

UNDERSTANDING TEACHERS' JOB SATISFACTION THROUGH WORK-LIFE BALANCE POLICIES

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Abstract

Work-life balance play an important role in influencing employee's quality of social and working life together with job satisfaction in the organization. Nowadays, teachers are also included in the context of work-life balance due to academic workload and career issues. In this study, researchers aim to explore work-life balance policies that influence teacher's job satisfaction in selected Malaysia boarding school. Only 56 school teachers were selected to represent as respondents consist of teachers from language, mathematics, science, social science, counselling unit, and vice principals department. The questionnaires were distributed using convenience sampling. The elements of work-life balance policies such as flexibility policies, welfare policies, job design and leave provisions were included in this study to examine potential influence on teacher's job satisfaction. Based on statistical analysis using SPSS, Pearson Correlation analysis four elements of work-life balance policies indicated positive and significant relationship with job satisfaction, with flexibility policies showed the strongest relationship toward teacher's job satisfaction. Most of teachers in selected Malaysian boarding school also demonstrated high level of job satisfaction at the workplace.

Keywords: Work-life balance policies; job satisfaction.

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Introduction

Understanding the work-life balance and job satisfaction has always been a phenomenon of interest. Job satisfaction theories were extensively studied in previous literatures, however, recently, work-life balance is considered as one of significant variables associated with job satisfaction (Gabbidon, & Higgins, 2012; Haar, Spell & O'Driscoll, 2005; Heraty, Morley & Cleveland, 2008; Marcinkus, Whelan-Berry, and Gordon, 2007; Nikandrou, Panayotopoulou & Apospori, 2008). Obviously, work-life balance enables to broader quality of life for those employees who are concerned in having greater quality of working life (Guest, 20x02). Teachers, nowadays, are also included in the context of work-life balance due to overburden of the academic workload and career issues (Hakanaen et al., 2006). According to Borg & Riding (1991), teaching profession is considered stressful and consequently resulted teachers having burned out or stressed in the workplace. As reported, teachers proved of having burnout and work life conflict by demonstrating high level of fatigue and depression as compared with other professions (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996; Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). In a view of educational environment, it is important to recognize the satisfaction among teachers, even though, a study conducted in Malaysia reported majority of teachers in

selected secondary school demonstrated a high level of overall job satisfaction with their teaching job (Shahrul N. S , Muhammad, M. A. & Sabihah H., 2007).

Problem Statement

The ultimate performance in educational environment depends entirely on its employees especially teachers. In Malaysia, the education sector has evolved significantly by launching Education Strategic Plan in achieving the objectives of Malaysia's vision 2020. With the changing demographic trends in educational organizations showing increasing number of females entering this profession examining socio-demographic characteristics might influence important aspect for this school teacher's profession. Numerous researchers have argued that respondent's demographic characteristics together with working environment such as government and organizational policy, compensation system, workloads, co-worker relationships and work-life balance demonstrated significant variables of employees' job satisfaction (Ch'ng, Chong & Nakesvari, 2010; Ghazi, Ali, Shazada, & Israr, 2010; Kusku, 2003; Morris, Yaakob & Wood, 2004; Okpara, 2006; Oshagbemi, 1997a; Saiyadain, 1996; Santhapparaj & Syed, 2005; Villanueva & Djurkovic, 2009). Even though, numerous studies have been conducted in the ground of job satisfaction, however, the current associations of work-life balance policies impact on job satisfaction among teachers are still limited in Malaysia. Thus, this study mainly concerned on several significant variables of work-life balance policies including flexibility, welfare, job design and leave provision on teacher's job satisfaction. Indeed, it is needed to further in gaining better understanding and awareness of the policies for better future implementation.

Objectives

The general objective of this study was to explore the influence of work-life balance policies on job satisfaction among teachers in selected Malaysian boarding school. Specifically, this study focused on by the following objectives; to examine the relationship of work-life balance policies toward teachers' job satisfaction; and to examine the level of job satisfaction among teachers in Malaysian selected boarding schools.

Research Hypotheses of this study are stated as follow:

- H₁ Flexibility policies have significant relationship with job satisfaction
- H₂ Welfare policies have significant relationship with job satisfaction
- H₃ Job design has significant relationship with job satisfaction
- H₄ Leave provision has significant relationship with job satisfaction

Literature Review

Work-Life Balance

As referring to previous literatures, the definition of work-life balance is referred to an individual's work and family role is equally engaged in, and equally satisfied (Greenhaus, Collin and Shaw, 2003). Thus, for those employees who experience quality of work-life balance, consequently demonstrated similar commitment, time and investment to work and work areas (Virick, Lily & Casper, 2007). Basically, the capability of employees to balancing

the work and non-work activities are perceived high quality of work-life balance (Moore, 2007). If employees practicing work-life balance in their life, they are definitely satisfied with work and duties they performed (Malik et al., 2009). Thus, higher work-life balance consequently results in higher job satisfaction among employees.

Flexible work hours are designed to enhance motivation of employees in competitive working environment by assisting employees to organize role requirement and expectation at the workplace (Jane & James, 2014). As reported in previous literature, work-life balance specifically focus on working hours has demonstrated positive relationship toward employee's job satisfaction (Hanglberger, 2010). According to survey conducted by Jobstreet.com (Jobstreet, 2013) across various industries in Malaysia, majority of employees suggested the need of more flexible work hours should be implemented in the organization. Thus, numerous initiatives such as the introduction of staggered working hours by providing flexible system of attendance that allow employees in public sector to choose three option as when to start and end of their work (Public Service Department of Malaysia, 2007). In addition, working from home or telework and part-time employment are also considered the common and current practiced of flexible working arrangement in Malaysia (Nooraini M. N. & Nor Diana M. M., n.d.).

Welfare policies also can be defined as the purpose of providing public social welfare as part of law and administrative rules setup (Compton; Galaway & Cournoyer; 2004). Specifically, Coventry and Barker (1988) assert that employee welfare includes providing staff a worker's canteens, providing saving schemes; pension funds and leave grants, making loans on hardship cases; providing fringe benefits and assistance to staff transferred to another area. Besides, the government of Malaysia has also set up childcare policy by encouraging employers to provide on-site or off-site childcare centers to their employees as well as childcare subsidy as part of employer-supported childcare initiatives.

Job design enables to improve employees' satisfaction and enhance organization performance by developing of job analysis and restructuring jobs to capture the talents of employees (Liu, Shah, and Roger, 2009). Employee's work overload and under load, work repetitiveness, excessive working hours and understanding over the whole job process enable to solve through job design principles. The principles also enable to offer non-monetary rewards including greater satisfaction from personal achievement and better productivity levels among employees (Kapil Dev, 2009).

Leave Provision According to Malaysian Labour Law of Employment Act 1955 and Industrial Relation Act 1967, leave for employees includes; annual leave, sick leave, and public holiday. According to International Labor Organization, Malaysia is the one of 120 countries around the world that provided with paid maternity leave and health benefits by law. By providing paid and unpaid leave including parental leave and holidays is considered the best practice because employees enable to manage their paid work and family responsibilities (Baird and Whitehouse, 2012; King et al., 2012).

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is referred to general attitude and feelings of employees in relation with their jobs and job components including communication with the colleagues, equitable rewards, working environment and conditions (Glisson and Durick, 1988). Job dimension

including work, promotion, payment, relationship with co-worker and supervision is associated with employee's job satisfaction. As reported, women experiencing higher work-life conflict in comparison with men, especially for those women with younger children than those with older children (Noor, 2013). In addition, a study conducted in Pakistan revealed negative relationship between work-life conflict and job satisfaction among Pakistani employees (Nadeem, 2009). Furthermore, by practicing flexible work schedules enable to enhance greater productivity, better recruiting, improved commitment and decreased absenteeism (Meeusen, 2011).

Methodology

The study is focusing on exploring the influence of work-life balance policy and job satisfaction. Researchers used descriptive and correlational research to find the linear relationship between two or more variables without any hint of attributing the effect of one variable on another (Salkind, 2012). The convenience, non-probability sampling technique was selected in distributing questionnaire to respondents. In this research, the sample frame includes vice principals and teachers from selected Malaysian boarding school in Negeri Sembilan. The population comprised of 65 teachers and according to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), only 56 teachers were selected to represent as respondents. The unit of analysis consist of teachers from language department, mathematics department, science department, social science department, counselling unit, and vice principals department.

Reliability

The reliability of questionnaire were analysed using Cronbach's Alpha to measure the internal consistency and the level of strength of each variables. As referring to the table, each of variables is acceptable as excellent, good and acceptable consistency with the Cronbach's Alpha value for flexibility policy (.638); welfare policy (.757); job design (.703); leave provision (.616) and job satisfaction (.902).

Demographic Background

As referring to the Table 2, it shows the demographic background of teachers in selected Malaysia boarding school. Most of respondents consist of female and Malay teachers approximately 43 and 55 respondents respectively. Average age for teacher at selected boarding school was between 31 to 40 years old (32 respondents). The highest level of education for teachers mainly Bachelor Degree (44 respondents) and most of them were married (46 respondents).

Table 1. Demographic Background

	FREQUENCY (f)	PERCENT (%)
Gender		
Male	13	23.2
Female	43	76.8
Age		
23 to 30 years old	16	28.6
31 to 40 years old	32	57.1
41 to 50 years old	6	10.7
51 to 60 years old	2	3.6
Race		

Malay	55	98.2
Others	1	1.8
Level of Education		
Bachelor Degree	44	78.6
Master	10	17.9
PHD	2	3.6
Status		
Single	9	16.1
Married	46	82.1
Others	1	1.8

Findings and Discussion

Relationship between Work-life Balance Policies and Job Satisfaction

The results showed in the Table 3 stated that, there existed a strong and positive correlation between flexibility policies and teacher job satisfaction ($r = .607$, $p < 0.05$). Meanwhile, welfare policies and job design have positive and moderate relationship between job satisfaction ($r = .579$, $p < 0.05$) and ($r = .474$, $p < 0.05$) respectively. However, leave provisions showed positive and weak correlation with job satisfaction ($r = .381$, $p < 0.05$). All element of work-life balance policies indicated significant relationship with job satisfaction. Therefore, research hypothesis of this study are stated as following:

- H₁ Flexibility policies have significant and positive relationship with job satisfaction (accepted)
- H₂ Welfare policies have significant and positive relationship with job satisfaction (accepted)
- H₃ Job design has significant and positive relationship with job satisfaction (accepted)
- H₄ Leave provision has significant and positive relationship with job satisfaction (accepted)

Table 2. Correlations Table for Work-life Balance Policies and Job Satisfaction

		Flexibility policies	Welfare policies	Job design	Leave provisions
Job Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.607**	.579**	.474**	.387**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
	N	56	56	56	56

Job Satisfaction Level

Based on Table 3, the overall total means score for employee job satisfaction is 3.7270 (SD=.80917) which considered as higher level of job satisfaction. It can be considered that, most of school teachers having high level of job satisfaction at the workplace.

Table 3. Total means score for teacher's job satisfaction

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Job Satisfaction	56	3.7270	.80917

The researcher sought to establish the level of agreement to various aspects of job satisfaction. According to the findings in the Table 7, the respondent agreed to most of these aspects, the higher mean value for job satisfaction is that "The task assigned to me help them grow" by a mean of 4.1250, standard deviation = .74009. Meanwhile, the lowest mean value is "In the last 7 days, I have received praise or recognition for doing good work (mean = 2.9643 and standard deviation = 1.15938).

Table 4. Job Satisfaction Questions

	Mean	Std. Deviation
The task assigned to me helped me grow	4.1250	.74009
At work, i have the opportunity to do my best every day	3.9643	.97168
My supervisor encourages my development	4.0179	.92424
I see myself working for my current employer till i retire	3.6250	1.22938
In the last 7 days, i have received praise or recognition for doing good work	2.9643	1.15938
I am satisfied with the work-life balance policies provided by my employer	3.6071	.96632
Overall i am extremely satisfied working for my current employer	3.7857	1.05683

Conclusion

Work-life balance plays a crucial role in influencing employee's job satisfaction and greater quality of working life. The aim of the study was designed to determine the influence of work-life balance policies on job satisfaction among teachers at selected Malaysian boarding school. The elements of work-life balance policies such as flexibility policies, welfare policies, job design and leave provisions were included in this study to examine potential influence on teacher's job satisfaction. According to Pearson Correlation analysis, four elements indicated significant and positive relationship with job satisfaction, with flexibility policies showed the strongest relationship toward teacher's job satisfaction. Meanwhile, most of school teachers also demonstrated high level of job satisfaction because they believed the task assigned helped them grow and the supervisor encourages their development in selected Malaysian boarding school. It can be concluded that, most of teachers in selected Malaysian boarding school agreed with work-life balance policies implemented in that particular school by showing positive and high level of job satisfaction at the workplace. Thus, the management need to consider all the variables stated in this study to improve the teacher's job satisfaction and subsequently influence their job performance at workplace to ensure the overall improvisation in Malaysian educational organization.

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