

Work-Life Balance Among Working Mothers in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Employees especially working mothers are struggling to accommodate employer's expectations and fulfilling the demands of their family needs. Achieving work life balance is the dream and hope of almost every working mother. Though many factors affected work life balance, factors like stress management, work culture and employer's role are believe to be significance variables. A study conducted in the National Sport Council of Malaysia on 100 working mothers reveals the truth of this relationship.

Keywords: Work-life balance, stress management, work culture, employer's role

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, life is a constant battle between profession and personal commitment, with the economic distress making living more challenging in many ways. A recent study conducted by the Center for General Studies, University Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), revealed the possibility that parental work conditions such as work-time, job demands, job supervision, job satisfaction and wage level may affect worker's life satisfaction, their family life, and children's educational achievement. This scenario had been supported by studies made by many psychologists (Gottfried, Gottfried and Bathurst, 1995; Bronfenbrenner and Crouter, 1982; Lerner, 1994).

Related to this issue, Hughes and Galinsky (1988) in their research pointed out, "the effect of job on individual health and well-being are found to be a potential source for workers and their

families. Workers must accommodate their time and schedules to do their jobs more than their families". Work hours affects parents' involvement with their family, depending on the size of the family, whether is a single or dual family, the number and ages of children, gender of children and parental occupational status (Baruch and Barnett, 1987).

Based on the situation, actions have to be taken to examine the work culture, stress management and also the roles of employer towards work-life balance achievement. This research was based on questionnaires distributed to working mothers in National Sports Council of Malaysia, Bukit Jalil, Malaysia. The finding from the research offers 7 suggestions and recommendations that could be highlighted towards influencing the working mothers towards achieving work-life balance. The objectives of the research was to determine the relationship between employer's role and work-life balance among working mothers in National Sports Council of Malaysia, to examine the relationship between work culture and work-life balance among working mothers in National Sports Council of Malaysia and to investigate the relationship between stress management and work-life balance among working mothers in National Sports Council of Malaysia. A theoretical framework to illustrate the dependent and independent variables was constructed to clarify the study.

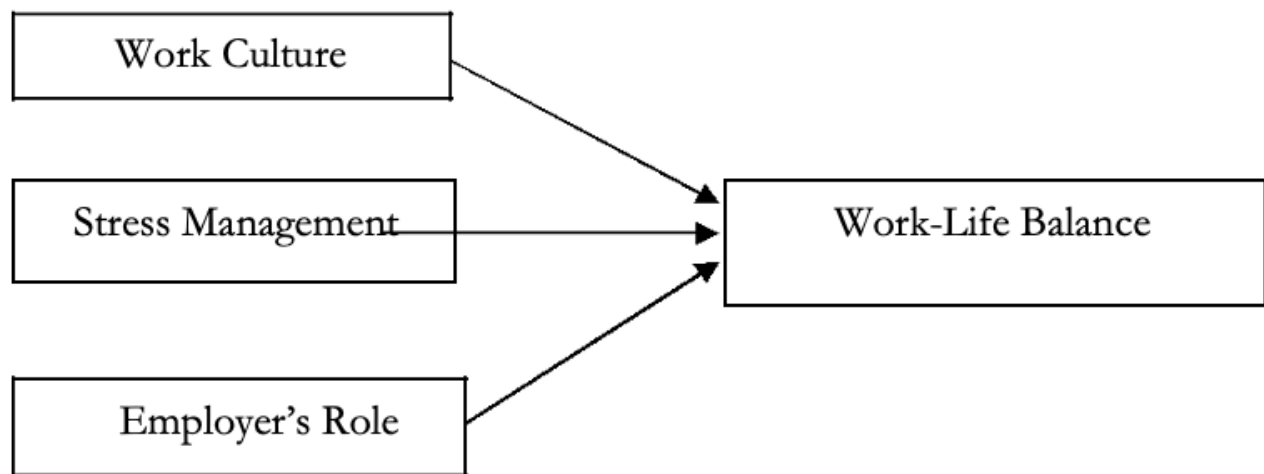


Fig.1. The Relationships Between Family and Career-related Factors and Organisational Commitment: A Malaysian Case)

METHOD

A quantitative approach was used to conduct the study. Data collection using a set of questionnaires was carried out in June 2015 from a representative sample of population. According to Malhotra (2004), the basic data analysis provides valuable insight and guides the rest of the data analysis as well as interpretation of the results. From the 100 sample size, all questionnaires distributed were returned. The data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0 to determine the reliability analysis, descriptive statistics, and correlation analysis. Frequency analysis was utilized for analyzing the respondents' demographic characteristics. The statistical method of Pearson Correlations was used to determine the existence of any relationships between the independent variables and dependent variable. A regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the variables.

FINDINGS

The objectives of this research are to examine the relationship between work culture, stress management and employer's role (IV) with work-life balance (DV) among working mothers. A demographic profile portrays the age, ethnic, education level, duration of service, income and other relevant information pertaining to working mothers. The analysis shows that work culture does influence work-life balance. An analysis method using Pearson's Correlation was conducted showing that work culture has a significant relationship with work-life balance with an r-score of 0.416. The analysis also shows that there is a relationship between stress management and work-life balance among working mothers. The result of the Pearson's correlation shows that stress management is highly correlated with work-life balance (r-scores stated at 0.543). The finding also reveals the relationship between the employer's role and work-life balance among working mothers. The researcher analyzed that there is a significant relationship between the employer's role and work life balance (r scores stated at 0.268). The findings also revealed that the reliability test are very good and acceptable as the Cronbach's Alpha for all variables are more than 0.50.

According to Table 1, most respondent are below 30 years old. 35% are between 30 to 40 years old and the remaining are above 40 years old. Majority are Malays. 50% have diploma qualifications, 29% are degree holder, 11% are STPM level and the remaining 10% are SPM level. None of the respondents are master holder. Many have worked between 5 to 10 years and some even worked for more than 10 years. Most of them earn an income between RM 1501 to RM 3000, some earn RM 3001 to RM 5000. A few earn less than RM 1500. The remaining 3% earns more than RM 5001. Most work on contract basis while the remaining are permanent workers. Majority has 1 to 3 children(s) and the remaining 13% of the respondents have 4 to 6 children. None have disable children. 66% of the respondents send their children to child care center, 21% hire maid to take care of their children and 10% send their children to their parents. A few are being cared by the respondent's spouse. Most work 5 days per week.

Table 1. Demographic profile of respondent

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Age of Respondents	30 years and below	54	54	54
	31-40 years	35	35	35
	Over 40 years	11	11	11
Ethnic of Respondents	Malay	95	95	95
	Chinese	3	3	3
	Indian	2	2	2

Education Level of Respondents	SPM	10	10	10
	STPM	11	11	11
	Diploma	50	50	50
	Degree	29	29	29
	Master	0	0	0
Duration of Working/Service	Less than 1 year	2	2	2
	1-5 years	30	30	30
	5-10 years	48	48	48
	More than 10 years	20	20	20
Income of Respondents	Less than RM 1500	11	11	11
	RM1501 - RM3000	69	69	69
	RM3001 - RM 5000	17	17	17
	More than RM 5001	3	3	3
Employment Status	Contract	79	79	79
	Permanent	21	21	21
Number of Children	1-3 children	87	87	87
	4-6 children	13	13	13
Status of Children Care	Spouse	3	3	3
	Parents	10	10	10
	Maid	21	21	21

	Child Care Centre	66	66	66
Number of Working Day per Week	Less than 5 days	0	0	0
	5 days	99	99	99
	6 days	1	1	1
	7 days	0	0	0

Table 2. Reliability Test

Reliability Statistics		
	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Work Life Balance	0.919	11
Work Culture	0.895	8
Employer's Role	0.729	4
Stress Management	0.659	2

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Work Life Balance	100	3.5673	.63815
Work Culture	100	3.7453	.63437
Employer's Role	100	2.4475	.78841
Stress Management	100	2.9667	.63121

Respondents were asked to indicate their perceptions and agreement towards the statement in the questionnaires by using the five points Likert Scale answers. The scales were ranged between 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree. As mentioned before, an even numbered scale would not have a mid-point and thus, forced respondents to make a choice. Based on Table 3, the overall mean for Work Life Balance is 3.5673 (SD = 0.63815), Work Culture is 3.7543 (SD = 0.63437), Employer Role is 2.4475 (SD = 0.78841) and Stress Management is 2.9667 (SD = 0.63121). The mean lets the researcher know the approximate number per attempts, it can help predict the number that the researcher expect for and it also enables to predict the probability

that something will happen at a particular time. In this study, under the descriptive statistics, the researcher calculates the mean to know the probability of scale that was answered by the respondents. Standard Deviation measures how spread out the data are in relation to the average. For instance, in this study the average for all factor is 100 (Number of Respondents) with a standard deviation gained from SPSS results.

Table 4. Correlation Analysis between Independent Variable and Dependent Variable

		Work Life Balance	Work Culture	Employer' s Role	Stress Manageme nt
Work Life Balance	Pearson Correlatio n	1	.416"	.268"	.543"
	Sig. (2- tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Work Culture	Pearson Correlatio n	.416**	1	0.365	0.365
	Sig. (2- tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Employer's Role	Pearson Correlatio n	.268**	0.365	1	0.15
	Sig. (2- tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.002
Stress Manageme nt	Pearson Correlatio n	.543**	0.365	0.15	1
	Sig. (2- tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.002	0.000

Note. (N=100) Diagonal entries indicate Cronbach Alpha values **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Correlation analysis

Pearson's Correlation Coefficients were run to examine the associations between independent and dependent variables. Table 4 shows the correlations between the independent variables (work culture, employer role and stress management) and the dependent variable i.e., work-life balance. Based on the results, all the independent variables have significant correlations with the dependent variable. Correlations between the variables ranges from $r = 0.268$ to $r = 0.543$ ($p < .01$)

Regression Analysis

Regression Analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the variables. Table 4 shows that there are significant and positive relationships between the independent variables i.e. work culture, stress management, employer role with work-life balance. A positive relationship is also obtained between all variables, though significant. The F value is the statistic which tests the overall significance of the regression model.

Table 5. Model Summary of Regression

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.494 ^a	.810	.898	.56360

Note. Predictors: (Constant), Stress_Management, Work_Culture, Employer_Role

Table 6. Coefficients Analysis

Independent Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficient		p-value
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-value	
(Constant)	2.054	.462		4.442	.000
Work Culture	.381	.090	.379	4.218	.000
Employer Role	.204	.073	.251	2.782	.000
StressManagement	.140	.091	.138	1.529	.000

Note. Dependent Variable: Work_Life_Balance

CONCLUSION

Based on the output result, the Anova model is significant whereby the value of p is equal to 0.000 which is less than the maximum significance value which is 0.01. R^2 is the coefficient of

determination and represents the extent of changes in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variables. It determines how well all the regression line fits the data. It is a number ranging from 0 to 1 ($1 > R^2 > 0$) and it represents the proportion of the total variation in the dependent variables that is explained by the regression equation. The model summary table shows that R, regression of three independent variables is equal to 0.810. The inter-correlation R square (R^2) generated is 0.898; which when translated, refers to about 89.8% of the three independent variables can explain the dependent variable. By referring to the rule of thumbs, the remaining 10.2% cannot be explained by the regression analysis. It could be inferred here that there could be other factors that could have influence on work life balance. A larger sample size could contribute to better results.

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