Leadership, Teamwork and Person-Organization Fit as Determinants of Job Satisfaction: A Case Survey among Public Sector Employees

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ABSTRACT

Employee and job satisfaction has been the primary research topic in management studies worldwide. It is the primary concern for organisations to measure the performance of individuals by how they carry out their responsibilities in a manner that contributes to the achievement of the organisation's goals and creates satisfaction in their work. This study examines the relationship between leadership, teamwork, and the fit of person-organisation on job satisfaction. Employees at the Department of Statistics Malaysia were taken as the respondents in this study. The self-administered questionnaire was used for the collection of data. Two hundred questionnaires were distributed among the organisations mentioned above, and 108 responses were returned, so the response rate was 54%. The result concludes a significant relationship between leadership teamwork and job satisfaction; meanwhile, person-organization fit is insignificant. This study put forth several recommendations for the organisation to promote job satisfaction and recommendations for future research.

1. Introduction

In recent years, the rapidly changing global economy has significantly transformed the world of work. These global market challenges and competitions have heightened the demand for a competent and high-performing workforce in organizations (Mosammod et al., 2011). To survive and thrive in an environment of extreme uncertainty, the Malaysian workforce must enhance the quality of its services and products (Edward et al., 2009). The overall performance of an organization heavily relies on the effectiveness and efficiency of its workforce. Achieving high performance necessitates a highly satisfied workforce. For an organization to operate smoothly, effectively, and efficiently, it must have a competent, effective, and productive human resource (Mosadeghrad, 2003). An effective organization should foster a culture that maximizes employee satisfaction (Bhatti & Qureshi, 2007).

Meanwhile, high quality government employees are crucial for an organization to achieve its vision and mission. The competitive environment among public and private organizations in serving the community necessitates excellence to meet the demands of rapidly changing times. It is undeniable that for an organization to remain competitive, it requires government employees who are competent in their respective fields (Sancoko, 2010). Given the dominant role of government employees in an organization, it is essential to focus serious attention on their level of job satisfaction.

Previous research has shown that employee job satisfaction significantly contributes to an organization's effectiveness and efficiency. Cordeiro (2010) asserted that an organization's success hinges on hiring and retaining satisfied employees. Froeschle and Sinkford (2009) found that increased job satisfaction aids in staff retention within colleges and universities. In the educational sector, job satisfaction and motivation are essential for the long-term growth of educational systems worldwide (Schulze, 2006). Furthermore, research by (Chan Yin-Fah et al., 2010) indicated that job satisfaction is negatively correlated with an employee's intention to leave the organization. In other words, more satisfied employees are more likely to stay with the organization. Therefore, understanding the factors associated with job satisfaction is both timely and valuable. Most empirical studies suggest that the biggest contributor to job satisfaction is organizational factors. This factor pertains to the working environment which firstly includes leadership. It is applied to the support individuals get from their leaders and supervisors in carrying out their job functions (Hitka et al, 2021). This includes both technical and social support. Secondly, teamwork is the quality of working relationship individuals enjoy with their co-workers. It refers to the reciprocal interest among the employees and social harmony (Ližbetinová et al. (2021). The third factor in organizational factor is person-organization-fit. This is a match between an individual's values, needs and abilities with the organization's values, demands and rewards. The better match result increased satisfaction and performance and decreased stress and turnover (Fong & Shaffer (2003).

Therefore, this study is conducted to identify the relationship between organization factors of job satisfaction in Malaysia public sector specifically on Department of Statistics employees. This study is significant as its findings could offer valuable insights for public sector managers aiming to enhance the working conditions of their employees. Such improvements could lead to harmonious employee relations and boost the overall performance of the sector.

2.   Literature Review

2.1   Job satisfaction

Bushra et al. (2011) described job satisfaction as the state in which a worker feels happy, pleased, or content with their profession. According to Belias et al. (2014), it is a positive and pleasant feeling derived from one's career performance. Job satisfaction is crucial for workforce well-being as it reflects an individual's reaction to their job (Raja Zirwatul et al., 2014). The absence of job satisfaction is believed to result in disgruntled employees who are unable to perform at their best (Muhammad et al., 2009). Job satisfaction represents a worker's positive feelings towards their work. Parasuraman et al. (2001) emphasized that it is a vital element, as employees tend to be more productive and motivated when they are satisfied and happy.

One of the primary factors in retaining employees is job satisfaction (Andrejić et al., 2022). Job satisfaction occurs when employees perceive their work as meaningful and significant, which in turn lowers their intention to leave. Various elements influence job satisfaction, such as working hours, working conditions, salary, pay scale, job design, opportunities for promotion, demographics, human resource development, leadership style, and stress levels. Consequently, managers are increasingly recognizing job satisfaction as a crucial aspect of employee motivation (Ko et al., 2021).

In the realm of public organizations, Kim (2005) notes that exemplary public servants exhibit qualities such as high job satisfaction, strong organizational commitment, high morale, and robust organizational loyalty. Employees who embody these traits are likely to enhance organizational performance (Wang & Lee, 2009). A study by Mafini, Surujlal, and Dhurup (2012) also found significant positive correlations between job satisfaction and life satisfaction among South African municipal employees. Supporting these findings, Yee et al. (2010) suggest that when employees experience high levels of job satisfaction, their participation in organizations becomes healthy and constructive, leading to improved organizational performance and better service delivery. This underscores the importance of people in organizations, as they drive excellent performance (Jiang, 2012). Coleman and Brown (2022) explored the relationship between job satisfaction and employee well-being in a longitudinal study of 500 professionals. Their research revealed a strong positive link between job satisfaction and the working environment, underscoring the wider influence of job satisfaction on individuals' overall well-being. Therefore, ensuring high levels of job satisfaction among employees is an essential strategy for any organization aiming for high performance.

2.2   Leadership

Leadership is crucial in determining an organization's success or failure. Effective leaders should possess critical and constructive knowledge, think creatively, generate thoughtful solutions to problems, and be skilled in various aspects of interpersonal relationships, such as effective communication and motivation. They should also foster dynamic and sustainable teams. Additionally, leadership and direction within an organization are key factors in balancing and enhancing job satisfaction (Dubey, Pathak, & Sahu, 2023). According to Simon (1947), employees will comply with supervisors' instructions as long as they fall within a reasonable and acceptable scope of work.

Previous studies reported the impact of leadership on job satisfaction (Bessa & Machado, 2024; Al-Mahdy et al., 2016; Green & Muñoz, 2016; Nyenyembe et al., 2016; Olcum & Titrek, 2015; Olsen & Huang, 2019; Pan et al., 2015; Sayadi, 2016; Song & Alpaslan, 2015; Suchyadi, 2018). Supervisory or directive methods are distinguished by personal qualities like tolerance, group cohesion, approachability, and professionalism. These methods involve engaging with subordinates in decision-making and discussions to set organizational targets, ultimately enhancing productivity, effectiveness, and job satisfaction (Samsuri et al., 2022). McNeely (2008) discovered that employees experience high job satisfaction when their leader is focused on employee relations and embodies good values. When leaders practice openness and prioritize fostering prosperous and prudent relationships, they gain respect from their subordinates, which in turn enhances employee performance. Meanwhile, Fiedler (1967) asserted that a group's effectiveness and efficiency depend on the leadership authority of its leader. By emphasizing a supportive approach towards members, leaders play a crucial role in enhancing morale, ethics, group work satisfaction, and overall achievement in organizational progress. Thus, the study hypothesized that;

H_1: Leadership styles have a positive relationship with job satisfaction among employees.

2.3   Teamwork

Teams are considered a crucial element in contemporary management theory and practice (Tennant & Langford, 2006). Teamwork is described as a small group of individuals with complementary skills who are dedicated to a shared purpose, performance objectives, and methods, holding each other mutually accountable (Greenberg & Baron, 2003). This can foster social interactions among team members (Hoegel & Gemuende, 2001). Three key aspects of this definition are: interactions among individuals, collective effort, and interdependence and teamwork involves individuals collaborating in a supportive environment to achieve common team goals by sharing knowledge and skills (Hoegel et al., 2001). Expanding on this idea, Luca and Tarricone (2002) assert that effective teamwork depends on the synergy among team

members to create an environment where everyone contributes and participates, fostering a positive and successful team outcome. They highlight the necessity for team members to be adaptable in cooperative work settings, where goals are accomplished through collaboration and social interdependence.

In the context of government sectors, teamwork can be seen as a scenario where government employees work interdependently to achieve a shared objective for which they hold collective responsibility. Government organizations place significant trust in the power of teamwork. By fostering a cooperative environment among teams, these organizations can effectively deliver complex projects on time and achieve high levels of public satisfaction.

In nearly every organization, teamwork is essential in today's global business environment, especially for projects that are complex and require diverse skill sets (Samson & Daft, 2003). In this context, a government-based project, far from being a single activity, represents an achievement of human multitasking. An effective team involves continuous monitoring of team dynamics to ensure that members adjust their tasks in relation to one another to achieve the project objectives (Azmy, 2012).

Previous research has shown that teamwork significantly enhances job satisfaction (Khuong & Tien, 2013). Scholars have also found that higher levels of teamwork correlate with increased employee satisfaction, motivating them to exert greater effort at work (Mafini & Pooe, 2013; Nickerson & Nagle, 2005; Sumer & Knight, 2001; Dorta-Afonso, et al., 2021). Consequently, teamwork among organizational members is crucial for fostering employee job satisfaction, which in turn positively impacts organizational performance. Additionally, effective teamwork can boost employee motivation and performance, as well as their self-efficacy. This increase in motivation and self-efficacy due to teamwork can lead to greater job satisfaction (Griffin, Patterson, & West, 2001). Thus, the study hypothesized that;

H_2: Teamwork has a positive relationship with job satisfaction among employees.

2.4   *Person-Organization Fit (P-O Fit)*

The concept of Person-Organization Fit (P-O fit) has long been established in the field of management, with its origins traceable to the work of organizational behaviour scientists in the 1950s. Over time, as human resource management shifted its focus towards creating enjoyable working conditions to reduce turnover and enhance performance, various factors, including P-O fit, garnered significant theoretical and empirical attention (Chernyshenko et al., 2009). Risman et al. (2016) define P-O fit as the perceived degree of similarity or congruence in values between individual employees and the organization for whom they work. In other words, P-O fit, sometimes referred to as simply value congruence, is a measure of the perceived compatibility between the values individuals bring with them to work and those promoted by the employing organization (Risman et al., 2016).

Research conducted in diverse work settings has indicated that P-O fit is associated with several positive outcomes for employees, such as improved task performance and increased job satisfaction. Bretz and Judge (1994) report that in a sample of industrial relations employees, individuals who report a higher degree of value congruence were more likely to have achieved higher positions within their companies and higher levels of compensation. Similarly, Lauver and Kristof-Brown (2001) also report positive work outcomes related to P-O fit. Workers in their study who report a higher degree of value congruence with the organization were more likely to make contributions to the workday that were above and beyond their expected work activities. Taken together, these studies suggest that perceived P-O fit, particularly in terms of value congruence, tends to be positively associated with individual work performance. A study conducted among nurses in a hospital, at the ward level, Verplanken (2004) identified a positive correlation between value congruence and job satisfaction. Notably, significant results were observed within the human

relations value domain, which encompasses values like trust and openness, as well as the empowerment of employees to contribute autonomously to their daily work. Thus, the study hypothesized that;

H₃: Person-organization fit (P-O fit) has a positive relationship with job satisfaction among employees.

3.   Methodology

This study aims to identify the factors influencing job satisfaction among public sector employees. The research employed a sampling frame consisting of all employees working in the Department of Statistics, in northern region of Peninsular Malaysia. It is considered non-contrived because it was conducted in the natural work environment. Data were collected from each individual worker, with the unit of analysis being the individual. A total of 200 self-administered questionnaires were distributed, and respondents were selected using census sampling techniques. Ultimately, 108 questionnaires were returned, resulting in a 54 percent response rate.

This study employed a questionnaire survey as the primary data collection method. The survey consisted of five sections: demographic profiles of the respondents, job satisfaction, leadership, teamwork, and person-organization fit (P-O fit). Demographic information sought included gender, age, race, education, and marital status. The questionnaire was developed by adapting items from existing literature. Specifically, four items related to job satisfaction were adapted from Sabri et al. (2011), leadership was assessed using four items adapted from Ekvall et al. (1991), teamwork was assessed using four items adapted from Shanahan et al. (2007), and P-O fit were evaluated using four items adapted from Cable et al. (1996). Respondents rated their responses on a 5-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was initially written in English and later translated into Malay, with back-translation conducted to minimize translation bias (following Van de Vijver & Hambleton, 1996). Data analysis was performed using SPSS software version 26, employing techniques such as frequency analysis, reliability analysis, descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis.

4.   Findings

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	45	41.7
	Female	63	58.3
Age	Below 30 years	42	38.9
	31-40 years	45	47.1
	41-50 years	14	13.0
	51 years & above	7	6.5
Race	Malay	105	97.2
	Chinese	2	1.9
	Indian	1	0.9
Education	SPM	35	32.4
	STPM	12	11.1
	Diploma	36	33.3
	Degree	23	21.3
	Master	2	1.9
Marital Status	Single	36	33.3
	Married	69	63.9
	Others	3	2.8

Table 1 above shows the demographic profile of the respondents. A total of 108 questionnaires were collected from respondents, comprising 63 (58.3%) female and 45 (41.7%) male employees participating in the study. The age distribution was as follows: below 30 years old (42 respondents, 38.9%), 31 to 40 years old (45 respondents, 41.7%), 41 to 50 years old (14 respondents, 13%), and 51 years old and above (7 respondents, 6.5%). The majority of respondents were Malay (105 respondents, 97.2%), with a small representation of Chinese (2 respondents, 1.9%) and Indian (1 respondent, 0.9%). Marital status included married (69 respondents, 63.9%), single (36 respondents, 33.3%), and divorced (3 respondents, 2.8%). All respondents were 100% Malaysian. In terms of education levels, respondents included SPM (35 respondents, 32.4%), STPM (12 respondents, 11.1%), Diploma (36 respondents, 33.3%), Degree (23 respondents, 21.3%), and Master (2 respondents, 1.9%).

Furthermore, Table 2 describes the reliability and Correlation analysis for the study variables. The Cronbach's alpha for the three independent variables were 0.938 for leadership, 0.945 for teamwork and 0.929 for person-organization fit (P-O fit). Meanwhile, the Cronbach's alpha value for dependent variable, job satisfaction is 0.870.

Table 2. Reliability and Pearson Correlation Analysis

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Leadership	(α=0.938)			
2. Teamwork	0.560*	(α=0.945)		
3. P-O fit	0.401*	0.566*	(α=0.929)	
4. Job satisfaction	0.617*	0.605*	0.345*	(α=0.870)

Note: N=108, * Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Meanwhile, the result of Pearson correlation analysis for this study shows leadership (r=.617, p<.01) is correlated positively with job satisfaction, teamwork (r=.605, p<.01) is correlated positively with job satisfaction and person-organization fit (P-O fit) (r=.345, p<.01) also correlated positively with job satisfaction.

Table 3. Multiple Regression Analysis

Variables	β	Significance
Leadership	.411	.000
Teamwork	.402	.000
P-O fit	-.480	.640
Adjusted R Square	.460	
F Test	23.417	

Note: Dependent variable = Job satisfaction

The effects of the independent variables (leadership, teamwork and person-organization fit (P-O fit)) on the dependent variable, job satisfaction, were determined by using multiple regression analysis (Table 3). The results show that leadership (β= 0.411, p<0.05) and teamwork (β= 0.402, p<0.05) had significant positive effects on job satisfaction, meanwhile, P-O fit (β= -0.480, p>0.05) had no significant positive effects on job satisfaction. The whole model explained 46% of the variance in the dependent variable (job satisfaction). Hence, H_1 and H_2 were accepted and H_3 was rejected.

5.   Discussion and Implications

The research findings highlight several significant factors related to job satisfaction among Malaysian employees in public sector. Firstly, leadership had a significant positive relationship with job satisfaction. This aligns with Marnis' (2012) and Dubey et al., (2023) conclusion that leadership style positively impacts employees' job satisfaction. Similarly, studies by Fatima et al. (2011) and Hamidifar (2009) found that leadership style positively influences job success and career satisfaction. These findings suggest that leaders who possess a clear vision, high levels of inspiration, and creativity, as well as innovative approaches, can effectively guide employees to meet performance expectations. Based on these findings, several recommendations can be made for organizations to enhance job satisfaction among employees in the public sector. The organization should invest in leadership development programs that focus on cultivating clear vision, inspiration, creativity, and innovative approaches. This can help leaders effectively guide their teams and improve job satisfaction. Other than that, the organization also should foster an environment where leaders and employees can communicate openly. This can help build trust and ensure that employees feel heard and valued.

Secondly, teamwork was identified as the second key factor contributing to job satisfaction, consistent with findings from previous studies (Abdullah et al., 2012; Musriha, 2013). Dash et al. (2014) also found that collaborative teamwork among organizational members can enhance job satisfaction and employee performance. This indicates that teamwork positively influences employees' behavioural responses, leading to higher job satisfaction. As to increase the value of teamwork in the workplace, the organisation should encourage a culture where teamwork is valued and promoted. This can be achieved through team-building activities, collaborative projects, and open communication channels.

In this study, person-organization fit (P-O fit) did not show a significant positive relationship with job satisfaction among employees. This aligns with findings from Chen, Sparrow, and Cooper (2016) and Kristof-Brown et al. (2011), suggesting that P-O fit may not always be a strong predictor of job satisfaction across different settings or populations. Other factors might play a more crucial role in influencing job satisfaction in this context. For instance, high levels of job stress can diminish job satisfaction even if employees feel they fit well with the organization. Additionally, the level of support from supervisors can impact this relationship; without adequate support, the benefits of P-O fit might not lead to higher job satisfaction. Individual differences also contribute to this finding, as personal factors like resilience, coping mechanisms, and values can affect how P-O fit influences job satisfaction. Some individuals may prioritize other job aspects over organizational fit.

6.   Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, several conclusions can be drawn; firstly, leadership style has a significant positive relationship with job satisfaction. Leaders who are visionary, inspirational, creative, and innovative can effectively enhance employees' job satisfaction and performance. Meanwhile, teamwork is a crucial factor contributing to job satisfaction. Collaborative efforts among organizational members can lead to higher job satisfaction and improved employee performance and lastly, in this study, P-O fit did not show a significant positive relationship with job satisfaction. This suggests that P-O fit may not always be a strong predictor of job satisfaction in all contexts or populations. Other factors, such as leadership and teamwork, might play a more critical role in influencing job satisfaction.

This study also highlights the importance of considering context-specific factors when assessing job satisfaction. What works in one setting or population may not necessarily apply to another, indicating the need for tailored approaches to enhancing job satisfaction.

Overall, the study underscores the importance of effective leadership and teamwork in fostering job satisfaction, while also suggesting that P-O fit may not be universally applicable as a predictor of job satisfaction. Organizations should focus on these key areas to improve employee satisfaction and performance.

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Conflict of interest statement

The authors agree that this research was conducted in the absence of any self-benefits, commercial or financial conflicts.

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