

The Relationship between Demographic Characteristics, Job Stress, Work Culture and Work-Life Balance with Job Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

Job satisfaction is a topic of great interest and a critical factor that affects organizational success. Job satisfaction is a complex phenomenon which is determined by multiple variables. Therefore, there is a need to investigate the factors influencing job satisfaction for the benefit of both employees and employers. Guided by Frederick Herzberg Two Factor Theory (1959), this correlational study attempted to examine the relationship between demographic characteristics, job stress, work culture and work-life balance with job satisfaction among the employees in one Port in Malaysia. Questionnaires were used as the main instrument. A total of 150 questionnaires were distributed online to the employees through a convenience sampling technique. The findings revealed a significant relationship between gender, work culture, job satisfaction, and work-life balance with job satisfaction among employees. Understanding factors related to job satisfaction is crucial for improving organizational performance and helping employees lead more fulfilling and satisfying professional lives.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, Demographic Characteristics, Job stress, Work culture, Work-life balance

INTRODUCTION

Job satisfaction has been confirmed by numerous researchers as one of the factors that contributed to an organization's efficiency and effectiveness [1,2,3] and certainly impacts the

motivation to boost productivity and lessen staff turnover [1]. Job satisfaction is a topic of great interest, especially to employers since it is likely to influence the company's performance. Job satisfaction comprehends people's feelings about their jobs on cognitive, emotional, and evaluation levels. Job satisfaction is one condition which most employees all over the world demand whenever they are doing their work, despite any career they are in. Job satisfaction is impacted by both personal and environmental factors.

Job satisfaction can be influenced by multiple personal and environmental factors including demographic characteristics, the nature of the work, relationships with colleagues and supervisors, opportunities for growth and advancement, compensation and benefits, and the overall work environment. Several studies have explored demographic factors concerning employee job satisfaction [4,5,6,7,8] with mixed results as some studies revealed positive relationships between variables, some reported negative relationships, and some reported no relationship at all. Moreover, there are limited numbers of past literature reported on the relationship between demographic factors and job satisfaction, particularly in Malaysia. Apart from demographic characteristics, environmental factors such as work culture, job stress and work-life balance were reported to influence job satisfaction. Therefore, there is a need to investigate the factors influencing job satisfaction for the benefit of both employees and employers.

The objectives of this study are twofold: 1) to investigate the relationship between demographic factors (gender, age, years of services, marital status and education status) with job satisfaction. 2) to investigate the relationship between job stress, work culture and work-life balance towards job satisfaction among employees in one of the ports in Malaysia. This study offers some important insights into factors of job satisfaction as it can lead to better management practices, increased organizational effectiveness and m productivity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Job Satisfaction

The concept of job satisfaction has been extensively studied [9-16]. Job satisfaction is a term that has been frequently used in literature for the past eight decades, but to date, there has yet to be a consensus on the definition. A seminal study in this area is the work of [9] reported that satisfaction is any combination of psychological, physiological, and environmental circumstances that cause a person to say that they are satisfied with their job. [11] defines job satisfaction as an emotional state that can create either positive (satisfaction) or negative emotions (dissatisfaction). The issue is that job satisfaction responses are influenced by both objective workplace circumstances and workers' psychological states.

The degree of satisfaction an individual derives from their employment directly affects their mental and social health. Job satisfaction represents one of the most complex areas facing today's managers in managing their employees. It is the primary responsibility of organisations to ascertain that employees are satisfied with their jobs. As job satisfaction relates to the employees' commitment, performance, turnover, well-being and life satisfaction, the organisation needs to ensure their employees are satisfied with their job [17]. Employees who find satisfaction in their jobs are more likely to be expected to identify with and participate in the activities of their organisation and will possess a strong belief in and acceptance of the organisation's goals and values.

Job Stress

Work stress is the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the job requirements do not match the worker's capabilities, responses, or needs [18]. The effects of stress have been the subject of much research over the past two decades. Work stress is characterised by a lack of enthusiasm for going to work, a sense of ongoing pressure, and the typical physical, emotional and behavioural stress responses.

There are many causes related to job stress. Previous studies reported a variety of stressors, such as individual characteristics, job-related conditions and elements, role-related factors, relationships at work, and conditions associated with the organisation's structure, climate, and information flow. One of the primary causes of job stress is work pressure. Previous studies have shown that work overload harms workers' health. It has been reported that satisfied employees are more productive and healthier than dissatisfied employees. Job satisfaction is significantly more critical when stress levels are optimal than when they stimulate the individual.

Findings revealed that stress levels experienced at work strongly correlate with job satisfaction. The amount of work pressure and workplace conditions harm job satisfaction [19]. A decrease in the factors that contribute to stress at work, such as the quality of an individual's connections, as well as their health and motivation at work, can lead to an increase in an individual's job satisfaction [19].

Workplace Culture

Workplace culture is a collection of attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that make up the regular atmosphere in a work environment. Workplace cultures transform how people work and how they feel about work. Culture affects how employees think, how they solve problems, how willingly they take risks, and how well they manage to change [20]. Organisational culture has become essential in increasing employee work satisfaction and productivity. The work culture of an organisation is a significant factor in determining whether it successfully attracts and retains highly motivated workers [21]. Organisational culture holds employees and the institution system together, encouraging positive and innovative work habits [22]. Employees' levels of job satisfaction, as well as their behaviours and attitudes, are modified as a direct result of changes in the organisation's culture, which influence and impact these factors. This demonstrates that an organisation's culture has been used to predict work performance and job satisfaction.

Components of an organisation's culture include, for instance, the variables influencing employees' levels of commitment and job satisfaction. When working in a pleasant environment, productivity increases and trustworthy behaviour encourages rapid communication and knowledge sharing [23]. In addition, satisfied workers are more productive on the job and report higher overall job satisfaction.

Work-Life Balance

The topic of work-life balance has become a topic of discussion among academics, practitioners, and policymakers. Sociology, psychology, organisational behaviour research, human resource management, and other social disciplines have all seen considerable increases in the study during the last few decades [24]. Because of the rapid growth of technology and its subsequent

inclusion into the operational and procedural practices of a wide range of corporate organisations, a good work-life balance has become increasingly important. Work-life balance is a functional concept that supports employees' efforts to balance their attention, time, and energy between work and other essential aspects of their lives [25].

Understanding the role of employees in balancing home and work functions and avoiding overlap is critical to establishing work-life balance because overlapping leads to high-stress bad quality of personal life, and so lowers the efficacy of individuals in performance and production [26]. In addition, work-life balance is essential, contributing to high employee satisfaction and reducing absenteeism and turnover.

A study by [27] on working adults in Malaysia reported that employees who can strike a healthy balance between their personal and professional lives are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs. Past studies reported that employees' mental health, job commitment, and productivity would suffer if a lack of work-life balance and personal lives were interfered with [25,27]. Poor policies regarding work-life balance, such as working long hours, contributed to employee dissatisfaction with their jobs and increased the risks to the employees' health and well-being [24] which resulted in absenteeism and employee turnover [28]. In addition to higher job satisfaction, performance, and organisational commitment, a more favourable work-life balance has been linked to a higher life and family contentment levels. Even though many other things are important, maintaining a healthy work-life balance cannot be overstated.

Conceptual Framework

The development of the conceptual framework of this study was guided by Frederick Herzberg Two Factor Theory (1959). [29] stated that this motivator-hygiene theory explains the satisfier (positive feelings) and dissatisfier factor (negative feelings) that leads to job satisfaction. There are three independent variables: job stress, work culture and work-life balance, and the dependent variable is job satisfaction. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework for this study. Based on the conceptual framework, the following hypotheses were developed.

- H1: Job stress has a significant positive relationship with job satisfaction.
- H2: Work culture has a significant positive relationship with job satisfaction.
- H3: Work-life balance has a significant positive relationship with job satisfaction.

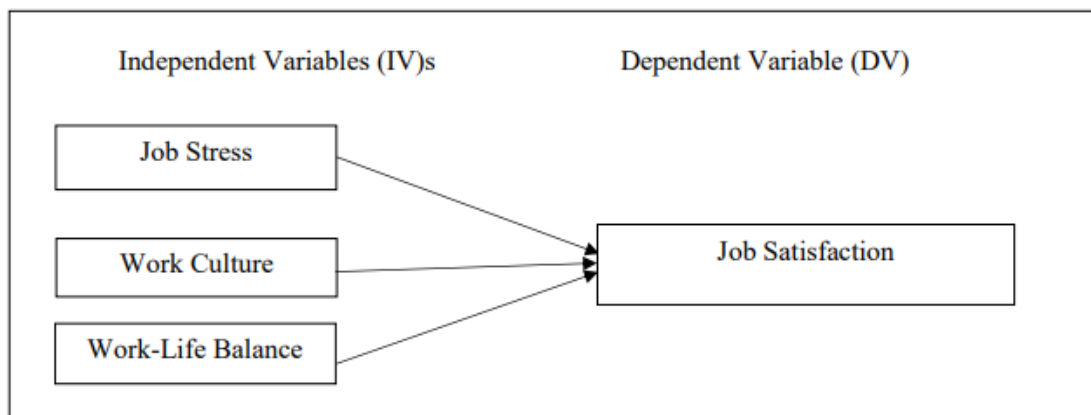


Figure 1: The conceptual framework

RESEARCH METHOD

Data Collection, Sampling and Response Rate

A positivist approach was used to explore the relationship among the variables. A survey was conducted among 150 employees in one of the ports in Malaysia. The G*Power software was used to calculate the sample size for this study, and based on the calculation, the total sample size required for this study is 77 respondents. Convenience sampling was used in selecting the respondents. This process is based on the availability and agreement of respondents to participate in the survey without the need to choose the respondents systematically.

Measurement

Based on the literature review, variables were derived, and measures were developed. The questionnaire has five sections: demographic data, job stress, work culture, work-life balance, and job satisfaction. In measuring the demographic profile of the respondents, the participants were requested to complete the questions about their demographic backgrounds, such as age, gender, marital status, education level, and length of service. The questionnaire developed by [30] with eight items was adapted to measure job stress. Seven items were adapted from a questionnaire developed by [31] to measure workplace culture. Ten items developed by [32] were adapted to measure workplace culture. The last section was developed to measure job satisfaction, consisting of eight items adapted from [33].

All questionnaire items were measured on a 5-point Likert-scale response ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A pre-testing was conducted to verify that the questions to be used as the questionnaire are free from vagueness, and bias, and the respondents can understand the questions. Pre-testing is also essential to avoid poor data quality and prevent or reduce items' deletion during the measurement model evaluation [34].

For this study, two (2) experts were invited for the pre-testing phase to provide feedback regarding the questionnaire items. A modification based on the pre-testing was used to generate the final version of the instrument for this study. After receiving feedback from professionals and laypeople alike, the final questionnaire was refined with some changes to the wording for more precision and the removal of some jargon, acronyms, and terminology. Research Ethics Committee Universiti Teknologi MARA reviewed and approved the study protocol.

Data Collection Procedure

A survey method was used to gather data from the respondents. The researcher emailed the respondents and briefed them about the inclusion criteria. The respondents were given written explanations and instructions as a guideline to understand the questionnaires better. The respondents that fulfilled the requirements were given a questionnaire to answer. The respondents needed around 5 to 10 minutes to complete answering the questionnaires. A total of 150 sets of questionnaires were distributed via Google Form to the respondents, and there were only 130 questionnaires that were returned yielding 86.6 % of the response rate.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Data were analysed using SPSS version 26. Normality tests, reliability tests, and demographic analysis were employed. Multiple regression analysis was performed to investigate the relationship between variables. Findings revealed that most of the respondents are male

(56.9%), aged between 26 to 35 years old (38.5%) with less than five years of working experience (43.8%). Regarding educational background, 40% of respondents completed Diploma or STPM. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents and Relationship with Job Satisfaction

Demographic Profile	Frequency	Percentage	t	F
Gender				
Male	74	56.9	2.663*	
Female	56	43.1		
Age				
21-25	38	29.2		0.781
26-35	50	38.5		
36-45	30	23.1		
> 46	12	9.2		
Years of Services				
< 5	57	43.8		0.907
5-10	48	36.9		
11-20	22	16.9		
> 20	3	2.3		
Marital Status				1.097
Single	64	49.2		
Married	65	50		
Divorced	1	0.8		
Education Level				
SPM	31	23.8		1.486
Foundation/Diploma/STPM	52	40		
Degree	41	31.5		
Postgraduate	6	4.6		
SPM	31	23.8		

This study conducted a normality analysis before continuing with the correlation analysis. The purpose of running the normality test was to know the shape of the distribution. The assumptions were tested by running descriptive statistics, and the Skewness and Kurtosis results were presented. The normality test shows that the data was generally distributed since the value of the skewness and kurtosis was ± 3 for each variable [35].

The bivariate analysis examined the relationship between individual characteristics and job satisfaction. The tests were selected based on variable types such as ratio, interval or categorical. A preliminary analysis was conducted to ensure no violation of normality assumptions and homogeneity of variance [36]. As specified in Table 1, independent sample t-tests revealed significant differences between gender; $t(93) = 2.663$, $p < 0.05$. The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = 0.288, 95% CI: 0.732 to 0.502) was a small effect size ($\eta^2 = 0.483$). The results corroborate the findings of previous studies that investigated the relationship between gender and job satisfaction [37,38,39]. Based on the findings, it can be interpreted that gender influence job satisfaction. The reasons for the differences in male and female's job satisfaction may be guided by their personalities.

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine the relationship between respondents' age, years of service, marital status, and education level. However, results also showed no significant difference between age, years of service, marital status and education level with job satisfaction. The results are presented in Table 1.

Multiple regression analysis was used to measure the relationship between the variables. This multiple regression addressed which variable in a set of independent variables can be considered the best predictor or most significant factor influencing the dependent variable. Table 2 shows the results of the multiple regression analysis conducted in this study. The result shows no collinearity problem as the value of the VIF was less than ten and, the tolerance value was below 1.0, given from the three independent variables. Three independent variables explain 84 per cent of the variance in job satisfaction. The F-test is significant at the p -value < 0.05 (0.000); therefore, the linear model is valid overall. As specified in Table 2, the result from multiple regression analysis revealed significant relationships between job stress ($\beta = 0.092$, $p < 0.05$) 95% CI [0.006, 0.155], work culture ($\beta = 0.176$, $p < 0.05$) 95% CI [0.020, 0.342] and work-life balance ($\beta = 0.701$, $p < 0.05$) 95% CI [0.516, 0.826]. Based on the findings, all three hypotheses were supported.

The findings confirmed that there is a significant positive relationship between job stress and job satisfaction. The finding is consistent with those of [19, 40,41]. The relationship between job stress and job satisfaction can vary across different individuals and work contexts. While high job stress is generally associated with lower job satisfaction, there may be exceptions where individuals find satisfaction in challenging and demanding work.

Based on the findings, work culture was found to be a significant determinant of job satisfaction. These results are consistent with those of other studies [42,43]. Work culture is shaped by organisational policies and practices. Organisations need to promote positive and supportive work culture by creating a conducive environment for their employees as it will positively influence job satisfaction

The current study further revealed that work-life balance is a significant determinant of job satisfaction. The findings lend support to the previous studies [44,45]). The practice of work-life balance is where employees are equitably committed to both their job and private life with equal importance. A possible explanation of this is that employers who prioritize work-life balance will create a positive work environment where employees feel supported and valued, leading to increased job satisfaction.

Table 2: Results of the multiple regression analysis

Independent variables	Standard Coefficient Beta	T	Sig.	Confidence Interval		Collinearity statistics	
				Lower	Upper	Tolerance	VIF
Job Stress	0.092	2.135	0.035	0.006	0.155	0.685	1.459
Work Culture	0.176	2.230	0.028	0.020	0.342	0.205	4.889
Work-Life Balance	0.701	8.559	0.000	0.516	0.826	0.189	5.285
R square	0.840						
Adjusted R Square	0.836						
F	220.341						
Significance F Value	0.000						

CONCLUSION

The primary aim of this exploratory study was to identify the relationship between job stress, work culture and work-life balance with job satisfaction among employees in one of the ports in Malaysia. The findings revealed significant positive relationships between all the independent variables with the dependent variable. Several significant limitations need to be considered. First, the study design was cross-sectional, which prevents the possibility of concluding causal relationships between the variables studied. Second, the results cannot be generalised to the employees in Malaysian ports, as the sample needed to be more nationally representative; therefore, the generalisability of the findings could be improved. Despite these limitations, the current findings add to a growing body of literature on job satisfaction. The present study has implications for research, practice, and policy. The employer should pay particular attention to improving and sustaining the job satisfaction of their employees by developing more effective human resources development programs in their organisation. In terms of direction for future research, further work could be conducted so that a more in-depth understanding of the current issue may be built further and strengthened. It is recommended that a qualitative study be carried out to acquire a deeper understanding of job satisfaction among employees in Malaysian ports.

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