al., 2025). The findings suggest that retreats and similar employee development interventions are a promising environment for the development of supportive climates that enhance employee motivation and organisational performance. Family-related values, which can affect employee satisfaction and retention, might need to be approached indirectly or supportively rather than directly as a form of motivation.

The findings have social implications beyond the theoretical and practical. The social relevance of lifestyle values for the development of work engagement is especially evident in an increasingly complex and personalized work-life integration context, particularly in diverse and multigenerational workforces. Matheson et al. (2021) suggest a more humane approach to motivation at work, where employees are not only workers but also people with important broader life values. It can help to develop more inclusive, empathetic and sustainable organizational cultures.

Limitations, Recommendations, and Conclusions

The study provides useful insights to understand the relationship between lifestyle value orientation and employee motivation. However, there are some limitations. First, the cross-sectional research design does not allow to infer causality between the variables. Findings suggest associations but not directional or temporal effects. Second, the sample consisted solely of public HEIs and over-represented non-academic staff, which may limit the generalisation of the results to other sectors or organisational contexts. Third, the data were self-reported and thus response bias, especially social desirability bias, may have influenced participants' self-evaluation of their motivation and value orientations.

In light of these limitations, future research could consider the use of a longitudinal design to better account for the causal relationships and the dynamic nature of employee motivation over time. The sample can be expanded to employees of private institutions, corporate sectors or different cultural contexts to make the findings more generalizable. Moreover, a qualitative or mixed-methods approach may offer a more nuanced understanding of how employees make meaning of and enact their lifestyle values at work. Researchers are also encouraged to explore other potential moderating or mediating variables such as organizational culture, job design, or leadership style that may influence the strength or direction of these relationships.

The present study has demonstrated that lifestyle value orientation is a significant predictor of employee motivation with Enjoyment motivation, Urgency preference, Affectionate values and Creativity orientation as significant predictors. Theoretically, the research contributes to the understanding of motivation in modern organisational settings by emphasising the significance of value congruence between a person and the work environment. While limited, the study provides a strong basis for future research and highlights the necessity of developing workplaces that recognise and respond to the different life priorities of their workers.

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Author Contribution Statement: All authors contributed significantly to the development of this manuscript. [Mohamad Rohieszan Ramdan], [Mohd Ridwan Abd Razak], and [Dayang Rafidah Syariff M. Fuad] were responsible for the conceptualisation of the study, development of the theoretical framework, and preparation of the introduction section. [Mad Ithnin Salleh] and [Muhammad Faheem Mohd Dahlan] were responsible for the research methodology design and coordination of the data collection process. [Anis Azlira Ali] and [Jamal @ Nordin Yunus] were responsible for data analysis, interpretation of results, and preparation of the findings section. All authors contributed to the drafting, critical revision, and refinement of the manuscript.

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