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Work-Life Balance and Employee Performance in Selected Manufacturing Company

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between work-life balance (WLB) and employee performance. Specifically, based on Hayman's (2005) concept on WLB, the authors tested how four dimensions in WLB are correlated to employee performance. Furthermore, employee performance constructs were derived from the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ) developed by (Koopmans et al., 2013). Using a survey questionnaire, this research was conducted with sample of 132 employees from a selected manufacturing company in Johor, Malaysia. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics such as mean, frequency, percentage, and coefficient correlation. The findings revealed overall WLB level and employee performance level were moderate among respondents. A weak correlation was found between WLB and employee performance in the study, but a positive correlation existed. An organization must understand that employees' ability to perform is determined by their opportunity and willingness to perform, as well as how much effort they are willing to put forth. It is less likely that individuals will be helpful at work when role conflict is increased, so organizations can benefit from practicing and promoting WLB.

Keywords: Work-Life Balance, Employee Performance

Introduction

A company's greatest asset is its employees who perform the organizational process and contribute to the achievement of its goals. Organizational viability and efficiency are determined by the productivity and viability of its employees. According to Tamunomiebi & Oyibon (2020), employee performance refers to the level of success that employees have in achieving their duties. The performance of employees plays an important role in determining the achievement of organizational goals, so organizations seek ways to motivate them to achieve great results. Traditionally, human resources professionals have approached performance improvement by evaluating previous performance and assigning rewards as a means of improving employee performance. Today, it is no longer sufficient because it does not consider the intrinsic interests of the workers. Both internal and external strategies have been developed to inspire and persuade employees to perform better in recent years. To increase employee performance, organizations are now implementing high-performance human relations preparation and planning (Virgiawan et

al., 2021). Consequently, work-life balance has become a crucial component of this approach. Work-life balance appears to be an element that influences employees' performance. In order to achieve good employee performance and strong organization performance, organizations should pay attention to the work-life balance of their employees.

The full adoption of work-life balance improves the productivity of employees in most organizations (Khan & Agha, 2013). Flexibility in working hours, leave policies, health and wellness programs, and employee assistance are all part of work-life balance (Werner & Balkin, 2021). Kenyan private universities for example regularly engage in competitive battles for higher employee efficiency in order to remain competitive (Mushemeza, 2016). It has become increasingly important for both managers and workers to maintain work-life balance these days. Recently, more attention has been paid to the pressures work imposes on families and personal lives of workers (Bataineh, 2019).

The purpose of this paper is to investigate

- The level of employee performance and work life balance
- The relationship between work life balance and employee performance

A manufacturing company was the context of the study. The manufacturing sector plays a significant role in the Malaysia's economy. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, this sector's gross domestic product (GDP) decreased from RM 84 229 Million in the fourth quarter of 2020 to RM 81 779 Million in the first quarter of 2021 (Department Statistics, Malaysia). Yet, Malaysia's manufacturing sales rose 15.3% in March 2021, which is RM126.9 billion higher than 2020. Manufacturing contributed 34.2% to the growth of sales value in March 2021, followed by Electrical and Electronic Products with 17.0%, and Food, Beverages & Tobacco Products with 14.9%. Therefore, in this challenging environment, employee well-being is the most crucial factor that organizations should focus on in order to remain sustainable. Due to its implications for employee performance, organization performance, as well as the country's economy, it is important to take note of it.

Literature Review

Employee Performance

Without paying attention to human aspects, production machines alone will not yield optimal employee performance. Employees who are capable, skilled, and responsible are extremely valuable assets for an organization. They are the backbone of the organization. The standards for human productivity stipulate that workers should achieve optimal levels of output. The performance of an employee is determined by the quality, quantity, timeliness, effectiveness, and independence of the work they perform in accordance with their responsibilities (Maryani *et al.*, 2021). The performance of a person during a certain period of time is the result or overall level of success that a person achieves in performing tasks according to various measures, such as work standards, targets, or criteria agreed upon in advance and in collaboration. This is considered a key element in management. Several broad performance categories have been proposed by previous studies, including task performance, citizenship performance, and counterproductive work behaviors (CWB). The concept of contextual performance refers to voluntary, positive employee behaviors that contribute to organizational functioning beyond specific job tasks, while the term CWB refers to intentional employee behaviors that harm the organization and its members. These three job performance domains appear to be empirically distinct based on empirical evidence (Devonish & Greenidge, 2010; Koopmans *et al.*, 2013; Koopmans *et al.*, 2014; Greenidge *et al.*, 2014).

Work-Life Balance

Managing work-life conflicts is at the heart of work-life management activities. The term 'work-life conflict' also refers to conflicts that occur when a worker's work obligations conflict with those of a friend, parent, or any other celebration or leisure activity (Grawitch *et al.*, 2010). The concept of work-life conflict recognizes that most people perform multiple roles (Kalliath & Brough, 2008). In other words, work-life balance activities reduce work-life conflict while also addressing its antecedents, including massive task requests and job pressure. Kalliath & Brough (2008) define work-life balance as the insight that coexisting work and non-work activities encourage growth based on an individual's current life priorities. A person can also achieve work-life balance by engaging in role agreements with their work partners or their family, which are discussed and agreed upon by all parties (Radcliffe & Cassell, 2015).

Work-life balance has four dimensions (Hayman, 2005). Work Interference with Personal Life (WIPL) is the first dimension. Individuals' personal lives can be interfered with by their work. Work can make it difficult for someone to manage the time of their personal life. As a second dimension, Personal Life Interference with Work (PLIW) must be taken into account. A person's personal life can interfere with their work. When an individual has a problem in his personal life, it will interfere with his performance. Personal Life Enhancement of Work (PLEW) is the third dimension. It refers to how a personal life can enhance work. Personal life can affect a person's performance at work. The individual's mood at work may be improved if he feels good about his personal life. Last but not least is Work Enhancement of Personal Life (WEPL). The act of enhancing one's personal life through one's work. A person's work can improve the quality of their personal life. As individuals acquire skills at work, they can use them in their daily lives.

Relationship Between Work-Life Balance And Employee Performance

Numerous studies have been conducted over the years on work-life balance and employee performance. According to these findings, independent variables and dependent variables have a positive relationship. There are several local studies that support this claim, as well as many international studies. Among them are (Dousin *et al.*, 2019; Mmakwe & Ukoha, 2018; Mbanya, 2018; Kasau, 2017). These studies indicate a strong and positive relationship between work-life balance and employee performance. According to Dousin (2019), a search has been conducted to explore the correlation between work-life balance practices and employee job performance, which is mediated by job satisfaction in relation to the correlation between work-life balance practices and employee job performance towards doctors and nurses. Random stratified sampling was used to study doctors and nurses in the East Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak. Validated work-life balance measures investigate four hypotheses: flexible work hours, supportive supervision, job satisfaction, and job performance. According to this study, employee job performance is directly correlated with work-life balance, which includes flexible work hours and encouraging supervision.

Furthermore, Abdirahman *et al* (2018) conducted another study in Malaysia. Employee performance towards management staff in Northern Malaysia region universities was studied in relation to work-life balance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. A significant positive correlation was found between work-life balance and employee performance in this study. A study conducted by Mmakwe *et al* (2018) investigated the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance in the banking sector in Port Harcourt, Rivers state. A high correlation was

found between work-life balance and employee performance. Banking firms can boost employee performance by supporting policies and structures that encourage employees to balance their personal commitments and responsibilities with their organizational responsibilities. In addition, Kasau et al (2017) investigated the relationship between work-life balance and performance among county government employees in Kitui. Among them were top-level executives, middle-level executives, and lower-level employees. Flexibility at work and family policies were found to be significantly associated with employee performance in this study. In light of previous findings, the following hypothesis was developed for this study:

H1: There is a significant relationship between work life balance and employee performance among manufacturing workers

Methodology

Work-life balance and employee performance in the manufacturing industry are examined. For this study, the researcher chooses the manufacturing industry. A cross-sectional study and a quantitative method were also used by the researcher to examine the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance among manufacturing workers. Data regarding the study were collected through a questionnaire. The study included 200 employees and 132 samples were drawn from a Krejcie & Morgan (1970) guide. Our survey was distributed via email and with 76% of the workers returning the questionnaire. The Brough et al (2009) Work-Life Balance Scale was used to assess the work-life balance. This questionnaire measures four dimensions: Work Interference with Personal Life (WIPL), Personal Life Interference with Work (PLIW), Personal Life Enhancement of Work (PLEW), and Work Enhancement of Personal Life (WEPL). There are 25 questions in this section of the questionnaire. To measure the work-life balance, a 5-point rating scale was used, each rated on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Responses to the questionnaires take three months. Next, employee performance was measured using IWPQ by (Koopmans et al., 2013). This questionnaire measures task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive work behavior. Moreover, descriptive analysis (mean scores, frequency, and percentage) was used to assess the work-life balance and the level of employee performance, while inferential analysis was used to evaluate the relationship between employee performance and work-life balance.

Result

In this section, employee performance is divided into three dimensions: task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive work behavior. Employee performance is summarized in Table 1 along with its dimensions. Employee performance was measured as ($M= 2.60$, $SD= 0.481$), which was considered moderate. In other words, when a good work-life balance is emphasized, respondents may perform better.

Table 1

Level of Employee Performance

Variable and Dimension	Finding	Level
Task Performance	M= 3.14; SD= 0.630	Moderate
Contextual Performance	M= 3.06; SD= 0.620	Moderate
Counterproductive Work Behavior	M= 1.36; SD= 1.024	Low
Variable: Employee performance	M= 2.60; SD= 0.481	Moderate

Mean value (Low = 1.00 - 2.33; Moderate = 2.34 - 3.67; High = 3.68 - 5.00)

The findings of work-life balance were divided according to the dimensions of the variable which are Work Interference with Personal Life (WIPL), Personal Life Interference with Work (PLIW), Personal Life Enhancement of Work (PLEW), and Work Enhancement of Personal Life (WEPL). Based on the findings, the work-life balance level in the organization is identified. Work-life balance was considered moderate (M= 3.02, SD= 0.583) according to Table 2. Consequently, workers have a moderately good work-life balance.

Table 2

Level of Work-Life Balance

Variable and Dimension	Finding	Level
Work Interference with Personal Life (WIPL)	M= 3.26; SD= 0.511	Moderate
Personal Life Interference with Work (PLIW)	M= 3.02; SD= 0.628	Moderate
Personal Life Enhancement of Work (PLEW)	M= 2.63; SD= 0.893	Moderate
Work Enhancement of Personal Life (WEPL)	M= 2.67; SD= 0.948	Moderate
Variable: Work-life balance	M= 3.02; SD= 0.583	Moderate

Mean value (Low = 1.00 - 2.33; Moderate = 2.34 - 3.67; High = 3.68 - 5.00)

Based on Table 3, the p value is 0.000, lower than 0.001. There is a positive correlation between work-life balance and employee performance, but it is weak because the Pearson Correlation value is 0.366. The positive Pearson Correlation value indicates that both variables have a positive relationship. The performance of employees can be enhanced or improved by providing them with a better work-life balance provided by the organization. As a result, this study accepts the hypothesis that work-life balance is positively associated with employee performance. Therefore, the lower the negative items are in the work-life balance variable, the better the employee's performance.

Table 3

Coefficient Correlation between Work-Life Balance and Employee Performance

	r	Sig.	N
Work-life balance and employee performance	0.366**	0.000	100

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Discussion and Recommendation

As a result of the findings, organizations need to improve some aspect of their work-life balance practices, programs, or activities. It is therefore important for organizations to organize programs such as employee wellness programs, employee assistance programs, and dependent care programs for their employees. The employees can receive advice from experts to solve their personal and work problems because some of them find it difficult to balance work and life. Organizations should also provide their employees with flexible working hours. The idea is to make sure employees can perform better while also taking care of their personal commitments and responsibilities, which allows them to be able to participate in personal activities and maintain friendships. Furthermore, organizations should ensure the well-being and welfare of their employees so that they will be more motivated and perform better. Employees can receive mental or physical care at the organization's panel clinic, for example. The organization will feel appreciated by its employees, which in turn will lead to better performance for the organization.

Conclusion

The hypothesis of this study has been accepted, whereas work-life balance and employee performance are moderate. According to the study, the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance is weak among manufacturing workers. Accordingly, work-life balance has a minor impact on employee performance. Research findings support and confirm previous studies that investigate correlations between the two variables. It offers a scenario in a manufacturing sector that can be a useful view for organizations and future research to improve performance through a harmonious and positive work environment. The performance of employees can be improved by implementing work-life balance programs such as employee wellness programs and employee assistance programs. Other practices such as mentoring and counseling are also important to motivate employees since they can receive advice and receive motivation. Practicing these techniques can improve both an individual's motivation and performance. Employees who have a good balance between work and life perform better in their work and contribute to the organization's success. Additionally, when employees have a good work-life balance, they are more motivated and productive. The result is that employees who have a healthy balance between work and life are not only able to perform well, but also improve their organization's operations and profits. As a result, both individuals and organizations can benefit from work-life balance.

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