

THE EFFECT OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT IN
DETERMINING LIFE SATISFACTION AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG
EMPLOYEES IN MPK_u

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*“This thesis is especially dedicated to my parents, husband, siblings and son for their
endless love, support and encouragement”*

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ABSTRACT

Work-life balance plays its crucial role in helping employees to juggle their role between work and family domain. In an increasingly challenging world of employment, employees are exposed to work-family conflict i.e work-interference with family (WIF) and family-interference with work (FIW). Work-life balance as well as work-family conflict is closely related with the quality of life of individuals that involves life and job satisfaction. Hence, the purpose of this research is to study the role of work-life balance and work-family conflict in determining employees' quality of life. The total respondents participated in this study were 113 which were taken from Majlis Perbandaran Kulaijaya (MPKu). A self-administered questionnaire was used for the data collection. The questionnaire used was to assess the level of work-life balance, work-family conflict as well as life and job satisfaction. The results from the analysis showed that the level of work-life balance among the employees at MPKu is at moderate level. Meanwhile, the level of work-family conflict is at low level for both WIF and FIW. The level of quality of life among the employees was reported at a moderate level which involves life satisfaction and job satisfaction. Linear regression analysis revealed that WIF was significantly has an effect on job satisfaction only while FIW was significantly has an effect on both life and job satisfaction. Findings from this study suggest that, future research should involve a larger sample size as it would give a clear picture of the organization. As for the organization, MPKu should take some actions in order to make the organization as a better place for work as job satisfaction was reported lower than the life satisfaction.

ABSTRAK

Keseimbangan kerja dan kehidupan memainkan peranan penting dalam memastikan pekerja dapat mengimbangi peranan mereka dalam domain kerja dan keluarga. Dalam dunia pekerjaan yang semakin mencabar, pekerja terdedah kepada konflik iaitu konflik kerja-keluarga atau pun konflik keluarga-kerja. Keseimbangan kerja dan kehidupan serta konflik antara kerja dan keluarga berkait rapat dengan kualiti kehidupan seseorang individu iaitu kepuasan kerja dan kepuasan kehidupan. Oleh itu, tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji peranan keseimbangan kerja dan kehidupan dan juga konflik antara kerja dan keluarga dalam menentukan kualiti kehidupan pekerja. Jumlah responden yang terlibat dalam kajian ini adalah seramai 113 orang dari Majlis Perbandaran Kulaijaya (MPKu). *Self-administer* soal selidik telah digunakan untuk pengumpulan data. Soal selidik yang digunakan adalah untuk menilai tahap keseimbangan kerja dan kehidupan, konflik antara kerja dan keluarga dan juga kepuasan dalam pekerjaan dan kehidupan. Hasil daripada analisis menunjukkan bahawa tahap keseimbangan antara kerja dan kehidupan di kalangan pekerja di MPKu berada pada tahap sederhana. Sementara itu, tahap konflik antara kerja dan keluarga berada pada tahap yang rendah untuk kedua-dua jenis konflik, iaitu; konflik kerja-keluarga dan konflik keluarga-kerja. Tahap kualiti kehidupan di kalangan pekerja juga dilaporkan berada pada tahap sederhana, iaitu; kepuasan kehidupan dan kepuasan kerja. Keputusan analisis *multiple linear* menunjukkan bahawa konflik kerja-keluarga mempunyai kesan ke atas kepuasan pekerjaan sahaja manakala konflik keluarga-kerja mempunyai kesan ke atas kepuasan pekerjaan dan juga kehidupan. Kajian pada masa hadapan memerlukan lebih ramai responden kerana ia akan memberi gambaran yang lebih jelas tentang organisasi ini. Pihak pengurusan MPKu harus mengambil tindakan agar organisasi ini dapat menjadi tempat pekerjaan yang lebih baik di masa akan datang.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

DV	Dependent variable
FIW	Family-interference with work
IV	Independent variable
MPKu	Majlis Perbandaran Kulaijaya
QWL	Quality of work life
WFC	Work-family conflict
WIF	Work-interference with family
WLB	Work-life balance

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Work-life balance is generally thought to promote well-being which in turn enhances the quality of life of individuals. Work-life balance seems to be a crucial component of corporate social responsibility. Good employers have a responsibility to ensure their employees are treated fairly so that the employees' welfare is acknowledged by organization. According to Smith et al (2011), work-life balance is essentially about individuals who have some level of control over when, where and how they do their work and having a 'life' beyond paid work. Work-life balance nonetheless is crucial for business as it directly impacting productivity, retention and recruitment as well as business performance.

A survey of work-life balance conducted by Welford (2008) have reported that of all the 1027 respondents, 82.5% of them suffered from stress and said that they do not have a healthy balance between their work and personal lives. High levels of stress can contribute to low employee morale, poor productivity and decreasing job satisfactory. Work can be made more meaningful if employees possessed an emotional stability, good manners, supportive and harmonize relationship environment.

When work-life balance occurs in employees' life, it is not only benefits the employees itself rather it also benefits the organization they are working as well. Many research have found that the work performance shown by employees act as an indicator of their satisfaction within their lives (McMillan and Morris, 2012). This means that when employees are satisfied with their work-life this will promote to positive satisfaction and further will show a positive work performance which will increase the organization's productivity.

In a competitive workplace nowadays, balancing between work and life is hardly to achieve if there is no alternative provided by organization. Previous study had proved that the outcome of family-responsive programs had showed positive results. In addition, evidence from research conduct by Hayman (2009) have found that enhancing the flexibility provided to employees through flexible work schedule for instance, can promote the integration of work, family and personal life. Beauregard and Henry (2009) suggest that, the reason organization having this type of policy is to increase cost savings, improved productivity and reduced turnover.

This research also studies about the life and job satisfaction of employees. Both life and job satisfaction is an indicator for which one can relates the level of life quality that they are having currently. Work-life balance acts as a medium to see whether the existence of the program will enhance or reduce the employees' life and job satisfaction. Conflict rooted from either family or work domain may also affect individual if it is not treated wisely. This study is intended to see work-life balance's and work-family conflict's effect on the life and job satisfaction of employees.

Much research regarding life and job satisfaction has been done in European and North America countries but less research was done in Asia (Bagtasos, 2011). Working arrangement for example, has long been incorporated in countries like United Kingdom, Europe, New Zealand, Australia and United States (Subramaniam and Selvaratnam, 2008) and is relatively new to developing country like Malaysia. Thus, by having this research, it would encourage more employers to provide work- life balance in their organization so that employees' welfare is guaranteed.

1.2 Background of study

This study focused on the life and job satisfaction of employees at Majlis Perbandaran Kulaijaya (MPKu). Within this study, three variables will be studied which is work-life balance (WLB) and work-family conflict as an independent variables; and life satisfaction and job satisfaction as the dependent variable. It is to see whether the independent variable which is the work-life balance and work-family conflict will affect the dependent variable which is the life and job satisfaction of employees. Previous research done had provided evidence that there is a positive relationship between the variables being studied because when work-life balance is provided by organization, it is functioning to help employees to have a good both life and job satisfaction (Greenhaus et al, 2006). It is proven that supporting pattern of work that meet biological and psychological needs within the individual's environment can lead to the reduction of stress, improved health and well-being and greater life satisfaction (Matuska and Christiansen, 2008 in Subramaniam and Selvaratnam, 2010).

Life and job satisfaction of employees can be influenced by various factors surrounding them usually because of the roles they play in their life. Both work-life balance and work-family conflict in this study will provide us the understanding of whether it will increase or decrease the life and job satisfaction of employees. According to Greenhaus et al. (2006), work-family conflicts are a common source of stress problems and have been related to employees' family functioning and health. The explanation behind this work-family conflict is that, because of the limited amount of time and energy that human had employee who participating multiple roles definitely will experience conflict and stress that blocks their satisfaction in life and job. Employees faced work-family conflict in dealing with their everyday's life. The conflict can be in the form of work interference with family (WIF) conflict or family interference with work (FIW) conflict. The work interference with family (WIF) conflict exist from work such as role autonomy, ambiguity, role workload and hours spend on paid work (Fu and Shaffer, 2001). While the FIW conflict is the conflict that arise from the family matters such as marital status, parental demand and spouse and also hours spend on paid work.

Theoretically, work-family conflict can be curbed by practicing work-life balance as it provides an alternative ways for individual to deal with their work and family matters. In relation to that, this study has focused on the effect of work-life balance and work-family conflict on life and job satisfaction. Work-life balance has been increasingly emphasized by many organizations nowadays because of the highly competition among companies in retaining their skilled employees. An international company like Citibank Group and Shell has long been implemented work-life balance in their organization. The main purpose of doing that is to attract employees' interest to stay longer with the organization without having resentful feelings. On top of that, the presence of work- life balance has also been associated with perceived organizational performance (Perry-Smith and Blum, 2000 in Aminah Ahmad., 2007). In other words, when the welfare of employees is guaranteed, indirectly they will put more efforts in their paid work. Despite ample evidence about the advantages of work-life balance, still the implementation of the program is facing several difficulties. Factors contributing to this matter include company culture such that managers and colleagues may not be supportive to this kind of program (Thompson, 1999).

Study showed that poor work-life balance in an organization is associated with an unsupportive workplace culture (McPherson, 2007). For instance in New Zealand, the Department of Labour 2006 survey of employees stated that almost 60% of them said aspects of their workplace culture made work-life balance harder to achieve, particularly as expressed in the expectations and attitudes of managers, supervisors, colleagues and workmates. Clearly without the support from the organization itself in attaining balance between work and life among employees, any initiative or program of work-life balance will not meet its function. According to de Cieri et al (2002), they have identified two key factors as barriers to work-life balance success: organizational inaction and organizational values. The most aspects of organizational inaction includes lack of communication to staff, ineffective implementation, failure to evaluate/measure the impact programmes, lack of middle management education and not getting line managers involved. While the most influential aspects of organizational values were focusing on the programs rather the culture change and the way work is done, and increased work demands over shadowing personal needs. All of these factors contribute to the failure of work-life balance and

increase work-life conflict faced by employees which will later affect the life and job satisfaction of them.

Thus, this study intended to investigate the role of work-life balance and work-family conflict on the life and job satisfaction of employees.

1.3 Problem statement and research questions

According to the New Zealand Department of Labour, work-life balance (WLB) is defined as being about effectively managing the juggling act between paid work and the other activities that are important to people (McPherson, 2007). Work-life balance can be implemented through policy and practices that refer to initiatives introduced by firms which facilitate the reconciliation of employees' work and personal lives (Alma et al., 2010). WLB is not only about working fewer hours but has become multi-faceted that includes flexibility in the number of hours worked; flexibility in the arrangement of hours worked; flexibility in the workplace; providing back up support and breaks from work (Maxwell, 2005).

As most prior work-life balance research has been limited to western countries, it is significant for us to study and advancing our understanding about the effect of work-life balance in Asian context particularly. Findings regarding work-life balance and work-family conflict from western countries can be used as a benchmark for this research that suits in Malaysian context. Both work-life balance and work-family conflict are related to each other where these two elements can tremendously affect one's life and job satisfaction. For example, when work-life balance is highly practiced it can lower work-family conflict faced by individual and thus resulting in a good level of life and job satisfaction. Therefore, this study aimed in determining the level of work-life balance, work-family conflict and the life and job satisfaction of employees in MPKu. These findings later can be compared to the findings from western countries to see any commonalities between them.

Work-life balance is generally thought to provide a satisfaction in both life and job satisfaction. Greenhaus et al. (2003) stated that, a balanced individual experience low level of stress which will not affecting their life satisfaction. In fact, Marks and MacDermid (1996) found that balanced individual experienced less role overload, greater role ease and less depression. All these will result in a satisfaction of life of an individual. Correspond to that, according to Haar et al. (2014), work-life balance is indeed positively associated to both life and job satisfaction. In addition, Brooks (2008) stated in his findings that when level of job satisfaction is higher it will result in a greater level of life satisfaction. Both job and life satisfaction is clearly interrelated with each other in order for employees to attain high quality of life. Clearly, when work-life balance is incorporated in an organization employees' well-being is not neglected. Therefore, this study has aimed to test whether work-life balance affects life and job satisfaction in Malaysian context, especially in MPKu organization.

Despite the implementation of work-life balance in an organization, the presence of work-family conflict is still one of the crucial element in determining individual's life and job satisfaction. They indicated that work-life balance is rather weakly practiced in the organization. Work-family conflict can be in the form of work-interference with family (WIF) and family-interference with work (FIW). Anderson et al. (2002) found that both FIW and WIF conflict have been associated with increased burnout and stress. Chiang et al. (2010) has reported that, stress has been extremely high in Asian countries compared to western countries. In order to see whether the findings are true especially in Malaysian scenario, this study can confirm the findings from the previous research. According to Burke (2002), a good life quality can be achieved when conflicts are less present in daily life routine. When employees have a high life quality, this means that they are pleased with both their life and job satisfaction. Thus, MPKu has been chosen to be a part in this research in testing whether work-life balance and work-family conflict will affect one's life and job satisfaction. MPKu is an organization that serves the Kulaijaya district to provide a good quality of life to the residents by providing and upgrading infrastructure and also planning the development of towns and cities.

When employees have reconciled between work and personal lives, they will definitely facing little conflict in their work and personal life domains. Employees can be

more focus on the things they do without any distraction. Study showed that when work-family interference increases, job satisfaction is decreasing (Yasbeck, 2004). This situation will later contribute to low job performance as well as low quality of life of individuals. Often successful individual is prone to face work family conflict as they spend most of their time at the workplace. How far this statement is disputable? Balance between work and family can be hardly balanced as claimed by many employees. The existence of conflict whether it is originated from family or work can tremendously affect employees' work-life balance. When conflicts are less present in daily routine, a good quality of life can be achieved. Thus, with the presence of work interference with family (WIF) and family interference with work (FIW), employees will somehow being disturbed and lost their focus towards their work and vice versa. Results from previous research indicate that WIF is related to a lower overall job satisfaction (Boles et al., 2001). On the other hand, FIW is more likely to exert its negative influences in the home domain resulting in lower life satisfaction (Ozbag, 2014).

As a conclusion, this research is aimed to provide employers a better understanding of work-life balance and work-family conflict in an organization. Moreover, by practicing work-life balance in an organization would create a harmony place for employees to work and reduce the work-family conflict those employees would face. These two elements will help employees in attaining good satisfaction in life and job.

RQ 1: What is the level of employees' work-life balance, work-family conflict and quality of life of employees at MPKu?

RQ 2: Does work-life balance give effect employees' life and job satisfaction?

RQ 3: Does work-family conflict give effect on employees' life and job satisfaction?

1.4 Research objective

Specifically, the objectives of this study are:

- i. to identify the level of work-life balance, work-family conflict, life satisfaction and job satisfaction among employees in MPKu.
- ii. to identify the effect of work-life balance on the life and job satisfaction among employees in MPKu.
- iii. to identify the effect of work-family conflict on the life and job satisfaction among employees in MPKu.

1.5 Scope of study

This study, studied the effect of work-life balance (WLB) and work-family conflict (WFC) on employees' life and job satisfaction. The researcher has set the respondents whereby they belong to managerial and administration position. Employees in managerial and administration position are believed to have access with the benefits that the organization offered i.e work-life balance as compared to low- level employees. Due to that, only those two positions were selected in this study.

Independent variables involved in this study are work-life balance and work-family conflict. The dimensions of work-family conflict included in this study are work-interference with work (WIF) and family-interference with work (FIW). While dependent variable in this study involved life satisfaction and job satisfaction. In addition, in order to have the whole picture of the organization, every department in Majlis Perbandaran Kulaijaya (MPKu) were involved in this study.

1.6 Significance of study

This study can be as a reference to employees to achieve high quality of life provided that work-life balance is implemented in their workplace. It helps the employees in lowering their conflict they faced either work-to-family or family-to-work conflict which later will affect their quality of life. Perhaps, by doing program training on 'how to cope with stress' can help the employees in controlling conflict they face in juggling their daily routine. The less conflict employees face, the higher satisfaction between the two domains. This will lead to high quality of life.

Apart from having work-life balance (WLB) in organization it does not guarantee the employees will have a good quality of life. This is so because, often the WLB implemented does not parallel with what is demanded by employees. For example, most working mothers need a flexible working hours because they have children to be sent to school or baby sitter. Instead of working from 9am to 5 pm, perhaps the supervisor may consider to change their working hours from 10am to 6 pm. The kind of WLB programs implemented should meet the employees' need or else it is meaningless. Thus, from this study somehow it could provide better WLB which are needed by employees nowadays. Therefore it is important to study what kind of WLB flexibility should be implemented in organization.

Besides, this study also contributed to the lack of research of this subject done in Malaysia. More and more research is needed in future regarding this topic as employees have already aware of their rights in attaining a good quality of life. In addition, many companies nowadays are practicing head hunter to employees who have a good reputation at their current workplace. Therefore, this study had contributed a kind of work-life balance needed in working environment nowadays especially to government organization like Majlis Perbandaran Kulaijaya.

1.7 Definition of terms

1.7.1 Conceptual definition

1.7.1.1 Work-life balance

Work-life balance (WLB) commonly is viewed as a solution to help employees balance their work and non-work commitments. Work-life balance thus is associated with WLB programs or practices which are defined in the literature as ‘any employer sponsored benefit or working condition that helps an employee to balance work and non-work demands’ (Casio, 2000 in Sanchez-Vidal et al., 2012). As mentioned by Estes and Michael (2005 in Beauregard and Henry, 2009) the term usually refers to one of the following: organizational support for dependent care, flexible work options, and family or personal leave. The programs are usually designed and incorporated into organization by top managers.

1.7.1.2 Work-family conflict

Work family conflict refers to work-interference with family (WIF) and family interference with work (FIW). Work-interference with family is used to describe conflict that arises in the work domain and carries over to the family domain (McMillan and Lane Morris, 2012). In other words, those stemming from the work domain may impinge on the family, such that when they spend long working hours and prevent them from performing domestic task (Fu and Shaffer, 2001).

Family interference with work (FIW) is used to describe conflict that arises in the family domain and carries over to the work domain (McMillan and Lane Morris, 2012). Married employees and parents usually will face this type of conflict because the role they hold as spouse and as a parent needs them to be responsible more than single employees (Herman and Gyllstorm, 1977 in Fu and Shaffer, 2001).

1.7.1.3 Life satisfaction

According to McMillan and Morris (2012), they said that life satisfaction is a distinctly cognitive, judgment-based construct and is influenced by an individual's personality and affective disposition. This means, life satisfaction is depends on one's life in which the criteria is up to the person.

1.7.1.4 Job satisfaction

Mathis and Jackson (2003 in Shoeb Ahmad, 2013) defined job satisfaction as an employee's multidimensional positive attitudes towards the job or job situation that increases quality of work life (QWL). They further explained that the job satisfaction is a positive emotional state that resulted from the evaluation of one's job experience.

1.7.2 Operational definition

1.7.2.1 Work life balance

The definition of work-life balance in this study is that any solutions or programs provided by the organization in order to help their employees to be balanced between work and life domain.

1.7.2.2 Work family conflict

Work family conflict refers to both work interference with family (WIF) and family interference with work (FIW). In this study, work-family conflict is defined as 'a form of inter role conflict, in which the demands of work and family roles are incompatible in some respect, so that participation in one role is more difficult because of

participation in the other role'. The conflict arises then will give an overview to the quality of life of employees.

1.7.2.3 Life satisfaction

In this study, life satisfaction is defined as how one perceived their life as a whole to the extent that he/she is happy with his/her current state of life.

1.7.2.4 Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction in this study is defined as a positive emotional state that resulted from the evaluation of one's job experience.

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