

IMPACT OF WORK LIFE BALANCE ON EMPLOYEES LOYALTY,
SATISFACTION, AND PRODUCTIVITY

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to God almighty who granted me the wisdom, knowledge and understanding coupled with strength, good health and energy to start and successfully accomplish this project. To God alone I give all the glory and honor. I am also dedicating this thesis to my precious, beloved and wonderful parents Mr. Kadarko Adogo Dizaho, Mrs. Tina K. Dizaho, and my siblings Judith K. Diza, Reuben K. Dizaho, Abel K. Dizaho, Thelma K. Dizaho and Caleb K. Dizaho for their prayers and support, not forgetting my good friends Andrew C. Ologbo and Bosede Edwards for their encouragement and guidance throughout my Master degree program.

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ABSTRACT

The concept of work life balance has become of prominence in ensuring stability and balance between employees work and personal life. This study is a critical analysis of work life balance with the aim of broadening existing knowledge and providing a better understanding of the position and contributions in the field. The purpose of this study is to critically investigate on the relationship and impact existing between work life balance and employee's loyalty, satisfaction and productivity with Spillover Theory as its theoretical foundation. Three hundred and sixty questionnaires were distributed to academic staff at one public university in Malaysia of which one hundred and thirty four were returned and only one hundred and twenty three were useable to the researcher for analysis. Multiple regressions were used to analyze the data. The results of the study indicate that work life balance has a positive relationship with employee's loyalty, satisfaction and productivity. Furthermore, work life balance has the strongest impact on employees' satisfaction. Among all the variables that make up work life balance, leaves and breaks has the highest and strongest prediction in balancing employees work and home life. In conclusion, future research could be conducted to identify the impact of work life balance on the effectiveness of an entire organization, that is, on an organizational level. Also future research could consider widening the scope of the study to other universities and organizations.

ABSTRAK

Konsep keseimbangan kehidupan dan pekerjaan telah menjadi keutamaan dalam memastikan kestabilan dan keseimbangan antara kerja dan kehidupan peribadi. Kajian ini merupakan satu analisis kritikal keseimbangan kehidupan dan kerja dengan tujuan untuk meluaskan pengetahuan sedia ada dan menyediakan pemahaman yang lebih baik tentang kedudukan dan sumbangan dalam bidang ini. Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji secara kritikal ke atas hubungan dan kesan yang sedia ada di antara keseimbangan antara pekerjaan dan kehidupan dengan kesetiaan pekerja, kepuasan dan produktiviti menggunakan teori “Spillover” sebagai asas teori. Tiga ratus enam puluh soal selidik telah diedarkan kepada kakitangan akademik di sebuah universiti awam di Malaysia yang mana 134 telah dikembalikan dan hanya 123 adalah boleh digunakan kepada penyelidik untuk analisis. “Multiple Regressions” telah digunakan untuk menganalisis data. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa keseimbangan pekerjaan dan kehidupan mempunyai hubungan yang positif dengan kesetiaan, kepuasan pekerja dan produktiviti. Tambahan pula, keseimbangan kerja dan kehidupan mempunyai kesan yang kuat ke atas kepuasan pekerja. Antara semua pembolehubah yang membentuk keseimbangan pekerjaan dan kehidupan, “leaves” dan “breaks” mempunyai ramalan yang tertinggi dan terkuat dalam mengimbangi pekerjaan dan kehidupan di rumah. Kesimpulannya, kajian masa hadapan boleh dijalankan untuk mengenal pasti kesan keseimbangan pekerjaan dan kehidupan kepada keberkesanan di seluruh organisasi, iaitu, pada peringkat organisasi. Kajian masa hadapan juga boleh mempertimbangkan untuk memperluaskan skop kajian kepada universiti dan organisasi lain.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1. Work Life Balance (WLB)
2. Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The concept of work life balance (WLB) has been a prominent factor in achieving balance between employees work, home and other life responsibilities. Thus this research seeks to identify the impact of WLB on employee's satisfaction, loyalty and productivity in UTM. This chapter seeks to introduce the subject matter of this research which is work life balance, employee's loyalty, satisfaction and productivity. The chapter outlines the problem background and problem statement of the study, the research question of the study, the research objectives, and the significance of the study, scope of the study as well as defining the conceptual and operational terms of the study.

1.1 Introduction to the Study

The concept of work life balance (WLB) arises globally in the western nations with American companies having the highest degree of work life balance in practice. In the 1930's, the first company with a structured work-life program was the Kellogg Company. Kellogg announced four six-hour shifts to replace the traditional three daily eight-hour shifts. This change resulted in not only an increase in employee morale but also in efficiency and productivity (Aron, 2009). The practice of WLB has however broadly begun during the 1960's and 1970's, employers considered work-life mainly an issue for working mothers who struggled with the demands of their jobs and raising children. Throughout this period and into the mid-1980s, the United State government had the major impact in the field, as reflected by the Presidential Conference on Families, the Pregnancy Discrimination Act, and the Quality of Employment Survey J Bird (2006).

During the 1980s, recognizing the value and needs of their women contributors, pioneering organizations such as Merck, Deloitte & Touche, and IBM began to change their internal workplace policies, procedures, and benefits. The changes included maternity leave; employee assistance programs (EAPs), flextime, home-based work, and child-care referral. The practice of WLB draw the male workforce attention and by the late 1980s when men also began voicing work-life concerns and the need for them to be involved with WLB and not just women. By the end of the decade, WLB was seen as more than just a women's issue, affecting men, families, organizations and cultures J Bird (2006).

However, the practice of WLB was solidified in the 1990s with the recognition of WLB as a vital issue for everyone including women, men, parents and non-parents, singles, and couples. This growing awareness of the central importance of the issue

resulted in major growth in attempted work-life solutions during this decade. Numerous studies showed that the generations from baby boomers to new college graduates were making job choices based on their own work-life issues and employers' cultures (J. Bird, 2006)

Employee's loyalty, satisfaction and productivity are essential in achieving organizational effectiveness and gaining competitive advantage. Beauregard, T. Alexandra and Henry, Lesley C. (2009) and Thomas & Ganster (1995) have outlined the importance of employee's loyalty in reducing turnover and maintaining/increasing retention and employee's intentions to stay. Employee satisfaction is an important aspect of an organization, because the method and ways of performing can be determined by the level of satisfaction the employees have in their job. Are the employees happy with the position of things in the workplace? Are the employees satisfied with their work? If no, it will affect the quality of their work and the quality of service delivered; previous studies have however shown that happy employees perform at their best. And as such it is necessary to ensure employees satisfaction in order to achieve positive impact on performance and productivity.

Lack of satisfaction in one's job can result to lack of productivity of the employee as well as loyalty. According to Gregory (2008) satisfied employees work harder and tends to perform and carry out their job description with more focus compare to unsatisfied employees and employees intention to remain in their organization are related to their satisfaction level therefore when employees are satisfied in the workplace, it leads to much higher increase in employees productivity. Thus employees work best when they are satisfied, and as such, lack of satisfaction means employees work, but without putting in their very best and not at their fullest potential. However, when employees are not satisfied, they tend to seek other means of satisfaction and the search for satisfaction may cost the organization to lose their competent employees, as

such, employee's loyalty is paramount which is achievable when employees are happy and satisfied with their jobs, works, and the organization as a whole.

Work life conflict can affect productivity negatively in terms of high level of stress resulting from high role demand. High degree of role demand can constitute to under-performing which is not healthy for organizational effectiveness. Lalita K, (2012) has revealed that it is important for organization to achieve a balance between work and personal life because work life balance enables employees to perform better.

Productivity is crucial in achieving organizational effectiveness and thus striving to achieve this with the practice of WLB is beneficial to both the organization and its employees. However employee's satisfaction and loyalty are relatively linked to achieving increase in productivity because when employees are happy and satisfied with the situation in the organization, their intention to remain in the organization increase due to the comfort and satisfaction derived from the organization. In other words, satisfaction increases employee's retention and improves employee's loyalty, thereby motivating them to focus on their jobs and perform at their best because once employees are released, happy and settled with the organization, it produces an increased in their performance and productivity.

1.2 Work Life Balance Practices in Malaysia

Malaysia economy has been growing rapidly and thus the labor force has also been increasing with high female participation in various industries and thereby generating room for organizations both private and government to initiate the practices

of WLB in order to address employees work life conflict. Due to globalization, the need for WLB has emerged in Malaysia and many Malaysia companies are initiating long term efforts in practicing and providing a balanced work life for their employees. However, although the practice of WLB is not vast in Malaysia as it is in other advanced countries, there are however many organizations in Malaysia who are effectively practicing effective WLB and have achieved tremendous benefits as a result. Among the many Malaysia companies practicing WLB are IBM Malaysia, Nestle Malaysia, KPMG, Sime Darby, HSBC, Chevron, and mostly the multinational companies (MNCs) Clark (2012). However, Clarke 2012 has also identified that although the country various workforce has initiated the WLB policies, most of the Malaysian employees do not however feel balanced between their work life and personal life and a high percentage of Malaysia employees are experiencing work life conflict. Findings from the first Malaysian Randstad work monitor, who surveyed 405 employees on trends in workforce mobility for Q1 2012, state that Malaysian employees are finding it difficult to strike a work-life balance. Over one third (38%) of those surveyed say their employers expect them to be available 24/7. Two thirds (66%) of employees say they are handling work-related matters outside of work hours and even on holidays (68%). The Randstad work monitor found two thirds (66%) of employees feel they fall short of their own expectations if they do not respond to emails or phone calls immediately. The sheer volume of data and complexity of applications is overwhelming many employees and this can have a negative effect on productivity and work-life balance, (K. Clarke 2012) and as such this research seeks to identify the WLB practices in University Technology Malaysia and its impact on employee's satisfaction, loyalty and productivity.

1.3 Organizational background

Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (also known as University of Technology Malaysia or UTM); UTM is the oldest public engineering and technological university in Malaysia. UTM specializes in several areas of professionalism including technical studies, having different faculties for the engineering divisions such as Civil, Mechanical, Electrical, Chemical and Biomedical engineering and the faculties for Education, Pure Sciences, Management, and Human Resources Development, Computer Technologies. It is the country's major source of graduate engineers and similar professionals. Universiti Teknologi Malaysia has its main campus at Johor Bahru, the southern city in Iskandar Malaysia, in the south of Peninsular Malaysia and another campus located in Kuala Lumpur, the capital city of Malaysia. The study seek to identify the extent to which the practice of work life balance impacts employees loyalty, satisfaction and productivity in UTM.

1.4 Problem background

Numerous studies have been conducted on work-life balance. According to a major Canadian study conducted by Lowe (2005), 1 in 4 employees experience high levels of conflict between work and family, based on work-to-family interference and caregiver strain. If role overload is included, then close to 60 percent of employees surveyed experience work-family conflict. Of all the job factors that influence work-life conflict, the amount of time spent at work is the strongest and most consistent predictor. The higher levels of work-to-family conflict reported by managers or professionals often are a function of their longer work hours. Other reasons include: Job security, support from one's supervisor, support from co-workers, work demands or overload, work-role

conflict, work-role ambiguity, job dissatisfaction, and extensive use of communication technology that blurs the boundaries between home and work.

It is of no doubt that the increasing rate of social trends has impacted the rapid rise in the demand of having a balanced work life in various organizations. Social trends have high influence on WLB and this problem seems to be increasing over time due to high increase in factors like female labor force participation rates, increasing numbers of single parent families, the predominance of the dual-earner family and emerging trends such as elder care and dependency or filial duty. However, the trends such as globalization, an aging population, and historically low unemployment and even technological advancement have constituted more to work life conflict of employees. Nathani and Jha (2009) has grouped factors influencing work and family life spheres into three namely, family and personal life related factors, work related factors and others. Family and personal life related factors include increasing participation of women in workforce, increasing participation of child bearing women in workforce, increasing participation of dual career couples in workforce, increase in single-parent/ single person households, increase in child-care/ elder care burden on employees and health and well-being considerations. Work related factor include long hour culture and unpaid overtime, time squeeze, demand for shorter working hours, increase in part-time workers, work intensification and stress and changing work time. Other factors include ageing population, rise of service sector industries, and technological complexity of work, skill shortages, and loss of social support network, globalization and demographic shift of workforce.

1.5 Problem Statement

Work life balance is essential in achieving psychological, emotional and cognitive stability of employees with benefits that promotes organizational effectiveness. Many organizations these days have developed the strategy of rewarding long hours and organizational commitment not minding other commitment of employees outside the organization and this create and result in high work life conflict with impact such as tiredness, fatigue and employees who are stressed which can be risky and have negative consequences on employee's health and well-being.

Lack of work life balance is a serious problem with strong potential of negatively affecting employees as well as employers. Beauregard, T. Alexandra and Henry, Lesley C. (2009) have also identified the behavioral outcomes resulting from lack of WLB or work life conflict to include reduced work effort, reduced performance, and increased absenteeism and turnover. Both work-to-life and life-to-work conflict have also been associated with increased stress and burnout, Anderson et al, 2002; Kinnunen & Mauno, (1998), cognitive difficulties such as staying awake, lack of concentration, and low alertness, MacEwen & Barling, (1994), and reduced levels of general health and energy, Frone, Russell, & Barnes, (1996).

Research by Kossek, (1990); O'Driscoll, Ilgen, & Hildreth, (1992), finds that work-family conflict can have a negative impact on employee attitudes, including commitment and that loyalty in one domain may be negatively related to loyalty in the other. Thus, it might be expected that those with greater role demands will report lower loyalty to work. Gregory (2008) has identified the main cost of employee's dissatisfaction to be stress. Stress from work, stress from family, stress from personal issues and responsibilities, physical stress and so on. Thus the inability of an employee

to handle stress can result to employee's dissatisfaction and lower rate of productivity. Rodgers & Rodgers 1989, Thomas & Ganster (1995) Lalita K, (2012) have identified that the in-ability to have a balanced work life can result to reduced productivity, lower performance and increased job stress. Therefore, highlighting the importance of work life balance to employee's loyalty, satisfaction and productivity, it is imperative to investigate if the practice of work life balance will positively impact employee's loyalty, satisfaction and productivity.

However, this study is an investigation of the work life balance of UTM academic staff and its impacts on loyalty, satisfaction and productivity. This study was influence by interview with key staff of the UTM registrar's office and Human Capital Department (Nur Aisha and Aminatu Faizal) in which they revealed that 90 percent of UTM academic staff according to past records are loyal, 82 percent are satisfied and 87 productive. They also stated that the organization (UTM) do strives to provide a balance employees work life by providing work flexibility. Thus, this study aims to investigate how the practice of work life balance helped influence and impact the loyalty, satisfaction and productivity of UTM academic staff. Although there are studies on WLB and loyalty, satisfaction and productivity but none of the studies have examine the impact of WLB on loyalty, satisfaction and productivity on a single study therefore this study group the three variables together in order to examine the variable that WLB has the strongest impact and influence on, furthermore this study intends to excavate deeper by analyzing the elements of work life balance which includes hours of work, work schedule, leaves and breaks and top management commitment with employees loyalty, satisfaction and productivity in UTM.

The aim of this study is investigate the impact/influence or work life balance i.e. hours of work, leaves and breaks, work schedule and top management commitment on employee's loyalty, satisfaction and productivity built on the theoretical background of spillover theory by Stains (1980).

1.6 Research Questions

The following questions will be addressed in this research:

- ✓ How do the hours of work influences and impact employee's loyalty, satisfaction, and productivity?
- ✓ How have work schedule impact employees loyalty, satisfaction and productivity?
- ✓ How have top management commitments towards work life balance impact employees loyalty, satisfaction and productivity?
- ✓ What is the extent to which leaves and breaks constitutes to balancing work life conflict and its impact on employees loyalty, satisfaction and productivity

1.7 Research Objectives

- ✓ To identify how the hours of work influences and impact employee's loyalty, satisfaction, and productivity.
- ✓ To determine how the work schedule has impact on employees loyalty, satisfaction and productivity
- ✓ To ascertain the top management commitment in helping employees achieve balance in their work and personal life and its impact on employee's loyalty, satisfaction and productivity.
- ✓ To examine the extent to which leaves and breaks impact on employee's loyalty, satisfaction and productivity.

1.8 Research Significance

1.8.1 Significance to Practice

As work life balance has become of prominence due to trends and social factors, this research will provide a better and deeper understanding and knowledge on why organizations should implement and initiate a balanced work life for the various impacts it will have and or create on employee's loyalty/retention, satisfaction, and organizational productivity. This research is significance to providing, building and increasing individual and employers knowledge on what having a work life balance can profit organizations such as resulting in positive outcome in employee's satisfaction, loyalty and reduction in the level of turnover and increase in performance.

The university (UTM where is research is conducted) will benefit from this research because findings from this research will enlighten the university on how they academic staff perceives and understand the flexibility provided by the University for Academic Staff to balance their work life conflict. Furthermore, findings will broaden and equipped the university with knowledge of how the WLB practices is affecting the academic staffs as well as the quality of education in general and the impact the university's work life balance has on employee's loyalty, satisfaction, and productivity. However, UTM will be aware of the conflicts arising from the inability for the academic staff to balance their work life and thus know what initiatives can be taken to address such issues if any.

1.8.2 Significance to Theory

This study will be useful for future researchers on work life balance. Data collected and used in this research will however also be beneficial to future researcher with the same of similar objectives. This study will be used to support and expand the understanding and knowledge of the spillover theory of work life balance.

1.9 Scope of the Study

- 1 This research is limited only to Universiti Teknologi Malaysia or UTM. The research is specifically to address the work life balance of the academic staff of UTM and its impact of their satisfaction, loyalty and productivity.
- 2 This research is mainly applicable to full time and part time employees. This is so in order to have actual results on what WLB entails in different categories of employment and how WLB practices differs in relation to the working hours.

1.10 Conceptual Definition of Terms

1.10.1 Work Life Balance

Work life balance have however been defined by (Hudson, 2005) as a satisfactory level of involvement or ‘fit’ between the multiple roles in a person’s life with specification to work and personal life of each individual. Naithani, (2010), work life balance refers to the effective management of multiple responsibilities at work, at home, and in the other aspects of life. Clark (2000) defines work-family balance as “satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home, with a minimum of role conflict

1.10.2 Work life conflict

Refers to having a job that interferes with your personal life or situations when your personal life interferes with your career and your ability to get ahead at work, Duxbury & Higgins (2008), Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) defined work family conflict as: “A form of inter role conflict in which the role pressures from work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect. (McCarthy) defines work life conflict as all activities that can affect work or personal life as a result of the engagement on activities related to the other side.

1.10.3 Employee's loyalty

According to (Aityan, 2011) employee loyalty can be defined as employees being committed to the success of the organization and believing that working for this organization is their best option. (Meyer & Allen, 1991) Employee loyalty is the willingness to remain with the organization. Employee loyalty is a manifestation of organizational commitment, the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization (Mowday, Porter and Steers 1982),

1.10.4 Employee's satisfaction

Employee satisfaction is a "function of the perceived relationship between what one wants from one's job and what one perceives it as offering" and a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences Locke (1976). While Spector (1997) refers to employees satisfaction in terms of how people feel about their jobs and different aspects of their jobs. Furthermore, C.R.Reilly (1991) defines employee's satisfaction as the feeling that a worker has about his job or a general attitude towards work or a job and it is influenced by the perception of one's job.

1.10.5 Productivity and Performance

Kopleman defines productivity as the goods and services produced per unit of labor, capital or both. In order words, productivity is the output per unit of input employed. The basic definition of productivity is:

$$\text{Productivity} = \frac{\text{Total Output}}{\text{Total Input}}$$

Work-life balance is about creating and maintaining supportive and healthy work environments, which will enable employees to have balance between work and personal responsibilities and thus strengthen employee loyalty and productivity. Krugman (1994) Productivity is commonly defined as a ratio between the output volume and the volume of inputs.

1.11 Operational Definition of Terms

1.11.1 Work life balance

The term work life balance in this study means the ability to manage and have equal satisfaction in work and other life responsibilities without interference in either of them.

1.11.2 Work life conflict

Work life conflict in this study refers to when work life and personal life clashes one another; when work life interferes in personal life and personal life interferes in work life.

1.11.3 Loyalty

Employees loyalty in this study refers to the willingness to remain in an organization with believe that working for that organization is the best option.

1.11.4 Satisfaction:

Satisfaction in this study means a state of feeling and behavior employees have regarding their jobs.

1.11.5 Productivity

Productivity here refers to units of employee's production via labor. Refers to total output/inputs. Performance on the other hand refers to all activities either by the employees or employers that triggers more efforts which produces good outcome as a result. Performance in this study also means achieving and even exceeding target or assigned business or performance expectations at a reasonable time.

1.12 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the research topic, the research background, and have discussed and provided basic understanding and knowledge on the entire research, which includes the objectives, the problem to be addressed, the significance of the study, the scope. This chapter also defines the conceptual and operational key terms.

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