

THE INFLUENCE OF WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT AND CONFLICTS TOWARD BANK EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE IN MALAYSIA

Juliana Mohamed Abdul Kadir¹, Azila Jaini^{2*}, Osveh Esmaeelinezhad³, Siti Nurfakhira Mohd Zahidi⁴, Nor Balkish Zakaria⁵

^{1,2}Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Johor, Kampus Segamat, 85000 Johor, Malaysia

³Amirkabir University of Technology, Iran

⁴U Mobile Service Centre, Berjaya Time Square, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

⁵Accounting Research Institute, Universiti Teknologi MARA Selangor, Malaysia

*Corresponding Author

Email: azilajaini@uitm.edu.my

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to determine the potential influence of physical workplace, psychosocial workplace, work-family conflicts, and work-extracurricular conflicts on the performance of bank employees. The research employed a quantitative method with the use of questionnaire as an instrument in data collection. The convenience sampling technique was adapted and the present study gathered 190 usable responses across 19 different banks located in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Results reveal that the psychosocial workplace positively affects staff performance. This implies that factors such as interpersonal connections, job satisfaction, organizational culture, and work-related stress levels can potentially wield substantial determinants of how effectively bank employees perform in their responsibilities. The study shed light on the employees' priorities that play a greater influence in enhancing employee performance than addressing physical challenges or the conflicts arising from the interplay between work and personal life. By highlighting the significance of the elements, the study calls for organizations to prioritize creating a positive and supportive psychosocial workplace for their employees. Future research could build upon these findings by considering additional variables, and exploring the applicability of the results across various industries and cultural contexts. This study provides insight into improving employees' performance in bank sectors. Supportive behaviours of supervisors have an important impact on employees' performance and this research confirms the importance of creating a supportive work environment within the bank industry.

Keywords: Banking Industry, Psychosocial Workplace, Physical Workplace, Work-Extracurricular Conflict, Work-Family Conflict

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the current workplace environment, companies prioritize the well-being of their staff welfare. The workplace is not a space for completing tasks, however, it serves as a platform for people

to connect, share knowledge, build relationships, engage in mentoring sessions, and collaborate (Harris, 2016; Hua, 2010). Employee performance, motivation, and productivity are crucial for enhancing organizational reputation, which contributes to the company performance. Employers play a pivotal role in motivating staff, efficiently managing resources to yield optimal outcomes that benefit not just companies but also industries and nations. The workplace environment and its surrounding encompassing physical and psychosocial aspects, work-family conflicts, and work-extracurricular conflicts, directly impacts job performance. Donohue et al. (2020) confirms that employee behavior in the workplace is significantly shaped by how well they are effectively carrying their work responsibilities.

Employee performance is intentionally related to various factors, including the psychosocial workplace; which emphasizes interpersonal, communication, and social interactions affecting employee behaviors and development. Changes in these factors become central to discussions on employee performance, reflecting on their health, mood and job motivation. Additionally, work conflicts such as work-family conflict and work-extracurricular conflict are significant considerations for contributing to employee motivation. According to Rosa (2017), work-family conflict refers to stress arising from job responsibilities conflicting with family demands. Meanwhile, work-extracurricular conflict occurs when work demands disrupt the time and resources available for extracurricular activities like volunteering, team building, or community involvement. Conflicts, whether at home or among employees, can have negative implications. However, employees' ability to handle the situation from being worse is crucial.

In a recent study, we investigated the impact of four key factors - physical workplace, psychosocial workplace, work-family conflicts, and work-extracurricular conflicts on employees' performance within an organizational context. Unlike previous research that primarily focused on the workplace environment (Nzewi et al., 2018; Samson et al., 2015), which neglecting considerations of work-family conflicts, our study aimed to comprehensively examine the interplay of these factors. The choice of these specific factors stemmed from their relevance industry-banking. The study was conducted among bank employees in the capital city of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur. This focus is particularly significant because it sheds light on the various determinants affecting employee performance within a sector crucial to Malaysia's economic landscape. The financial sector has consistently played a pivotal role in driving economic expansion, boasting an impressive average annual growth rate of 7.3% since 2001. In 2010, it contributed 11.7% to the real GDP and constituted 12% of the total GDP. The study acknowledges the existence of numerous unmeasurable variables causing stress among employees, but its specificity to Kuala Lumpur banking employees adds value by confirming the financial sector's significant impact on Malaysia's economic growth. With its robust growth and substantial contribution to the GDP, the financial sector in Malaysia serves as a vital link in fostering commerce and investment, both locally and globally (BNM, 2020).

The current data indicates the substantial growth and heightened demand for the financial sector, establishing it as an indispensable service industry. This indicates a remarkable expansion, emphasizing the sector's increased significance in the economic landscape. Given the present expansion of the financial industry, there is a need to prioritize the well-being of its workforce. This is to ensure that the industry's growth aligns with the fair treatment and support of its employees. In the Malaysian banking landscape, there are currently 26 commercial banks, 16 Islamic banks, and 11 investment banks (BNM, 2021). This diverse composition highlights the complexity and significance of the sector which plays a pivotal role in the community, contributing significantly to the overall economic growth. Past study showed that 22 per cent of workers lose focus on work, 22 per cent of workers feel tired and fatigued, 29 per cent experience fatigue, and 27 per cent of workers experience aches and pains due to too much stress at work (Sa'adin et al., 2018). This showed that the employees are struggling with their problems and may affect their job performance.

Considering this matter, it become imperative to further explore into this issue from the perspective of bank staff. Therefore, the aim of this research is to examine whether physical workplace, psychosocial workplace, work-family conflicts, and work-extracurricular conflicts have impact on employees' productivity, particularly within the banking sector in Malaysia. This study contributes to fill the gap by concentrating on the intricate interplay between various factors and their impact on the performance of bank employees. The study strives to provide a more comprehensive understanding within the realm of organizational performance. The significance of this study holds the potential to yield tangible benefits within the practical context of banking institutions. With a deeper comprehension of the variables used in the study, organizations can be better equipped to devise strategies that foster improved performance outcomes. The remainder of this paper is divided into a few different sections, beginning with the literature review right after this introduction. The methodology section will then be discussed and followed by the findings and discussion. The last section concludes the overall paper.

2.0 UNDERPINNING THEORY AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Employee performance is crucial in a long-term strategy for an organization as it benefits all parties including the company, employees, the industry as well as the country and it's a yardstick to measure a standard of living. The Affective Event Theory was invented that refers to employee reactions on how employees deal with events occurring in their work environment that affect their job performance, organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Cropanzano et al., 2017). It also involves internal influences on employees such as emotions both positive and negative that can affect their job satisfaction. Additionally, all types of jobs can also affect employee emotions including actual job duties, actions of co-workers or managers, stress from work and organizational management.

Meanwhile, Herzberg's Two Factor Theory inspired by Fredrick Herzberg in 1959 was also added to this study. Based on the theory, there are two sets of factors that influence work behaviour and employee performance levels known as motivational factors and hygiene factors. Motivational factors are intrinsic factors that will increase employee job satisfaction such as achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, growth and advancement. Meanwhile, hygiene factors are extrinsic factors related to the context of the job to avoid dissatisfied employees such as interpersonal relationships with peers, supervision, working conditions, salary and personal life (Herzberg *et al.*, 1959). This theory was applied in past studies to explain the relationship between the workplace environment and employee performance (Ann & Blum, 2020).

According to Kuijk (2018), this theory assumes that employees who are satisfied with job performance are referred to as a motivational factor related to opportunities and responsibilities. Meanwhile, temporary appreciation for those who may be dissatisfied with their job was referred to as hygiene factors related to salaries and working conditions that can affect employee performance. Moreover, this theory has explained that there are many intrinsic elements to a work that leads to satisfaction. In the context of the present study, employees' performance was measured from hygiene factors (physical workplace, psychosocial workplace, work-family conflicts and work-extracurricular activities). The hygiene factors were a concern in the present study due to the absence of motivation at work did not lead to dissatisfaction and not reducing their productivity as compared to deficiency of hygiene factors can lead to lack of productivity (Herzberg et al., 1959). Thus, organizations especially banks should motivate employees by understanding the hygiene factors of employees as well as maintaining a democratic approach in management through certain methods that should be applied by the organization.

2.1 Determinants of Job Performance

Prior research on employee performance has provided inconclusive findings as various factors are said to affect their productivity. Prior research has found a positive relationship between physical workplace and job performance (Eberendu et al., 2018; Hansika and Amarathunga, 2016). Based on the study conducted by Hansika and Amarathunga (2016) showed that good office design is important for employee satisfaction, which will affect their level of productivity. Physical work environment and surrounding conditions such as office layout, air quality, temperature, noise, heat, lighting, and colour showed an effect on employees' comfortable at work and affect employee psychological performance (Nidaul Izzah et al., 2019; Puspitasari & Adam, 2019). A healthy physical environment in the workplace should be implemented and practised by banks (Agbozo et al., 2017; Hafeez et al., 2019). Based on previous justification, hence the first hypothesis was postulated:

H1: Physical workplace positively affects the performance of bank employees.

In terms of a psychosocial workplace environment, Williams et al. (2019) relates employee behaviour to psychological phenomena that can affect emotions, mood, psychological symptoms, affective, or cognitive disorders such as attitude, perception, decision making, or behaviours such as effectiveness, absence, motivation. Thus, it becomes a crucial aspect, which every manager needs to consider as the problem with psychosocial workplace can harm employee quality of work. Though it has been identified through aspects related to management quality in firms, interactions between managers and colleagues, work consolidation and family life (López-García et al., 2019; Sundstrup et al., 2018), however, emphasis on this aspect is a must as it can reduce hazard in the workplace and provide a good working environment during working hours to keep them fit and healthy. However, the results from Getachew (2021) study showed that the physical and psychosocial workplace environmental factors did not have a significant effect on employee performance. Based on the previous justification, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H2: Psychosocial workplace positively affects the performance of bank employees.

Work-family conflict can also occur in workplace situations when job demands such as working late, overtime or outstation contrast to family commitments such as cooking for the family or caring for a sick child are brought into family life that begins to affect work performance. Work-family conflict means stress from work and incompatible family demands whenever family responsibilities are more difficult than participating in work responsibilities (Rodrigo, 2017). Additionally, past studies also found that the effect of work-family conflict on worker performance was mediated by work stress in the case of Ari firm-wooden wood craft exporter (Arsania & Supartha, 2020). The findings of the study indicate that employee work-family conflict has a positive and significant effect on employee work stress. Therefore, following past research arguments, the present study attempts to examine the influence of work-family conflicts on employees' performance in Malaysian banking industry. Thus, the following hypothesis was developed:

H3: Work-family conflicts positively affect the performance of bank employees.

Extracurricular activities such as volunteer work, community projects, fundraising, community, and exhibition work are valuable in developing employee talents, soft skills and knowledge such as communication skills, leadership, teamwork and self-esteem (Kumar et al., 2021). It is necessary to understand how extracurricular can increase work productivity, therefore, managers also need to be wary of employees who have activities outside the workplace that benefit and balance their lives that with more outdoor activities are said to reduce staff stress levels, be more innovative and creative and stay positive. This is to ensure employees remain productive, energetic and engaged in jobs that are essential to the success of the organization,

making it a clear priority. Besides, a proper organizational policy is crucial for every employee to support the separation between work and extracurricular activities (Russo & Morandin, 2019). Considering this, the following hypothesis was derived:

H4: Work-extracurricular conflicts positively affect the performance of bank employees.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

Based on previous justification, the present study proposes a conceptual framework as presented in Figure 1.

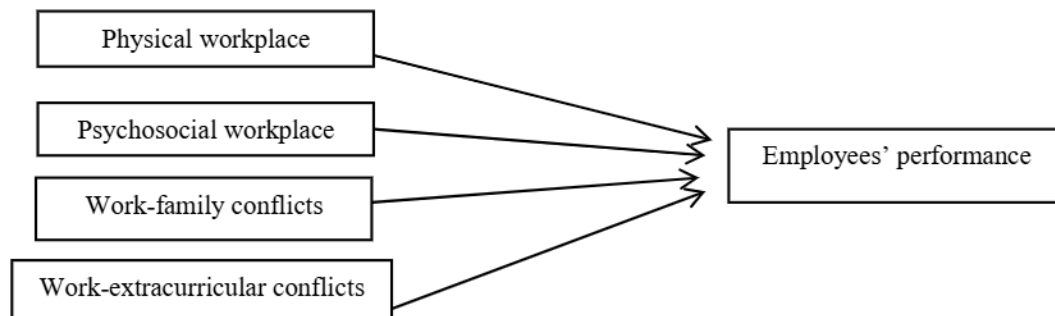


Fig. 1 Conceptual Framework

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The present study opts for a quantitative research method where the data was collected from 19 banks located in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Kuala Lumpur was chosen due to it is the capital of Malaysia and the largest urban area where all nation's central banks are located here. With the usage of the convenience sampling technique under non-probability sampling, 190 respondents represented the employees of those banks were selected for the data analysis. Questionnaires were distributed to bank staff through the Human Resources Department, department heads and bank staff itself. The questionnaire was designed into three parts, Part A related to demographic profile of the respondents, Part B was the questions related to the independent variables (physical workplace, psychosocial workplace, work-family conflict and work-extracurricular conflict) and Part C was related to the dependent variable (employees' performance). Five-point Likert scale was used where 1 indicated "Strongly disagree" and 5 indicated "Strongly agree" for Part B and Part C questions.

Since Smart Partial Least Square (SmartPLS) software was used in data analysis, thus the calculation of sample size should be determined by the power of analysis, with the minimal number of samples determined by the model's complexity (Hair et al. 2017). The present study applied G*Power software to calculate the minimum sample size as advised by Faul *et al.* (2007). The calculation of the minimum sample size for four predictors based on achieving statistical power of 80 per cent with a 5 per cent probability of error is 85 respondents. Therefore, 190 usable responses were deemed reliable since it was over the minimum sample size requirement.

3.1 Data Analysis and Findings

The analysis of data begins with extracting the demographic profile of the respondents using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 26. Table 1 presents 107 (56.3%) of the respondents who were female and 83 (43.7%) were male.

Besides, most of them were between the ages of 21 to 25 years old that equivalent to 79 (41.6%) respondents. In terms of marital status, 98 respondents were married which equivalent to 51.6 per cent. With regards to religion and race, the majority of the respondents were Muslims and Malays with 182 (95.8%).

Table 1. Demographic Profile

Demographic		Frequency	Per cent	
1	Gender	Female	107	56.3
		Male	83	43.7
2	Age	21-25	79	41.6
		26-30	36	18.9
		31-35	19	10.0
		36-40	15	7.9
		41 and above	41	21.6
3	Marital Status	Single	98	51.6
		Married	89	46.8
		Others	3	1.6
4	Religion	Muslim	182	95.8
		Buddhist	5	2.6
5	Race	Malay	182	95.8
		Chinese	5	2.6
		Indian	3	1.6

Before analysing the data, the present study conducted procedural and statistical strategies to solve the issue of common method variance (CMV) (Podsakoff et al., 2003). This issue may arise due to the data being collected from a single source, which is from bank employees only. Therefore, the present study conducted procedural remedies where a statement of instructions was stated on the front cover of the questionnaire along with assurances that their personal information and responses would be kept confidential and anonymous. Then, the statement also explains the voluntary responses and no right and wrong answers in answering the questionnaire. With regards to the statistical approach, the present study applied the Harman single factor test where the first factor findings explained must be less than 50 per cent of the overall variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003) to ensure the data is free from bias. The present study derived 32.75 per cent of the unrotated factor analysis for the first factor. Thus, CMV was not an issue for this study.

Since the nature of this study is to predict the relationship between variables, thus Smart PLS software is recommended to test the hypotheses derived in this study (Hair et al., 2019). Furthermore, Smart PLS also provides a comprehensive method for examining all relationships between constructs at the same time by using a measurement model and structural model. The assessments of the measurement model break into internal consistency (reliability), convergent validity (loading and average variance extracted) and discriminant validity for the indicators (Hair et al., 2017). Meanwhile, the structural model indicates the results of the research hypotheses.

Table 2 presents the results of the measurement model. One item needs to be deleted under psychosocial workplace construct (PSY1) due to lower loading <0.708 (Hair et al., 2019). Next, convergent validity was measured based on the value of AVE in the measurement model. The results showed that all values were greater than 0.5, which indicate the construct, shared substantial variance with its respective items (Henseler et al., 2016). With regards to CR, all constructs meet the threshold value of CR >0.7 and thus indicate the reliability of the measurement model at the item. The analysis proceeds with assessing the

discriminant validity based on the HTMT criterion with the threshold value of ≤ 0.85 for different constructs (Kline, 2011). Overall, Table 3 presents HTMT values of all constructs that fulfil the criterion of HTMT.85 and thus confirm the discriminant validity in this model.

Table 2. Measurement Model

Group	Item	Loading	CR	AVE
Physical workplace	PW1	0.811	0.9	0.643
	PW2	0.729		
	PW3	0.824		
	PW4	0.848		
	PW5	0.793		
Psychosocial workplace	PSY2	0.853	0.926	0.716
	PSY3	0.836		
	PSY4	0.832		
	PSY5	0.885		
	PSY6	0.823		
	Work-family conflicts	WF1		
WF2		0.877		
WF3		0.894		
WF4		0.882		
Work-extracurricular conflicts	WEX1	0.863	0.951	0.828
	WEX2	0.920		
	WEX3	0.939		
	WEX4	0.917		
Employees' performance	EP1	0.811	0.901	0.694
	EP2	0.815		
	EP3	0.845		
	EP4	0.861		

Table 3. Discriminant Validity (Hetero-trait mono-trait (HTMT))

	EP4	PSY	PW	WEX	WF
EP4					
PSY	0.735				
PW	0.599	0.779			
WEX	0.291	0.244	0.173		
WF	0.257	0.180	0.115	0.804	

Next, the assessment of the structural model was decided based on collinearity issues through variance inflation factor (VIF), the explanatory power of the model (R^2), path coefficient (β) and their corresponding t-values, effect size (f^2) and predictive relevance of the model (Q^2) (Hair *et al.*, 2018). Overall, VIF values of all constructs were below 5 denoting the model is free from multicollinearity issues. Then, R^2 values of 0.26, 0.13 and 0.02 indicate substantial, moderate and weak explanatory power of the model (Cohen, 1992). Thus, the results revealed R^2 value of 0.45 representing 45% of the variance in employees' performance (EP) is explained by all of the predictors (PW, PSY, WF and WEX) and thus presented substantial explanatory power of the model. With regards to the effect size (f^2), the values of 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35 present small, medium and large (Cohen, 1992). Table 4 presented the effect of each independent variable on employees' performance. Overall, physical workplace ($f^2 = 0.149$), work-family conflicts ($f^2 = 0.103$) and work-extracurricular conflicts ($f^2 = 0.046$) exert

weak effect on employees' performance. In contrast, psychosocial workplace exerts a strong effect on employees' performance.

The analysis proceeds with assessing the proposed hypothesized relationships. In analysing the hypotheses, the bootstrapping technique with 5000 resamples was used to indicate path coefficient and t-values for all constructs. According to Table 4, it showed that only psychosocial workplace ($\beta = 0.520$, $t = 1.418$) has a positive influence on employees' performance. Hence, H2 was supported. Meanwhile, physical workplace ($\beta = 0.149$, $t = 4.891$), work family conflicts ($\beta = 0.077$, $t = 1.332$) and work extracurricular conflicts ($\beta = 0.046$, $t = 0.626$) did not exert significant effect on employees' performance. Therefore, H1, H3 and H4 were not supported.

Table 4. Structural Model

Hypotheses	Relationship	β	SE	t-value	LL	UL	Decision	f ²
H1	PW > EP4	0.149	0.105	1.418	-0.032	0.314	Not supported	0.149
H2	PSY > EP4	0.520	0.106	4.891	0.337	0.688	Supported	0.520
H3	WF > EP4	0.103	0.077	1.332	-0.031	0.224	Not supported	0.103
H4	WEX > EP4	0.046	0.074	0.626	-0.073	0.171	Not supported	0.046

4.0 DISCUSSION

This study assessed the influence of the determinants of the workplace factors such as psychosocial and physical factors as well as work-family and work-extracurricular conflicts on employees' performance in a bank sector. As expected, psychosocial workplace factors (H2) were related to how the work needs to be carried out (e.g., workload, work methods) and the work context such as relationships and interactions with supervisors (Odebode, 2018). From the results, it was found that psychosocial workplace factors (e.g., clear roles and responsibilities, management support, job demands) have a significant relationship with employee performance. This finding is consistent with Diamantidis and Chatzoglou (2019) that indicated management support is directly (indirectly) related to job performance. Therefore, the mechanism underlying the relationship between psychosocial factors and job performance was supported by the Affective Event Theory. This theory explains work environment characteristics (e.g., job demands) indirectly impact job satisfaction and job performance through the occurrence of certain work events, which provoke employees' emotional reactions. Thus, it can be concluded psychosocial factors such as management support create employees' positive reactions, which lead to higher job performance (Cropanzano et al., 2017).

Surprisingly, the results showed that the physical features of the work environment (e.g., space, temperature, and lighting) did not have a significant impact on employee performance (H1), which is inconsistent with previous studies (Ajegbomogun et al., 2022; Diamantidis and Chatzoglou, 2019) and thus, H3 and H4 were not supported. In other words, work-family and work-extracurricular conflicts did not directly influence employee performance in the bank sector. Although this result is consistent with previous studies, it is not aligned with some studies that proved work-family and work-extracurricular conflicts did not have a significant effect on employee performance (Bhuiyan et al., 2005; Getachew, 2021). One possible explanation could be that employees had other priorities such as gaining income compared to physical environment and work-life or work-extracurricular conflicts. Therefore, they did not care much about other factors such as conflicts in their families when they are doing their work. It is consistent with the study of Asbari et al. (2020) that found female employees were pressured by the need for income; therefore work-family conflicts did not influence their

performance. This insight suggests the importance for organizations to broaden their focus on addressing physical issues or minimizing work-life conflicts. Instead, the organizations should strive to comprehend and harmonize with their employees' priorities to enhance overall performance and well-being. Furthermore, this study examined the direct impact of workplace features, work-family, and work-extracurricular conflicts on employee performance. Therefore, physical work environment, work-family conflicts, and work-extracurricular conflicts probably have an indirect impact on employee performance through mediators such as satisfaction (Idris et al., 2020; Siahaan, 2018). Another explanation could be related to self-assessment performance. The method of measuring performance could play an important role in signifying the effect of work-life and work-extracurricular conflicts as well as physical workplace features on employee performance.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

From a practical point of view, this study provides insight into improving employees' performance in bank sectors. This research contributes to the further understanding of the relationship between psychosocial factors, particularly management support, and employees' performance in the context of the bank industry. Since it has been found that supportive behaviours of supervisors have an important impact on employees' performance, this research confirms the importance of creating a supportive work environment within the bank industry. Therefore, managers should to the social work environment in bank sectors. Therefore, managers should consider that employees need a positive and cooperative workplace climate (Lehner et al., 2013). This study suggests that employees' priorities play an important role in improving employee performance compared to physical factors or work-life conflicts. Accordingly, some factors like work-life conflict did not have a significant relationship with job performance. From a theoretical point of view, the present study extends the AET in such a way that work environment and features can directly affect employees' performance like workplace psychosocial factors.

6.0 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTION

Our results suffered from several limitations. Firstly, the cross-sectional design prevented causality between physical and psychosocial as well as work-life and work-extracurricular conflicts and employee performance. While we verified potential causal pathways, future research should consider a longitudinal approach to measure performance due to the low accuracy of self-assessment performance. Secondly, the data was collected from one bank sector, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research is recommended to address the limitation by collecting data from several bank sectors. Finally, our research consisted of a geographically homogenous group (i.e., Malaysians). As such, future researchers should conduct this study across heterogeneous settings to provide further evidence of generalizability.

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