RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN WORK-LIFE BALANCE FACTORS AND PERCEIVED EMPLOYEES' JOB PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN WORK-LIFE BALANCE FACTORS AND PERCEIVED EMPLOYEES' JOB PERFORMANCE

Hana Hamidi

This study aimed to determine the level of employees' job performance exhibited by 64 employees and the work-life balance factors that would influence their job performance. The factors concerned are organizational policies, supervisory support, and employees' demographic characteristics, i.e. age, gender and marital status. The research methodology used is a quantitative survey approach, utilizing self-administered questionnaires as instrument for data collection. Statistical analyses such as Pearson Correlation, ANOVA and t-test are used. The findings revealed that the level of job performance among the respondents is relatively medium and both organizational policies and supervisory support are significant in determining employees' job performance. Therefore, it is recommended that the organization and management should enhance the organizational policies related to work-life balance and the skills of supervisors to play effective key roles in increasing employees' performance.
ABSTRAK

PERHUBUNGAN ANTARA FAKTOR-FAKTOR KESEIMBANGAN KERJA-KEHIDUPAN TERHADAP PERSEPSI PEKERJA TERHADAP PRESTASI KERJA

Hana Hamidi

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenalpasti tahap prestasi 64 pekerja dan faktor-faktor keseimbangan kerja-kehidupan yang mempengaruhi prestasi kerja mereka. Faktor-faktor kerja-kehidupan yang dikaji adalah polisi kerja-kehidupan organisasi, sokongan penyelia, dan ciri-ciri demografi pekerja seperti umur, jantina dan status perkahwinan. Metodologi kajian yang digunakan berbentuk survei kuantitatif yang menggunakan borang soal-selidik untuk penggumpalan data. Analisis statistik seperti Pekali Korelasi Pearson, ANOVA dan ujian-t telah digunakan. Dapatan menunjukkan bahawa tahap prestasi kerja secara keseluruhannya adalah sederhana. Kedua-dua faktor polisi organisasi dan sokongan penyelia mempunyai perkaitan yang signifikan dengan prestasi kerja. Justeru itu, adalah dicadangkan supaya pihak organisasi dan pengurusan perlu mengkaji polisi organisasi dan meningkatkan kemahiran penyelia dalam peranan menasihati para pekerja dalam hal-hal keseimbangan kerja-kehidupan dan prestasi kerja.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

In today’s working world, most of employees’ time is spent at the workplace, making their work take over their lives as a whole. The increasing demand from their job requires employees to be even more committed to their work, even after office hours. This has resulted in a lot of work related problems such as stress and an imbalance in their roles as a worker, parent or family member.

Over the past decades, the social responsibility of companies has increasingly become a subject of social debate (Carciner, Sanchez and Perez, 2003). As a reaction to this, companies seem to pay more and more attention to their position in society and do so with a growing sense of responsibility for a sustainable development of society.

Family and work are the two most important domains of life for most adults (Andrews and Whitey, 1976). When conflicts between these two domains occur, there are adverse consequences for both individuals and organizations (Fu and Shaffer, 2000).
Individuals who experience work-family conflict may incur increased health risks, inadequate performance as a marital partner and parent, reduced life satisfaction and poor marital adjustment (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985, as cited in Fu and Shaffer, 2000). Inability to deal with the demands of the two domains may also manifest itself in the form of increased absenteeism and turnover, reduced organizational commitment, and lower productivity (Fernandez, 1986 as cited in Fu and Shaffer, 2000).

Competing in the business world demands a great deal commitment from its employees. This has resulted in a situation where work life needs a greater proportion in terms of attention and involvement. Yet, it is a struggle for employees, especially those who have other commitments which they are responsible for, their families. This is specially so for working mothers, who are more answerable and hold greater responsibilities at home, caring for their children. Juggling between work and family, organizations are smart to know and acknowledge that in order to retain and to get the best out of their workers; they must first accommodate a family-friendly policy in the organization.

Employee productivity, stress, absenteeism company loyalty, product quality, and job satisfaction are examples of measures of employee well being cited in previous research (IR Research Publications, 2000 as cited in Hacker and Doolen, 2002). In particular, there is evidence that employers can benefit from work/ family and or work/life policies (Rose, 1996).

Many work/ family and/or work/life human resource programs are focused on improving the nature of the work environment to be more supportive of employees and to provide better quality jobs where all employees are encouraged to bring their full
capabilities to the tasks at hand (Hall and Parker, 1993). These efforts have been linked with higher job satisfaction, increased employee loyalty to the organization, and increased levels of employee commitment to the success of the organization as measured by employee commitment, retention, and productivity (Gover and Crooker, 1995; Joesch, 1997; Bond, 1998)

In this research, a particular interest is to look at some highlighted independent variables, namely organizational policies, supervisory support and demographic characteristics of employees (age, gender and marital status) and what are their relationships towards employees’ job performance. This interest is originated from the rising need for organizations to cater to employees’ demand for more flexible policies in terms of matters which are related to life besides that in the workplace.

It is hoped, that through this research, a better way of understanding employees’ needs and ways of giving more choices and spaces for employees to deal with their work and personal/family matters.

1.1 Background of studies

The past two decades have brought a great increase in the number of individuals with significant responsibilities both at work and with family: single parents, working women, dual-career couples, and fathers heavily involved in parenting (Carnicer, Sanchez and Perez, 2003). These changes have heightened interest in understanding the work-family interface. Family and work domains create the interaction and relevancy with each other.
In the effort to be more understanding of the employees’ needs, more organizations today are trying to instill a “family-friendly policy” in their organizations. This is as a way of winning the hearts of the employees, as well as the organizations’ realization of their role in the society.

The pressures of work, for those in work, have been intensifying in recent decades. Factors such as the advances in information technology and information load, the need for speed of response, the importance attached to quality of customer service and its implications for constant availability and the pace of change with its resultant upheavals and adjustments all demand the employees’ time and can be sources of pressure.

The evidence from the UK, (Wise and Bond, 2003) which has the longest working hours in Europe, shows while the average number of hours worked has been steady for the past twenty years, the proportion working more than 48 hours has increased in the past decade. Also, the intensity of work has increased. Comparative figures for Europe show that the rise in intensity in the 1990s was greatest in the UK closely followed by Ireland, France, Italy and the Netherlands. Intensity was measured through subjective responses to questions about the proportion of time spent working at very high speeds and to tight deadlines. As a result, the demands of work begin to dominate life and a sense of work-life imbalance ensues.

Wise and Bond (2003) have carried out a study in UK which looked at how far organizations are practicing the family-friendly policy. This study looked at four financial services organizations and how these organizations approach the work-life balance agenda.
In the study, it is acknowledged that a major driver for introducing work-life policies had been to recruit and retain quality staff. There are several outcomes of the policy in which the organizations hope to get from. The outcomes are improved recruitment, retention, creating a supportive culture and promoting workplace equality. These were among the key reasons given by the companies for adopting work-life policies and have important implications for future policy development.

This area of work-family research is important in that work-family conflict has been shown to have an unfavorable relation with variety of variables associated with employee work life, home life, and general health and wellbeing; greater health risks for working parents, lowered performance in the parental role, lowered productivity at work, less life satisfaction, anxiety, and work stress (Carnicer, Sanchez and Perez, 2003).

1.2 Statement of Problem

Based on past research, a growing number of studies on the work-life balance issue have been carried out due to the realization of the effects of the demanding work environment in today’s new age competitive world. It was quite recently that this issue has grabbed the interest of researchers. A different perspective has been looked into in order to prove the relations between the employees’ balance in work life and their performance in their jobs.

According to Hyman (2003), work-life balance may have achieved the status of a defining employment issue and some progress has undoubtedly been made toward the introduction of flexible arrangements. However, having said that, not much studies or
focus has been made towards addressing the issue of work life balance effects towards employees’ job performance.

This study is specifically designed to see if there are any relations between hectic lives at the work place and whether there is any interference to the employees’ family organization. Work life balance is harder to achieve nowadays due to increasing work demand, the need for speed and globalization of business.

This affects the health of employees, increased stress level and increased turnover and absenteeism rate which give an impact to employees’ performance. In the long run, the organization’s productivity and performance will be affected. This study is carried out based on the problematic question, how far has family-friendly policies and work-life balance give an impact towards employee’s performance.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The main purpose of this study is to identify work-life balance factors which influence employees’ job performance by looking at employees’ level of job performance in Inland Revenue Board located in Kuching, Sarawak.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

1. Identify the relationship between organizational policies and employees’ job performance.

2. Identify the relationship between supervisor’s support and employees’ job performance.
3. Identify the differences between employees’ age and job performance.

4. Identify the differences between employees’ gender and job performance.

5. Identify the differences between employees’ marital status and job performance.

6. Identify the level of employees’ job performance

1.4 Conceptual framework

A conceptual framework for this study has been developed as shown in the below figure. It is based on the objectives of the study and the knowledge obtained from literature review.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Work-life Balance Factors Influencing Employees’ Job Performance.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES
- Organizational policies
- Supervisors’ support
- Demographic characteristics
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Marital status

DEPENDENT VARIABLES
- Job performance
  (Measure by using perceived employees’ level of job performance)
1.5 Hypothesis

The hypotheses for this research are stated in the form of the null hypotheses. Below are the null hypotheses of this research:

Ho 1: There is no significant relationship between organizational policies and employees’ job performance.

Ho 2: There is no significant relationship between supervisor’s support and job performance.

Ho 3: There is no difference between employees’ age and job performance

Ho 4: There is no difference between employees’ gender and job performance

Ho 5: There is no difference between employees’ marital status and job performance.

1.6 Significant of Study

This study benefits organizations because it focuses on the relationships between work-life balance and job performance. Understanding this problem gives organizations an in depth understanding of how far work-life balance requires the attention of the management, especially in the governmental or semi-governmental bodies in Malaysia. Work-life balance problems have only been recently recognized as a rising phenomenon, even though its symptoms have emerged from the surface years before. In fact, in Malaysia, not much of studies are done to the great lengths in promoting employees’ work-life balance. This study serves as a solution to handling the problem, as well as a guide for management team to address and handle situations related to employees’ work-life balance and job performance.
Apart from the management team in the organization, this study will most benefit Human Resource practitioners in the organization in surveying its employees' job performance level and the factors influencing it. By understanding the root of the problem, ultimate ways and solutions to minimize the effects towards employees' job performance to the specific organization can be done.

Numerous books, article and journals have tried to uncover the problems of work-life balance and its policies, together with ways of implementing them in the organization. However, few researches actually touch the impact of work-life balance towards employees' job performance. For this reason, this study is conducted to contribute to the literature on employees' work-life balance.

1.7 Definition of Terms

Employees' Job Performance
a) Conceptual Definition

Hiltrop and Despres (1994) defined job performance as the value added in an activity or task achieved by an individual at work. Mobberg and Caldwell (1988) defined job performance as employees' level of achievement against the standard determined by the employer. Johns (1992) defined job performance as the degree to which the members of the organization contribute to reach the organizational objectives.

b) Operational Definition

Perception of employees towards their job performance and how work-life balance factors influence their level of job performance. The perception of the overall
performance of employees is looked at and how it work-life balance factors affects the employees' job performance.

**Organizational Policies**

a) Conceptual Definition

Wood, 1999 as cited in Hyman and Summers (2002) defined policy as the use of family-friendly practices in a concerted and coordinated way an underlying commitment on the part of the employer to helping employees obtain a balanced relationship between work and family obligations. Ontario Women’s Directorate (1990), as cited in Neal, Chapman and Dayton (1993) defined policies as the formal or informal ways in which employees’ work and leave schedules are handled.

b) Operational Definition

In the study’s context, an organizational policy is defined as rules either written or unwritten or informal policies regarding the firm’s standpoint of employees’ work-life balance or work-family relationships. The policies here only refer to those related to the work-life balance agenda which includes family leaves, work-life balance programs such as child care centre, family day, recreational activities, and how far the management allows the employees to actually use the policies.

**Supervisors’ Support**

a) Conceptual Definition

“Supervisory support is a multidimensional concept, with components such as encouragement to attend training, goal-setting, reinforcement and behavior modeling all
having been show to increase transfer" (Baumgartel et al., cited in DeSimone & Harris, 1998, p.70).

b) Operational Definition

Supervisor’s support is looked at as an extension to the managerial support, meaning that supervisors are representing the managerial factor, in this research context, the support refers to supervisor’s understanding tolerance towards employees juggling with work and family matters.

1.8 Limitation of Study

There are various factors related to work-life balance that influence employees’ job performance. Only managerial factors of work-life balance are looked at, which are organizational policies and supervisor’s support. This being the case, not all factors are being studied. Thus, the research is not representing work-life balancing factors as a whole.

There are other factors (Gill and Davison, 2001) which have not been looked at; among them are role conflicts, difficulties with childcare, work overload, working hours, and spouse factors.

Beside the above factors, the nature of every industry is not the same. Different industry might have different criteria or work demands which may or may not have the same density of impact towards employees’ work-life balance and job performance. Data collection in this research is only looking at the governmental-link body, which may have different working environment and culture compared to private business organizations.
The study is carried out in one single organization, which is Inland Revenue Board. Data collected may not necessarily reflect the employees’ job performance in the governmental body as a whole. Moreover, compared to other governmental bodies which may differ in its main function, Inland Revenue Board is a company which is operating under strict performance target and output each year.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The review of related literature is presented in this chapter. Aspects which are covered in this chapter are work-life balance concept, work-family policies, Two-Factor Theory, demography characteristics, organizational policies, supervisor's support.

The concepts of work-life balance will be explained, as well as the usage of work-family policies. When talking about work-life balance, these two key concepts are vital and essential in understand what work-life is all about. Two-Factor theory is a motivation theory; however, its usage in the work-life balance context is interrelated. However, not every expects of the theory is taken up for this study.

2.1 Work-Life Balance Concept

To have a clear picture of what work-life balance is all about, it is important to fist understand the term itself. Not many employees actually understand what work-life balance is all about, and understandings from one another might differ. Guest (2001) stated that work-life balance is a form of metaphor, in the English language “balance” is a complex word with a variety of meanings. As a noun, a balance is a set of scales, a weighing apparatus. In the English language, balance is also a verb; as the Oxford English dictionary puts it “to off-set or compare; to equal or neutralize, to bring or come in equilibrium”.

The problems in analyzing work-life balance only begin with the concept of balance, and there is also a need to consider work and life (Guest, 2001). Work can be
initially defined as paid employment. However, this soon breaks down when extra unpaid hours, the time taken to travel to and from work are taken into account.

The same can be said for life or non-work. The term work-life balance is in itself a misnomer and serves simply as a convenient short-hand for work and the rest of life. Family life is only one aspect of life outside work. Leisure analysts draw a distinction between free time and leisure time. Others have explored committed time and free time.

An important part of the policy debate has concerned the importance of family-friendly policies while leaving unclearly specified what is meant by family. According to Rothausen as cited in Guest, 2001, she has presented a detailed analysis of how the concept of "family" has been operationalised by W/O psychologists and other work-focused researchers and offers five different models. In the absence of an agreed definition she suggested that a "realistic definition of family would include all others who meet certain needs or functions formerly thought to be met by the family; this is a functional, or effective, rather than a 'traditional' of legal definition of family" (1999, p.820).

Life outside work also includes free time. This is normally conceived as time when there are no commitments determined by others. It can be distinguished from leisure, which is normally considered to be pursuit of specific activity. The many different terms and concepts lying underneath the term work-life balance itself is complex and diversified, which need a universal understanding and definition of the terms to make things more uniformed.
Table 2.1  Nature, Causes and Consequences of Work-life Balance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Determinants</th>
<th>Nature of the balance</th>
<th>Consequences/ impact</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Contextual</td>
<td>a) Subjective balance – no emphasis</td>
<td>Work satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demands of work</td>
<td>balance – home central</td>
<td>Life satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture of work</td>
<td>balance – work central</td>
<td>Mental health/ well-being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Stress/ illness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demands of home</td>
<td>Spillover of work to home</td>
<td>Behavior/performance at work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture of home</td>
<td>Spillover of home to work</td>
<td>Behavior/performance at home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Individual factors</td>
<td>b) Objective</td>
<td>Impact on others at work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work orientation</td>
<td>Hours of work “Free” time</td>
<td>Impact on others at home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality</td>
<td>Family roles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal control and coping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age, life and career stage</td>
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</table>

From the above figure, demands of work, if balanced, will lead to work and life satisfaction. Demands of home will have its consequences to behavior and performance both at work and at home. Individual factors such as gender and age will impact on others at work and at home. This model represents the balance that one should have be it at work or at home, in order to achieve what is called work-life balance.

Greenhaus (2003) recently distinguished between three types of work-family balance and they are:

1. Time balance (equal time devoted to work and family);
2. Involvement balance (equal involvement in work and family); and
3. Satisfaction balance (equal satisfaction with work and family).