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The Relationship Between Work Stress and Job Satisfaction in Telecommunication Industry: A Case Study of Telekom Malaysia

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Abstract

Work-life balance (WLB) is a serious issue that have impact on job satisfaction of employees. Employees will face difficulty when an unhealthy balance exists which forces them to place work demands above and beyond the demands and needs of family. This research focused on one of the factors of work-life balance which is work stress and its impact on job satisfaction. The purpose of this research was to investigate the relationship between work stress and job satisfaction in Consumer Sales Unit of at Telekom Malaysia, Terengganu. Quantitative data was collected using questionnaires that has been distributed to 28 respondents whose were employees in the Consumer Sales Unit at Telekom Malaysia, Terengganu. Based on data that had been analyzed, work stress had a negative and strong significant relationship ($p < .05$, $r = -0.656$) with job satisfaction at Telekom Malaysia, Terengganu. Hence, it can be concluded that work stress is directly contributed to employee's job satisfaction at Consumer Unit, Telekom Malaysia, Terengganu. It is recommended that its current work-life balance program be improved. Training on stress management and mental health awareness should be planned and conducted. It is also recommended that one employee should be given overtime work not more than two hours per day. This could be done when work schedules be analyzed frequently. By doing this, work could be done efficiently, and more flexibility is encouraged. Lastly, this study can be continued by other future researchers by using different analytical methods such as SEM-PLS.

Keywords: Work Stress, Job Satisfaction, Telecommunication Industry, Telekom Malaysia.

Introduction

For decades, research on work-life balance (WLB) has attracted the attention of researchers in psychology, human resource management and organizational behavior (Haar et al., 2019; Greenhaus & Allen, 2011; Valcour, 2007; Sirgy et al., 2001). Some studies indicated that WLB is related to greater well-being and productivity, while others conclude that high levels of work may cause health problems and lower job satisfaction (Jackson & Fransman, 2018;

Dizaho & Othman, 2013). Work stress is one of the antecedents that affected the WLB. Previous study by Meenu et al (2016); Bell et al (2012) identified that work stress is the major contributor in decreasing WLB. Moreover, the direction of interference of work stress and WLB is gender dependent (Karkoulian et al., 2016) in which the researchers explained that in case of females, relationship of work stress with work interference with personal life was much stronger than the personal life interference with work than males. Work stress or occupational stress, job stress occurs when an individual's capabilities, resources and needs do not match the job requirements. In the workplace, the mismatch between capabilities and requirements of completing a task will have adverse consequences especially job satisfaction (Aruldoss et al., 2021).

Job satisfaction can be viewed as the broader context of the issues that affect an individual's work experience or quality of working life (Arunika & Kottawatta, 2015). Job satisfaction can be understood in terms of its relationships with other important factors such as general well-being, workplace stress, workplace control, home-work interface, and working conditions. Many factors influence employees' job satisfaction, and when employees are satisfied with their work, they feel motivated (Noor, 2011).

Statement of Problem

Job satisfaction concept consists of one's feelings and attitudes about one's job. These attitudes include all aspects of a particular job's negative or positive feelings that are likely to contribute to the development of satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) feelings (Riggio, 2003). According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Colombians are among those who struggle most with their work-life balance. The lives of Mexicans are not in real balance either. The United States and the United Kingdom also perform quite poorly, coming in 11th and 12th of all 35 OECD member countries (plus Russia, Brazil, and South Africa) covered by the 2019 Better Life Index (Statista, 2019). The South American country occupies the bottom position, with a lowly score of 0.9. out of 10 with Mexico following in second last position with a score of 1.1 and South Korea third last with a 3.1 score. The study, which included 20 of the organization's 35 economies, showed that 26.6 percent of workers in Colombia work more than 50 hours a week on average (Stephen, 2019). Previous studies have reported that long working hours increase the risk of depression (Tomioka et al., 2011; Virtanen et al., 2012). A study by Ardayfio et al (2006) showed how anxiety and depression could result from chronic stress. It showed that prolonged exposure to cortisol, the stress hormone, contributed to depression symptoms. In addition, studies in the United States and the United Kingdom showed that depression is one of the most common consequences of work-life imbalance, resulting in lower productivity and higher absenteeism (Layous et al., 2011; Seligman, 2011).

Moreover, based on global workplace provider Regus's online survey, 70 percent of Malaysian workers are reporting to be experiencing more stress-related illnesses due to challenging global economic conditions. The report which covered the opinions of 20,000 senior executives and business owners across 95 countries revealed that 48 percent of the Malaysian respondents felt their stress levels have risen and over 42 percent are sleeping less due to work worries; 33 percent of respondents worry about losing their jobs, 32 percent lack confidence on the sector they are working in; 53 percent of the respondents reported that their families and friends have noticed that they were stressed by work; with another 47

percent said that stress was damaging their personal relationships (Ravichandran, 2017). Thus, environments of occupational tension and psychologically induced stress (employment risk stress) are correlated with burnout, decreased job satisfaction and loss of organizational commitment (Goddard et al., 2006; Jamal, 2005; Noblet et al., 2005). Apart from that, previous researchers concluded that work stress has been found to affect job satisfaction, performance, and turnover intentions in developed countries, but there is little evidence from other countries and especially rural areas. Therefore, the primary purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between work stress and job satisfaction among employees at Telekom Malaysia, Terengganu, East Malaysia.

Literature Reviews

Work Stress

Work stress is an individual's reactions and interactions to characteristics of the work environment that seem morally, emotionally, and physically threatening, mediated by individual differences and/or psychological actions (Ivancevich & Matteson, 2002; Jamal, 2005; Szilagy & Wallace, 1987). Mathew (2013) stated that there was an inverse relationship regarding work stress and job satisfaction, as tension rises, job satisfaction drops. In the view of Evans (2010), work stress in the healthcare sector will contribute to increased workplace discontent, manifesting itself as absenteeism and attrition, both of which compromise the quality of care. Previously, there were many studies conducted by previous researchers regarding work stress and job satisfaction. Based on the study by Umoh & Okon (2019), it was undertaken to ascertain the relationship between work stress and job satisfaction among nurses in Federal Psychiatric Hospital, Calabar. Findings from the research study revealed a strong, negative, and significant relationship between the stressors and job satisfaction among nurses. This could be correlated with another study conducted in China by Li et al (2012) who indicated that work stress had a negative impact on job satisfaction as the rising in work stress could lead to lower job satisfaction and reduced quality of life in which might eventually lead to the employees leaving their profession.

In addition, according to Tao et al (2017), who conducted research on the correlation between work stress and job satisfaction in Community Health Nurses (CHNs) in Southwest of China, indicated that work stress and job satisfaction of CHNs in Sichuan Province were moderate and negatively correlated. This result was consistent with the report by Guo et al (2016), the most prominent factors in work stress were "professional and career development" and "management and interpersonal relationships" that the CHNs perceived as capable of decreasing job satisfaction. In addition, according to the research by Vinod (2018), the researcher stated that the purpose of the study was to focus on the correlation between work stress and job satisfaction of the college librarian in Thane district and it showed that there was a significant correlation between job stress and job satisfaction scale in Aided, Rural and Temporary college librarian. This finding can be related to the Ugoji and Isele's (2009) statement who found that stress has the strongest relationship with job satisfaction because the high level of stress could lead to the low level of job satisfaction.

In the meantime, Vasan (2018) restated to identify the relationship between work stress and job satisfaction among the pharmaceutical sales representatives and the researcher found that there was a negative significant relationship between the work stress and job satisfaction. The working atmosphere of sales representatives was a high stress-based

environment for many pharmaceutical companies (Priya, 2017), and the high level of work stress would cause lower job satisfaction among sales representatives (Patil & Meena, 2013).

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is an attitude in which an individual's behavior is determined by the extent to which he or she is satisfied on the job (Aruldoss et al., 2021). Mukhtar (2012) described three factors affecting job satisfaction which are human factors (personality, employment, marital status, age), social factors (employees, collaboration, supervision) and institutional factors (company size, structured framework, leadership, rules and procedures, technology). In addition, Aziri (2011) stated that satisfied employee is a happy employee and a satisfied employee. This is very true especially when considering the many negative consequences of work dissatisfaction such as lack of loyalty, increased absenteeism, increased number of accidents, etc., the value of job satisfaction comes to the surface.

There is a significant impact of job satisfaction on employees' motivation and the level of motivation has an impact on productivity, hence also on performance (Aziri, 2011). Kappagoda (2012) pointed out that job satisfaction is one of the factors affecting task performance improvement and conceptual performance.

Apart from that, previous researchers had also added the negative relationship between work stress and job satisfaction (Fairbrother & Warn, 2003; Hoboubi et al., 2017). In one study of university staff in Malaysia, it was found that job stress is negatively related to job satisfaction (Ahsan et al., 2009). In contrast, some 30 years back, in one study by Landsbergis (1988), it was documented that high levels of job stress are associated with a lower level of job satisfaction. In literature, it has been well established that job stressors are predictors of job dissatisfaction and turnover intentions of individuals (Cummins, 1990). Employees who can maintain balance in work and life are likely to feel satisfied with their jobs (and non-work activities). One logical explanation for the positive effect of WLB on job satisfaction is spillover, according to which an individual's affective experiences are stored in a psychological space, which can be recalled in a variety of work-life domains such as family, community, leisure, and work (Wilensky, 1960). WLB effected the job satisfaction as employees tend to carry forward the feelings they encounter at home and in life to organizations. Any stress at nonwork tends to result in job dissatisfaction. It was well documented in the literature for over seven decades that happy workers tend to be productive workers (Joo & Lee, 2017).

Hypothesis

Based on the review of the related literature, the following hypothesis was developed.

H₁ Work stress significantly influence job satisfaction among employees at Telekom Malaysia, Terengganu.

Conceptual Framework

Based on the Fig 1, the independent variable used for this study was work stress. Meanwhile, the dependent variable in this study was the variable that reflects the outcome of a research study which is job satisfaction. The researchers correlated both variables to examine the relationship between work stress and job satisfaction among employees at Telekom Malaysia, Terengganu.

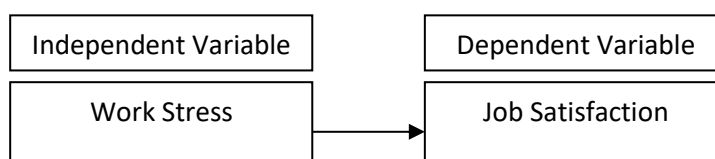


Fig. 1 Conceptual Framework for The Relationship Between Work Stress and Job Satisfaction among Employees at Telekom Malaysia, Terengganu.

Methodology

The research design that was used in this study is correlational research. Salkind (2014) stated that correlational research used to provide some suggestions on how two or more things are related to one another, the similarities they have and how the well specific outcome has been predicted through one or more pieces of information. Variables that relate to one another for this research are Work Stress and Job Satisfaction and such relationship had been investigated at Telekom Malaysia, Terengganu. The respondents for this study were 30 individual employees who are currently working at Consumer Unit, Telekom Malaysia, Terengganu. The samples are derived using convenience sampling techniques. Data was collected using questionnaires, which had earlier been developed and validated by content and language experts. All items were answered by the respondents using five (5) points Likert scale. A total of 30 sets of questionnaires had been distributed to all employees of Consumer Unit, Telekom Malaysia, Terengganu and 28 questionnaires were successfully collected which indicated 93% of return rate. All questionnaires were cleaned to ensure the quality of the data and analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Findings

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Most of the respondents are male which represent 78.6 % of the respondents. Most of the respondent aged between 21 – 30 years old (42.9 %). Majority of the respondents are Malay and most of them are married (67.9 %). 16 respondents had a diploma and bachelor's degree (57.2%) as highest educational level and most of the respondent's income level are in between RM1000 – RM3000 per months (57.1%).

Table 1 shows that the reliability statistics for Work Stress and Job Satisfaction. For each variable, the reliability statistics score was closer to 1. Both variables used for this study indicated a very strong reliability score (Work Stress: 0.862 and Job Satisfaction: 0.840). The closer reliability score to 1, the more reliable would be the best (Sekaran & Bogie, 2010). Therefore, it was found and can be concluded that the questionnaire used accurately measures what it is supposed to measure.

Table 1

Cronbach's Alpha Score (n = 28)

Variable	Number of Items (N)	Cronbach's Alpha
Work Stress	5	0.862
Job Satisfaction	5	0.840

Correlation Analysis

Table 2

The Relationship Between Work Stress and Job Satisfaction

Variables	Mean	SD	1
Work Stress	2.4000	.84503	
Job Satisfaction	4.04.29	.62148	.657**

** Correlation is significant at the level of 0.05 (2-tailed)

Based on Table 2, the findings indicated that work stress had a negative and strong significant relationship ($p < .05$, $r = -0.656$) with Job Satisfaction at Telekom Malaysia, Terengganu. Majority of the employees in Consumer Sales Unit at Telekom Malaysia, Terengganu agreed that Work Stress had a relationship on their Job Satisfaction. Majority of them felt stressed because they need to balance between their job and family matters. Furthermore, most of the employees had to work overtime and work longer hours to achieve the target sales especially during night and this lead to decrease their Job Satisfaction.

Hypothesis Testing and Discussion

H_1 Work stress significantly influence job satisfaction among employees at Telekom Malaysia, Terengganu.

Table 3

The Influence of Work Stress on Job Satisfaction

Variables	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)
Work Stress	-.657
R Square	.432
Adjusted R Square	.410
F Value	.432
Significant F Value	.000
Durbin Watson	1.856

Based on Table 3, the findings indicated that Work Stress significantly influence Job Satisfaction at Telekom Malaysia, ($\beta = -.657$, $p < .01$). Therefore, the H_1 hypothesis which hypothesized that work stress significantly influences Job Satisfaction is accepted. The findings are also similar with the study conducted by Vasan (2018) in which restated to identify the relationship between work stress and job satisfaction among the pharmaceutical sales representatives and the researcher found that there was a negative significant relationship between the work stress and job satisfaction. Hence, the results also identified that work stress decreased the Job Satisfaction of sales representatives. The working atmosphere of sales representatives was a high stress-based environment for many pharmaceutical companies (Priya, 2017) and the high level of work stress would cause lower job satisfaction among sales representatives (Patil & Meena, 2013).

Conclusion

This study was successfully identified that work stress and their influence on job satisfaction. Hence, it can be concluded that work stress directly contributes to employee's job satisfaction

at Consumer Unit, Telekom Malaysia, Terengganu. The work stress of the employees in Consumer Sales Unit at Telekom Malaysia, Terengganu can be reduced by improving the Work-Life Balance Program offered to the employees. Thus, Telekom Malaysia, Terengganu could improve their Work-Life Balance Programs to reduce Work Stress level at the workplace by improving current flexible-working time by offering more flexibility in working arrangement. This was due to the employees tend to work overtime and longer hours to achieve their manager's target. A new flexibility in working arrangement should allow employees to allocate their alternate shift timings and restricted the overtime hours allowed per employees to ensure that employee have a healthy work-life balance. For example, one employee could only work overtime not longer than two hours per day. With restricted hours employees are encouraged to get their work done efficiently and have more flexibility when it comes to personal life. By doing this, it will help to lower work stress level that occurred among employees in Consumer Sales Unit at Telekom Malaysia, Terengganu. Apart from that, the researchers hopes that this study can be continued by other future researchers by using different analytical methods such as SEM-PLS.

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