



The Mediating Role of Chinese Values in the Satisfaction of Work-Life Balance among Chinese Bank Employees: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the mediating role of Chinese Values in the relationship between antecedents of Work-Life Balance (including work involvement, work overload, work support, family involvement, family overload, and family support) and satisfaction among Chinese bank employees in Sarawak, Malaysia. A quantitative method was employed to gather data from 52 Chinese bank employees, which was then analysed using IBM SPSS version 25.0, Pearson Correlation Analysis, and the PROCESS Macro for mediation analysis. Findings reveal that Chinese Values play a significant mediator role in the relationship between some of the antecedent factors and satisfaction with Work-life Balance. It is recommended that some cultural aspects of Chinese values, which are commonly accepted by other ethnicities, be considered when developing and implementing Work-life Balance programmes in the banking sector. The study highlights the importance of considering cultural differences in the design of workplace programmes to improve Work-life Balance satisfaction among employees.

Keywords: Chinese values, satisfaction, work-life balance

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1 INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the banking sector competition in Asia has increased at a whirlwind speed. Thus, employees had to cope with the rapid changes and maintain their competitiveness in the market by sacrificing their own time to complete their work due to the increased workload. It is crucial to balance work and life as it has been the top social challenge for the past few decades (Chatra & Fahmy, 2018)

As work-life balance or work-life literature started to discuss broadly in the last decade, the gap between the work domain and life domain has become saturated. Since the research of work-life literature originated in Western countries, most work-life balance studies are in the context of Western perspectives. However, Western and Eastern countries view work and family differently regarding culture, as most Eastern countries are collectivistic. With that being said, few studies and researchers have expanded their viewpoint and focused on Chinese ethnicity; therefore, research on the Chinese cultural aspect is scarce.

Malaysia is well known for its multi-ethnic uniqueness as Malaysia has three main ethnicities, namely Malay/Bumiputera, Chinese and Indian (Kawangit *et al.*, 2012). Therefore, Malaysia has its culture gaps and has extraordinary cultural differences compared to Western countries. Chinese citizens in Malaysia comprised 23.4% and ranked as the second largest ethnic group in Malaysia after Malay. Malaysian Chinese, or "huaren" in Mandarin, bear the historical continuity of identities and values from China and transform themselves to localised in Malaysia (Tan, 1997). Malaysian Chinese adapted to the geographical and social environment. They evolved into a new Chinese identity easily distinguishable from Mainland China, Hong Kong Chinese, and Taiwan Chinese due to Malaysian Chinese persistence in practising their Chinese values and traditional beliefs, which is influenced by Malaysian culture and Westernization that has taken place in Malaysia for generations. Ng (2021) stated that Malaysian Chinese adapted to the new environment through business networking, making money guided by positive cultural values. Thus, in this case, there is still a lack of studies that examine the cultural aspect, such as the identity and values of the Chinese ethnicity in Malaysia.

Current research on work-life balance in Mainland China focuses on Chinese who live on the mainland. However, Malaysian Chinese is influenced by Malaysian culture and Westernization that has taken place in Malaysia for generations. Malaysian Chinese differs from Chinese in Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. Malaysia has three main ethnic groups: Malay, Chinese and Indian. These three ethnic groups have their practices, identity, and values, making them unique. In this case, there is still a lack of studies that examine the cultural aspect, such as the identity and values of the Chinese ethnicity in Malaysia.

It is crucial to understand first what Chinese identity all is about. According to Fung (1948), Chinese identity includes Chinese values as an alternative perspective of Chinese philosophy that is fundamental to Chinese culture and human concerns regarding philosophical reflections. Hofstede (2011) stated that culture distinguishes people of a category or a group from others based on some specific collective information. Therefore, culture and values are closely related.