

Influence of Work-Life Balance towards Level of Job Satisfaction among Research Academics in Malaysia

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Abstract Malaysian Research University academics often exposed to the issues of work-life balance. Work-life balance is suggested as one of potential factor which contribute to the level of job satisfaction among academics. Imbalance between work and life may cause low level of job satisfaction while balance will trigger high level of job satisfaction. This paper aims to foresee the effect of work-life balance towards job satisfaction among academicians in Malaysia. This study is a preliminary study which utilized a survey method to gather the data. A total of 97 respondents were participated in this preliminary study which gathered thru online survey. PASW 18 was executed to analyze the data. Correlation was used to identify relationship between work-to-family enrichment and work-to-family conflict towards job satisfaction. While regression was executed to identify the effect of work-to-family enrichment and work-to-family conflict towards job satisfaction. Result had indicated that work-to-family enrichment and work-to-family conflict significantly influence job satisfaction. In this paper, the researchers discuss the preliminary result of this study and how this study contributes to the knowledge enhancement in area of work-life balance in academia setting

Keywords: Work-to-family Enrichment, Work-to-family Conflict, Job Satisfaction

1. Introduction

For decades, work and life balance had been recognized as significant factor which contributes to the experience of workers job satisfaction. According to Perrons (2003), work-life balance not only essential to health and well-being of individuals, yet it is cost-efficient and stability-enhancing for institutions and work-environments. When a person feeling balance, they will perform better in work environment thus increases productivity of the organization. Among professional that been widely linked with issue work-life balance is university academics in Malaysia. As been highlighted by Panatik and friends (2012), challenging job in university setting had affected work-life balance of the academics population in Malaysia causing them to experience higher level of stress. Consequently, Panatik *et. al.*, (2012) in more detail report had revealed association of high level of stress with lower level of job satisfaction among the academics. Therefore, the sole aim in this paper is to investigate on how work-life balance affecting job satisfaction among research university academics in Malaysia.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Work-life balance

In the 20th century, there is arising concern on work-life balance issue in the realm of organisational study. This concern begun when numbers of dual-earner couple was arisen (Aminah,1996).Dual-earner couple is a situation referring to marriage in which both partners

pursue occupational career. The shifting to the pattern of dual-earner couple causing different perspective of marriage role unlike traditional viewpoint of the marriage. Recent statistics of Malaysian workforce distribution shows a constant increase in ration of working men and men with 6:4 (Department of Statistics Malaysia,2013). This means that nowadays couple practicing equal participation in both maintaining family role and economy in both gender. As participation was equally distributed there were arising problem of the balance between work and life. That is, imbalance between work and life triggers work-to-family conflict. Work-to-family conflict is a conflict where imbalance caused from work domain interfering family domain (Greenhaus and Beutell,1985). Too much workload,overspent time in workplace and emotionally drained are few examples of work-to-family situation which can triggers work-to-family conflict. However,those who successfully maintain both work and family will encounter with work-to-family enrichment. Work-to-family enrichment is a situation where participation in work domain helps individual to sustain in family domain (Greenhaus and Powell,2006). The concept of work-to-family enrichment is totally opposite with work-to-family conflict which it enlighten on how works bring constructive effects towards family rather than destructive it. That is, positive situation which encounters when work participation helps to enhance quality in family participation.

2.2 Job satisfaction and work-life balance

As issue of work-life balance kept arisen, it has been constantly discussed within the organisational context. Work-life balance said have affect to various organisational outcome and work-related attitude such as job satisfaction (Zulfiqar *et al.*,2013). Job satisfaction is defined as the extent to which a person believes that his/her work give significant impact on a personal well-being and satisfaction of employee's life (Spector,1997). It is a part of organisational commitment component which is important to develop positive work-environment in the organisation (Kovach,1977). According to Jijena Michel and Jijena Michel (2012) job satisfaction function as evidence-based approach that is pre-requisite to trigger positive changes in institution or university. Panatik *et al.*(2012), suggested that work-to-family had significant negative relationship with work-to-family conflict among academics in Malaysia. That is, the increasing level of work-to-family conflict decreases level of job satisfaction among the academics. In their study, they suggested that perhaps stress from conflicting events from work causing academics to poorly perform in family which in turn reducing the level of job satisfaction among them. Anafarta (2011) supported this statement by his research which found that when work causing difficulties in fulfilling family responsibilities, individual will have lower satisfaction from work. Therefore, we have come out with the first and second hypotheses that:

H1: There is negative relationship between work-to-family conflict and job satisfaction among Research University academics in Malaysia

H2: Work-to-family conflict have effect towards job satisfaction among Research University academics in Malaysia.

Meanwhile, efforts have been made to investigate the positive impact work-life balance of work-to-family enrichment. Unlike work-to-family conflict, work-to-family enrichment was found to be more familiar with positive organisational consequences. Previous researchers had postulated that work-to-family enrichment was associated with positive work-related attitude. For instance, Jijena Mivheal and Jijena Mivheal (2012) had found that work-to-family enrichment was positively associated with job satisfaction among academics in Economics and Finance Faculty of Juan Misael Saracho Autonomous University. They highlighted that work-to-family enrichment can be a potential tool in promoting improvements in job satisfaction among academics. This has been supported by Swee Fung, Ahmad and Omar (2014) research which found that high level of work-to-family enrichment helps increases level of job satisfaction among teacher in secondary school in Bangsar Zone, Malaysia. Their findings suggested that good working condition promoting higher level of work-to-family enrichment which in turn increases teachers level of job satisfaction. Therefore, from the literature we have come out with the third and fourth hypotheses which are:

H3: There is positive relationship between work-to-family enrichment and job satisfaction among Research University academics in Malaysia.

H4: Work-to-family enrichment effect towards job satisfaction among Research University academics in Malaysia.

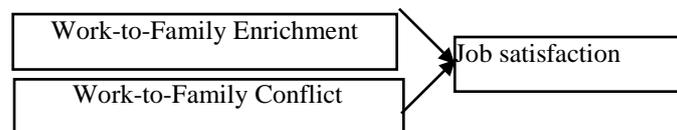


Fig. 1- Model of the study

3. Methodology

3.1 Sample and procedure

This paper is a preliminary study which had been executed via survey method. Data had been collected using online survey with total of 77 participating respondent. All the data were administered using self-administered questionnaire which had been distributed via online google document.

3.2 Measurement

Work-to-family conflict had been measured using nine items questionnaire of Carlson *et al.* (2006). It consists of three sub-domains which are development, affects and capital. Example of the item is “*Helps me to understand different viewpoints and this helps me be a better family member*”. The items were scored with 5 point Likert scale where 1=strongly disagree until 5=strongly agree. The previous reported Cronbach Alpha values of the instrument are 0.84 which considered good (Stoddard & Madsen, 2007).

Work-to-family enrichment had been measured by nine items of work-family conflict scale by Carlson *et al.*, (2000) since it reported to have less sampling bias as it had been tested across five types of population (Carlson *et al.*, 2000). All items were rated using 5-point Likert scale from 1=strongly disagree until 5=strongly agree. Examples of the question are “*The problem-solving behaviors I use in my job are not effective in resolving problems at home*”

Job satisfaction had been measured by eight items of Michigan Organizational Assesement (MOAQ) of Job Satisfaction subscale (JSS). JSS reported to have good psychometric properties where it had good overall validity (Bowling & Hammond, 2008). Examples of JSS items are “*Regarding your work in general. How pleased you with the people you work with?*” and “*Regarding your work in general. How pleased you with the way your department is run?*” Answer was rated with 5-point Likert scale start from 1=very satisfied, 2=satisfied, 3=unsatisfied, 4=highly unsatisfied and 5=not relevant.

3.3 Data analysis

All data were analyzed using descriptive statistical correlational and inferential statistical analysis using PASW18.

4. Result

Correlational analysis in table 1 shows work-to-family conflict have weak negative relationship with job satisfaction ($p < 0.01, r = -0.325$). It is shows that higher level of work-to-

Table 1-Correlation of the variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Overall work-to-family enrichment	-	.879**	.918**	.901**	-.631**	-.461**	-.607**	-.561**	.463**
2. Work-to-family enrichment development	.879**	-	.685**	.702**	-.474**	-.358**	-.447**	-.420**	.365**
3. Work-to-family enrichment affect	.918**	.685**	-	.756**	-.671**	-.497**	-.661**	-.570**	.442**
4. Work-to-family enrichment capital	.901**	.702**	.756**	-	-.539**	-.372**	-.507**	-.515**	.441**
5. Overall work-to-family conflict	-.631**	-.474**	-.671**	-.539**	-	.884**	.878**	.816**	-.325**
6. Work-to-family conflict time based	-.461**	-.358**	-.497**	-.372**	.884**	-	.673**	.602**	-.380**
7. Work-to-family conflict strain based	-.607**	-.447**	-.661**	-.507**	.878**	.673**	-	.553**	-.185
8. Work-to-family conflict behavioral	-.561**	-.420**	-.570**	-.515**	.816**	.602**	.553**	-	-.286**
9. Job satisfaction	.463**	.365**	.442**	.441**	-.325**	-.380**	-.185	-.286**	-

Notes: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

family conflict decreases level of job satisfaction among research university academics in Malaysia. Therefore, hypotheses H1 is accepted. In specific, time-based work-to-family conflict shows highest correlation with job satisfaction ($p < 0.01, r = -0.380$). While, behavioural based work-to-family conflict shows weak relationship with job satisfaction with $p < 0.01, r = -0.286$. Meanwhile, it is found that work-to-family enrichment has a positive moderate relationship with job satisfaction ($p < 0.01, r = 0.463$). The result indicates that higher level of work-to-family enrichment contributing to the increasing level of job satisfaction among research university academics in Malaysia. Therefore, hypotheses H3 is accepted in this study. Specifically, it is found that affect ($p < 0.01, r = 0.442$) dimension of work-to-family enrichment score higher correlation with job satisfaction compare to development and capital dimension.

Table 2 below shows the result of regression analysis. Result shows that overall work-life balance is significantly related with job satisfaction. In specific, result indicates that all the work-life balance variables and dimensions explained 34 percent of the variance in job satisfaction. This means that both work-to-family conflict and enrichment explained the occurrence of job satisfaction with 34 percent. It is found that only work-to-family enrichment affect ($\beta = 0.345, p < 0.05$) dimension were significantly affected job satisfaction. Whereas, for work-to-family conflict, both time-based ($\beta = -0.45, p < 0.001$) and strain-based ($\beta = 0.445, p < 0.001$) dimension were significantly affected job satisfaction respectively. Therefore, based on these result, hypotheses H2 and H4 are accepted

Table 2-Regression of work-to-family enrichment, work-to-family conflict and job satisfaction

Variables	Job satisfaction
	Standardized β
Work-to-family enrichment development	0.007
Work-to-family enrichment affect	0.345*
Work-to-family enrichment capital	0.275
Work-to-family conflict time based	-0.452***
Work-to-family conflict strain based	0.445***
Work-to-family conflict behavioral based	0.081
R ²	0.343***
F	7.816

5. Discussion

In this study we had identified how work-life balance influence job satisfaction, respectively. Testing these across the variables of work-to-family conflict and work-to-family enrichment, we had found that both of the variables gives significant impact towards job satisfaction. To be exact, both variables found explaining 34 percent of job satisfaction. Our findings suggests that academics who has high level of work-to-family enrichment have high level job satisfaction. This was inline with previous study which point out work-to-family as one of possible determinant in increasing level of job satisfaction (e.g. Swee Fung, Ahmad and Omar, 2013). Specific result indicated that only affect dimension of work-to-family enrichment was significantly affect job satisfaction. The significant result on affect dimension of work-to-family enrichment shows that positive emotional states or attitude in work involvement is one of big contribution in promoting high level of job satisfaction. This was

explained through the meaning of work-to-family enrichment affect itself which referring to positive emotional state or attitude that are develop when works experience effectively helps individual to be a better family member (Stoddart and Madsen,2007). Academics who is develop positive emotion and attitude towards their job feels more satisfied and happy towards completing their job which in turn making them to experience higher level of job satisfaction. For work-to-family conflict, our result also suggest that there is negative relationship of work-to-family conflict to job satisfaction. Work-to-family conflict found to negatively associated with job satisfaction. This findings was supported by few research such as Zulfiqar,Khan, Afaq and Khan (2013), Buonocore and Russo (2013), Burke, Konyucu and Fiksenb (2013) and Huffman, Casper and Payne (2014). That is, all of them agreed that increasing level of work-to-family conflict will reducing level of job satisfaction among workers across field and countries.While in Malaysian perspective, our result was inline with prior research by Panatik and friends (2012) which reported the negative association of work-to-family conflict with job satisfaction among Research Universities academics in Malaysia. Our findings also suggest that specifically time-based work-to-family conflict shows highest correlation with job satisfaction compares to strain-based and behavioural based work-to-family conflict. Perhaps limited time with family caused by too much work accumulating stresses among academics which in turn causing them feel unsatisfied with their job. Interestingly we have found different perspective on impact of work-to-family conflict towards job satisfaction via strain-based work-to-family conflict. Surprisingly, we have found that work-to-family conflict found to positively affect job satisfaction. That is, experience of strain-based work-to-family conflict not decreasing the level job satisfaction but increasing it. This result is opposite with most of the prior research on work-to-family conflict study (e.g. Kalliath & Kalliath (2013)). Perhaps this unique findings can be explain by presence of eustress which referring to the positive type of stress that is gain when individual practicing positive adapting attitude to handle with perceived stressors (Kupriyanov and Zhdanove, 2014). Positive stress develop from positive attitude consequently help maximising academics capability to perceive stressor as platform to greatly perform in their work instead of deteriorating it.

6. Conclusion and Practical Implication

In conclusion, this study had highlighted on how work-life balance may influence the experiences of job satisfaction. It was concluded that work-to-family enrichment can serves as a potential influencer towards increasing level of job satisfaction among academics while work-to-family conflict as a potential factor which reduces job satisfaction among academics in Research University academics in Malaysia. Therefore proper guidelines that promotes work-to-family enrichment whereas reducing work-to-family conflict is needed to make sure positive work-life balance can be achieved to ensure high level of job satisfaction among Research University academics in the future.

7. Limitations

The limitations in the present study are acknowledged. First, the study is limited to the population of Research University academics in Malaysia. Therefore, the result may be appropriately generalize towards the same population. Second, this is cross-sectional study which limiting its capabilities to ascertain causal relationship among variables examined.

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