



Work-life Balance of Malaysian Lecturers

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Abstract

Lecturers have been bogged down with a lot of roles: Lecturer, researcher, administrator, counselor, and many others. Can they juggle these multiroles in their daily life effectively? What factors matter to their work-life balance (WLB)? Lecturer is a crucial asset to universities to ensure excellent students can be produced. This study is to identify main variables that influence Malaysian WLB. 120 lecturers from public and private universities were chosen as respondents. Partial least squares-structural equation modeling analysis was used and the results showed that health factor as a mediator ($P = 0.000$), family factor ($P = 0.000$), work factor ($P = 0.021$), and flexible hours factor ($P = 0.001$) have significant effects toward WLB. Family factor ($F^2 = 0.662$) and health factor ($F^2 = 0.414$) contributed a large effect on the WLB. The value of R^2 for this model with the mediator, is 0.305. This finding is in sightful for the stakeholders of Ministry of Malaysia Higher Education, especially when they want to implement new policy relating to lecturers.

Keywords: Work-life Balance; Family; Work; Health; Flexible Working Hours

1. Introduction

Malaysia Department of Statistics has recorded RM 853.0 billion of gross domestic product in 2015 proven that Malaysia is one of industrious countries in the world. This information has been done by effort of working Malaysians. While pursuing dreams career, or meeting their ends meet, and quality or satisfaction of life, the idea of employee's work-life balance (WLB) starts to be thought of. Working employees are graduates and non-graduates. They are one of the most powerful human resources in one's country. Where do these graduates graduate from? They are the products of universities and higher learning institutions. There are many related issues of the key players in university scenario such as incompetent lecturers and quality of education (Zaliza and Mohd, 2014; Salleh et al., 2015).

In recent years, employers in all sectors are becoming more aware of the necessity to take care of WLB of their employees. This is crucial for the betterment and sustainability of one's organization. Grady and McCarthy (2008) define WLB as "family, community, recreation, and personal time. WLB is depicted as satisfaction and good functioning whether at work as well as time spent at home, with some unavoidable conflicts. In term of meeting the ends meet and pursuing a better life, most lecturers work hard to earn more income. Workers are expected to stay on their jobs for some allocated period and enjoy a relative level of security. WLB is an essential issue whether in public sector or private sector, especially in current education field. WLB has become a trendy research area in many different fields such as psychology, sociology, information technology, human resource management, and gender from past researchers. Although the definition and perception of WLB varies from one another, it depends on how that an individual or a culture of the organization is aware on their society WLB.

Nowadays, those who work for private or public organization have to comply with the company's rules and regulations. This does not guarantee that these working people possess a good life quality

between work and life. Most people like to have their own life balanced while working. They would like to have time for life outside of work and wish to have sufficient time for their spouse, children, family, friends, and social life activities. By having a good life WLB, one could improve employee's commitment in sense of satisfaction at work and at home. Indirectly, employees will receive a healthy WLB and reduce the risk of heart disease or other health problems. Having a satisfaction work condition and ample rest, the employees' productivity and work performance can be better improved.

However, if there is no a proper WLB, life could also have the opposite effects. Those who have some signs of imbalance of WLB suffer from lack of productivity (Perlow and Porter, 2009), work dissatisfaction, poor health, anger, and stress every day, and even worst scenario, burnout the physical and psychological response to long-term stress (Teasley and Buchanan, 2016). Similarly, organizations will also be facing the increased costs in the form of absenteeism, low productivity, health costs, and turnover. Thus, this study focuses on work and life role interference, measured by family factor, work factor, health factor, and flexible working hours of WLB among Malaysian lecturers.

2. Objective of the Study

The main objective of this research is to identify factors: Family, work, flexible working hours, and health that can influence WLB of lecturers in university.

3. Literature Review

Numerous research WLB has been carried out widely (Shagvaliyeva and Yazdanifard, 2014; Saltmarsh and Randell-Moon, 2015; Lester, 2015). The literature can be evident for those general consequences of poor WLB are depression and distress, leading to lower productivity, bad work quality, higher absenteeism, and staff turnover (McPherson, 2007).

3.1. Work factor

Eaton et al. (2015) believed that employers that recognize the importance of WLB and feature flexible policies that respect the demands of the individual's home life create a happier, less stressed, and more productive employment culture. There are variety aspects should consider having best working environment, especially for professional class. The identified issues that related to lecturer's working environment which is workload, superior assist, colleagues support, workplace condition, and job performance. Workload generally refers to the quantity of physical and cognitive work that workers can perform without endangering their own health and safety or that of others, yet still remain efficient. In addition (Njeri, 2014) emphasized that, given the constant, fast-paced changes taking place within organizations and their consequences, the issue of workload on WLB is of concern. Workload constitutes a major risk factor for WLB and the components includes: Heavy workload, emotionally challenging work, greater demands, fair payment, clear and precise job responsibility, good work procedures and reporting relationships, clean work conditions, time spent at work, and family. Furthermore, heavy workload can affect WLB. Heavy work load and workplace culture (McPherson, 2007) arise when there is cumulative demand such that the fulfillments of the obligations of one role make the satisfaction of the requirements of another role more difficult.

3.2. Family factor

Higher levels of family satisfaction can lead to higher levels of work satisfaction, organizational commitment and improved productivity. On the similar front, Kluczyk (2013) postulated that "life satisfaction" could be understood as satisfaction with family life and work life together. Scott et al. (2003) explain that focus on the domains of work and family is essential, as family and work are the most important elements of everyone's life. Any competing demands of work and family life will cause conflict and negatively affect the well-being of workers. These researchers agree that measurable

aspects of WLB are satisfaction, lack of role conflict, and an overall sense of harmony. Balance between family and work domains also involves time balance, involvement balance, and satisfaction balance.

3.3. Health factor

WLB and health are related each other. Health condition may affect employees' WLB. Employment generally dictates the patterns of our lives and these life patterns in turn have an impact on the health of individuals and families. Finding an appropriate WLB is important for promoting health. WLB can be defined as "not automatically about working less but about having control and flexibility over when, where, and how to work." The balance between work and the rest of our lives is partly determined by developments in the labor market, such as working hours and irregular work patterns, and partly by wider developments such as commuting and changes in family life. To promote health, all of these dimensions need to be addressed (Kavanagh et al., 2005).

In a similar front, Beisser et al. (2014) and MOJ Public Health (2014) considered health in term of physical, mental, social, and physiological health. All these terms should be considered stable for a person to manage herself to improve subjective well-being and may result in a positive interaction between mind and body and to well-being. This was accompanied by an increase in brain gray matter volume although the causal relation and direction of this association are still doubtful. Health can be regarded as a dynamic balance between opportunities and limitations, shifting through life, and affected by external conditions such as social and environmental challenges. By successfully adapting to an illness, people are able to work or to participate in social activities and feel healthy despite limitations. Health-care costs are definitely costly.

4. Flexibility Working Hours

Flexible working hours have recently taken a lot of attention from organizations and professional class. Most of the lecturers demanding more flexible working hours because of several urban issues such as traffic congestion is one of the most stressful issues that had been facing by lecturers. Work flexibility implies not only variation in time and place of the job but also sharing of the job, career breaks (maternity/paternity leaves), part-time, and term-time working (Shagvaliyeva and Yazdanifard, 2014). When the worker has some choice or control over the hours or days worked, such scheduling may be used to avoid or reduce work-life time imbalance (Tausig and Fenwick, 2001; Kopp, 2013). On the other hand, a better WLB could be achieved when those lecturers receive a good flexibility working hours.

5. Methodology

The study analyzed the data using SmartPLS 3.0. Partial least squares-structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) method is based on iterative techniques approach that maximizes the explained variances of endogenous constructs (Hulland, 1999). It also well behaved like a multiple regression technique (Hair et al., 2010). This characteristic makes the method of PLS-SEM is valuable for exploratory research. The measurement model in PLS is assessed in terms consistency and validity which includes item loading, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE). Item loadings which is >0.70 is considered as sufficient enough for the variable to be in its construct while a value of CR which is >0.70 is considered to be acceptable in terms of its reliability.

AVE determines the amount of variance captured by the construct from each of the variables due to measurement errors. As suggested by Fornell and Lacker (1981), a minimum of 50% of variance should be captured by the construct. This implies that the values of AVE should be more than 0.50.

The structural model in PLS is examined by evaluating the path coefficients value at 5% level of significance to see the nature of the relationship between the constructs. To validate the model, the diagnostic checking was conducted onto the model by observing the value of R^2 which determine the strength of the model. In addition, effect size is also examined using F^2 value, the value determines

the magnitude or strength of the relationships among the constructs. This helps the researchers to assess the overall contribution of the study. A value of effect size of 0.02 indicates small effects, 0.15 indicate medium effects, and more than 0.35 indicate large effects, respectively (Cohen, 1988).

6. Results

A total of 120 questionnaires were received (80.0% response rate). The analysis used 120 completed questionnaires which are sufficient based on Hair rule of thumb for minimum sample size required for analysis in PLS-SEM. From all the data set, it shows that the participation of female young adults is high (59.2%) compared to male young adults (40.8%). Most of the participant age is more than 40 (33.3%) followed by individual age between 31 and 35 years old (25.8%), 6-40 years old (21.7%), and 25-30 years old (19.2%). This study managed to get a balance combination of lecturer from private and government universities. The summary of the results are displayed in Table 1.

SmartPLS 3.0 was utilized using algorithms and the measurement model was evaluated for its consistency and reliability before testing the structural model. Table 2 presents the results for measurement model which include the factor loading, CR and AVE. All item loadings were above 0.70, the CR for all constructs is above than 0.70, indicating that acceptable reliability and value of AVE of at least 50% which suggests the validity at each construct level. These three diagnostic results show that all constructs are strongly correlated with its own measures variables as shown in Table 2.

After validating the measurement model, the structural model was run using a bootstrapping procedure of 5000 times of resampling, and the results are consistent. The path coefficients in PLS-SEM analysis are shown in Table 3. Suggesting the health factor as a mediator ($P = 0.000$), the nature of the path coefficient shows that family factor ($P = 0.000$), work factor ($P = 0.021$), and flexible hours factor ($P = 0.001$) have significant effects toward WLB. The details of the results are depicted in Table 3.

Meanwhile, the strength of the relationship can be measured by observing the value of for R^2 . The value of R^2 for this model is with the mediator is 0.305. About 30.5% of WLB among lecturers in Malaysia is explained by family factor, work factor, and flexible hours mediated by the health factor.

To measure how much is the contribution for each of the factor, F^2 statistics are obtained. It is revealed that the effect size for family factor, work factor, and flexible hours and health factor is 0.662, 0.033, 0.057, and 0.414. It can be concluded that work factor and flexible hours factor contribute a small effect while family factor and health factor contribute a large effect on their WLB (Figure 1).

7. Conclusion and Recommendation

Results showed that all factors: Family, work, and flexible working hours are significantly related to WLB. Health factor mediates all the variables. Family factor ($F^2 = 0.662$) and health factor ($F^2 = 0.414$)

Table 1: Profile of respondents

Profile	Percentage of frequency
Gender	
Male	40.8
Female	59.2
Age	
25-30	20.0
31-35	50.0
36-40	30.0
More than 40	
Universities	
Government	50.0
Private	50.0

Table 2: Measurement model properties

Construct	Item (variables)	Item loading	CR	AVE
Family	The conditions of my family-life are excellent	0.828	0.858	0.548
	I am satisfied with my family life	0.786		
	So far, I have gotten the important things that I want in my family-life	0.700		
	If I could live my family-life over, I would change almost nothing	0.710		
	My family can be considered as exemplary family Mithali	0.749		
Work	My workload; lecturing, supervising, researching are bearable	0.814	0.899	0.640
	My superior is helpful	0.769		
	My peer gives me full support	0.757		
	My workplace is ideal	0.768		
	I am able to perform my work well	0.887		
Health	I have enough sleep	0.761	0.884	0.605
	I have sufficient exercise	0.716		
	I do regular medical check-up	0.763		
	At my age, my health is satisfactory	0.810		
	At my age, I am able to control my emotion well	0.863		
Flexible hours	I can work well from home	0.749	0.856	0.549
	I can work best at my flexible hours	0.700		
	I can always come and go and at my convenient time	0.833		
	The flexible hours makes me a better employee	0.711		
	I am more responsible individual as I practise flexible working hours	0.799		
WLB	I enjoyed my life	0.892	0.877	0.603
	I love my work	0.926		
	I am committed to my work	0.877		
	I do have leisure time while working	0.704		
	My work stress is bearable	0.731		

WLB: Work life balance

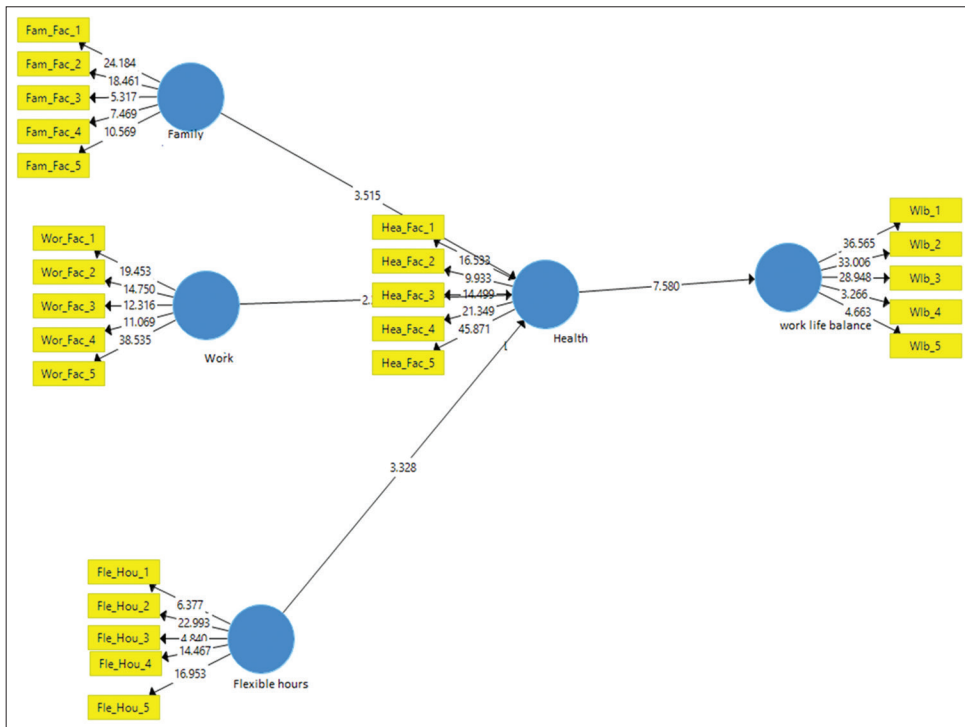
Table 3: Structural model properties

Path	Coefficients	t-statistics	P value	F ²	R ²
Family factor→health factor	0.247	3.515	0.000***	0.662	0.293
Work factor→health factor	0.213	2.310	0.021***	0.038	
Flexible hours→health factor	0.233	3.328	0.001***	0.057	
Health factor→WLB	0.541	7.580	0.000***	0.414	0.305

***Significance at 0.05, WLB: Work life balance

contributed a large effect on the WLB. The finding suggests that most Malaysian lecturers are family man, caring, and really concerned of their health to have a satisfied and well-balanced working-life. The lecturers are satisfied with their family life and have gotten the important things that they want

Figure 1: Structural model



in their family life. Based on the items, in the questionnaire, the lecturers do take a great care of their health by having enough rest and sleep, and regular medical check-up. Not to forget these lecturers are also able to control their emotion well. These positive practices are important to maintain good health. However, despite having a lot of workload: Lecturing, supervising, researching, and doing administrative work for those who hold posts in the department, as well as publishing, the work factor is significant and has only small effect in creating WLB of Malaysian lecturers. It is much hoped that all significant factors considered, especially family and health factors that have large effects should be seriously taken into account by the university management and the government, particularly Ministry of Higher Education, as it will increase WLB and indirectly work productivity of lecturers, lessened lecturers turnover, and absenteeism. For the university, this research can help academic institution to increase body of knowledge of WLB among lecturers. It will help top management to give more attention in term of improving WLB of the lecturers. After all happy and healthy lecturers will produce quality graduates.

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