

Work-Life Balance Post Online Teaching: A Study among Educators in Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to find out the factors of work-life balance among secondary school educators in the state of Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia, after the mode of online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. The three identified factors that shall influence their work-life balance were job satisfaction, job demands, and job stress. To achieve this objective, 184 teachers from a total of 261 teachers in the five secondary schools were conveniently sampled using Google Forms. The collected data was analysed using SPSS software. The result found that only job stress significantly and negatively affected the work-life balance of those secondary school educators. Due to online learning, teachers have to adopt and adapt to the new teaching platform, which requires them to be more advanced and alert to curb all the current issues that come across. Reducing teachers' stress in the face of such work pressures is an appropriate solution for addressing these problems. Therefore, those concerned must play a vital role to ensure that the work-life balance of teachers is secured and well-prepared to face any new upcoming challenges. Thus, the study is significant in providing evidence for developing policies to restore work-life balance for secondary school teachers. This will not only give balance but will also create happy personnel who will contribute more to the organisation.

Keywords: Job Demands, Job Satisfaction, Job Stress, Teacher, Work-Life Balance

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a critical role in realising Malaysia's vision of becoming a developed nation by cultivating a knowledgeable, innovative, and skilled society (Yun & Yusoff, 2017). Since 1957, the Malaysian government has made sustained investments in the education sector to nurture well-educated and committed citizens (Yahya et al., 2012). Teachers are central to this mission, and their job performance is significantly shaped by factors such as work-life balance and professional autonomy (Johari et al., 2018). However, the increasing demands on teachers, particularly those related to irregular schedules and excessive workload, have led to rising levels of stress and deteriorating psychological health (Nurumal et al., 2017). Recognising the need to enhance overall well-being, the National Transformation 2050 (TN50) initiative was introduced to prioritise innovation, inclusive growth, and social welfare (Jayasingam et al., 2021).

Work-life balance (WLB) has become an increasingly relevant topic in both academic and professional settings due to changing workforce demographics and evolving work expectations (Helmle et al., 2014). The concept refers to an individual's ability to manage professional duties while maintaining a healthy personal life (La Hart, 2020). When employees experience a lack of balance, it often results in emotional exhaustion, reduced productivity, and lower job satisfaction (Bataineh, 2019). In education, where the demands extend beyond the classroom into personal time, achieving WLB is critical to sustaining teacher well-being and maintaining high standards of instruction.

The outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020 significantly disrupted Malaysia's education system. In response to the

health crisis, the government enforced the Movement Control Order (MCO), which led to a nationwide shift from face-to-face teaching to remote learning (Wan Mohd Yunus et al., 2020). Schools and higher institutions were required to suspend physical operations and transition to digital platforms, introducing new demands and stressors for teachers (Putranti et al., 2020). The sudden reliance on virtual classrooms blurred the boundaries between work and personal life, compounding the psychological pressures already experienced by educators (Allen & Martin, 2017). Teachers were not only expected to master new technologies quickly but also to maintain student engagement and academic standards with little formal support.

Secondary school teachers in Malaysia, particularly in states like Negeri Sembilan, were deeply affected by this shift. Many faced challenges such as poor internet connectivity, unfamiliarity with online teaching tools, and extended work hours, all while managing household responsibilities. According to Suganya and Sankareshwari (2020), this new teaching environment led to increased stress, job dissatisfaction, and mental health concerns. Rosli and Abu Bakar (2021) further reported that during the MCO, teachers struggled with psychological strain as they adapted to this sudden transformation in their professional roles.

Despite growing international literature on WLB, few studies have focused specifically on Malaysian secondary school teachers and the unique pressures they faced during the COVID-19 pandemic. Much of the existing research has examined employees in the United States (Alexander-Wright, 2020), Indonesia (Putranti et al., 2020), and other global contexts, but there remains a significant gap in understanding how public-school educators under Malaysia's Ministry of Education (MOE) managed work-life challenges during this period. As one of the country's largest government workforces (Federal Budget 2020), the experiences of these educators are crucial to shaping future educational resilience. This study therefore aims to examine the work-life balance of secondary school teachers in Negeri Sembilan about job demands, job stress, and job satisfaction amid the transition to online teaching.

Problem Statement

Work-life balance (WLB) is a crucial component for the well-being and productivity of individuals across various professions, particularly in education, where the mental and emotional demands are high. Teachers, especially those in secondary schools, play a pivotal role in shaping future generations, and their ability to maintain a healthy balance between personal and professional life significantly influences the quality of education delivered. According to Saeed and Farooqi (2014), female teachers are especially susceptible to work-life imbalance due to increasing responsibilities that demand constant attention and energy. Their study revealed that educators in Gujrat faced dissatisfaction due to institutional failure in supporting a fair balance between work and personal life.

The importance of teacher well-being became even more pronounced during the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted traditional education systems worldwide. In Malaysia, the Ministry of Education (MOE) suspended face-to-face instruction and mandated online learning (Rawal, 2021). This abrupt shift placed a heavy burden on teachers, especially in secondary schools across states like Negeri Sembilan, where many educators lacked sufficient digital resources and training to effectively manage virtual classrooms. The challenge of adapting to new teaching platforms while simultaneously handling personal responsibilities significantly increased job-related stress. Approximately 65% of teachers were already experiencing work-related stress before the pandemic (Rosli & Abu Bakar, 2021), and this figure rose during the health crisis, with 78% reporting that their workload had become overwhelming (Aperribai et al., 2020).

Furthermore, educators had to stay constantly updated with MOE directives and rapidly changing guidelines, which added to their workload and pressure. Online teaching required new pedagogical approaches and skills (Stone & Springer, 2019), forcing teachers to redesign lessons while managing unfamiliar technology and ensuring students kept pace with the curriculum. In Negeri Sembilan, many secondary school teachers struggled with unstable internet access, increased administrative tasks, and prolonged screen time, leading to mental exhaustion and emotional fatigue. Studies by Yayla and Eskiciİlgin (2021) and Besser et al. (2020) emphasized that new schedules, increased workload, and lack of boundaries between work and home contributed to heightened levels of stress and decreased job satisfaction.

The intersection of these factors has shown to impact teacher morale and psychological health. Research by Ozamiz-Etxebarria et al. (2021) highlighted that female educator, in particular, experienced heightened levels of stress, anxiety, and depression due to the dual pressures of home and work responsibilities. The long hours required for online instruction, coupled with the need to remain professionally competent and responsive to administrative demands, further compromised their ability to maintain work-life balance. Globally, this phenomenon has led to what La Hart (2020) describes as a universal struggle among professionals to maintain personal well-being amid pandemic-driven changes. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction, job demands, and job stress, focusing specifically on secondary school educators within the public education sector in Negeri Sembilan.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study will be:

1. To examine the level of work-life balance among secondary school teachers in Negeri Sembilan during COVID-19.
2. To examine the positive relationship between job satisfaction and work-life balance among secondary school teachers in Negeri Sembilan during COVID-19.
3. To examine the negative relationship between job demand and work-life balance among secondary school teachers in Negeri Sembilan during COVID-19.
4. To examine the negative relationship between job stress and work-life balance among secondary school teachers in Negeri Sembilan during COVID-19.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Work-Life Balance

Gagnano et al. (2020) proposed the meaning of the work-life balance (WLB).” Work-life balance is the individual insight that non-work and work are viable and promote growth as per the individual’s present life needs”. A new review demonstrated that a superior work-life balance cultivates not just job satisfaction, work execution, and commitment, but additionally life and family fulfilment La Hart, 2020). ‘Work’ refers to paid work, whereas ‘life’ refers to everything else, such as family, friends, interests, and self-care (Tapp, 2018). Generally, work-life balance is when an individual maintains an overall sense of balance in life. No matter how hard an individual tries, personal and professional lives do tend to cross with one another, as per a study done by La Hart (2020). Poor work-life balance can have a detrimental influence on an organisation’s product or service quality, as well as financial ramifications (Awadallah, 2020). The balance of work-life additionally lessens pressure-related results like mental misery, anxiety, tension, and depression (Gagnano et al., 2020). The academic profession fuses a demand that is possibly challenging alongside a wide scope of obligations. People who belong to this profession experience substantially more issues than some other professions in keeping up with their work existence with individual life successfully (Saeed & Farooqi, 2014).

The imbalance of work-life experience by teachers in performing family and job brings about results like diminishing usefulness of productivity and expanding non-attendance among these teachers (Obeidat et al., 2014). Nordenmark et al. (2012) in their study using the European Social Survey (ESS) established that job demand had a significant negative relationship to well-being among employed men but not among employed women. While Aruldoss et al. (2021) found that work-life balance was negatively related to job stress, positively related to job satisfaction, and positively related to job commitment. Employers in recent years are becoming greater aware of the necessity to attend to work-life balance in their personnel. This is important for the sustainability and betterment of one’s organisation (Husin et al., 2018). A study by Hanapi and Nordin (2014) emphasised that one of the most stressful issues that they have to face is the congestion of the traffic, which

caused them to be more demanding for flexible working hours. In addition, the workload issue is also one of the main aspects that can contribute to an imbalance of work-life among teachers in Malaysia.

Additionally, Miryala and Chiluka (2012) found that 73% of the teachers in one of the learning institutes in Malaysia reported that there is no work-life balance policy in their organisation, which resulted in a negative effect on their performance and well-being. A study conducted by Jaharuddin and Zainol (2019) reported that the time spent on the job has increased drastically over time to time which can affect the work-life of teachers in Malaysia can leading to severe physical and mental health issues. Bowman (2017) mentioned that US federal government's model employer-based orientation is arguably an extension of comprehensive work-life balance policies and since the federal government has positioned itself as a model for other organizations, including those in the private sector, it is critical to understand whether its human resources policies are beneficial to personnel's and, in the case of work-life balance policies, what factors influence their effectiveness. This expertise can assist both the federal government and organisations that follow its lead in implementing work-life balance rules in a way that encourages the most widespread adoption and benefits both the organisation and its employees (Bowman, 2017). Tapp (2018) has shown that work-life balance has many factors and impacts such as demography (e.g., gender, age, experience, spouse), organizational identity (which includes policies, programs, organizational culture and support) and pliancy (coping strategies, locus of control, leisure activities and the desire for work-life).

Job Satisfaction and Work-Life Balance

Job satisfaction is the way a person's subjective viewpoint is whether he/she feel about the job and the organisation (Mohammed, 2016). According to research done by Schultz and Schultz (2010), the level of job satisfaction is maximised exposed the job scope like sculptors, authors, educational administrators, teachers, psychologists, food preparers, fabric handlers, packagers, firefighters and so forth. In addition, job satisfaction has not been studied most effectively as an antecedent of preferred behaviour, including challenging overall performance, but also as a cause of counterproductive conduct. Interestingly, job satisfaction is rather strongly related to (self-reported) behaviour that mainly focuses on opposition to the organisation Carson et al., 1991). Hasibuan (2010) stated that job satisfaction is a mindset that is reflected by discipline, work morale and work performance. Job values are the goals to be performed in carrying out work obligations. What you want to achieve is valuable work, which is considered essential by the individual. It was stated later that painting values should be appropriate or assist the achievement of primary needs Malik et al., 2020). Few studies found that satisfaction and desire can be fulfilled by the employees towards the organisations through employee relations, the environment of the workplace, the financial benefits, and the ambience of the workplace (Deshpande et al., 2012).

Research done by Arif et al. (2014) explained that work-life is related to work tasks. Employee satisfaction is determined by the benefits of the organisation. This is because work-life balance is highly correlated with benefits. Programs that give better benefits to employees can boost their level of satisfaction and can lead to a greater outcome for the organisation. As a result, this can also increase the productivity of the organisation. Job satisfaction is linked to work-life balance because the employer has already provided them with conducive amenities and a serene working environment. Job satisfaction is an important aspect of a successful organisation Ayar et al., 2021). It serves both the needs of the employer and employee in any sector despite any sectors. According to research by Irawanto et al. (2021), the job performance and morale of an employee will be influenced by job satisfaction. The satisfaction of the employees can be measured through their job performance, attitude, punctuality and absenteeism Dousin et al., 2019).

H1: There is a relationship between job satisfaction and work-life balance among secondary school teachers in Negeri Sembilan during COVID-19.

Job Demands and Work-Life Balance

Job demands include matters such as time and work pressure, responsibility, role conflict, and computer problems, which were initially defined as those components of the job that need persistent effort and are related

to cognitive and emotional implications (Savage, 2019). In other words, it is the psychological, physical, organisational, and social characteristics of a job that cause strain, be it psychological or physical, which in turn causes an individual to deteriorate (Jamal et al., 2021). Michiels (2019) stated that there are two types of job demands. They are hindrance demands and challenge demands. Hindrance and challenge can also be a motivation factor to the personnel, as a hindrance is the barrier and challenge is the motivator (Michiels, 2019). Another study by Enst et al. (2019) has also cited that role conflict arises when personnel are expected to fulfil unrelated demands from various parties. Here, the incompatible procedures and inconsistent expectations of managers and clients could assist in role conflict. There is a study that shows the relationship between job demand and personal resources (Love, 2019). It is mentioned by Love (2019) that there is a positive relationship between job demand and personal resources. Job demands also have a relationship with the development of health impairments, as mentioned by Donley (2019).

Enst et al. (2019) have noted that role conflict (job demand) has a positive relationship with emotional exhaustion, which might affect the desire for work-life balance. If personnel have more control of their job demands, personal resources (motivation) would also increase, Enst et al. (2019), which could contribute to coping strategies and would have a relationship with work-life balance (Tapp, 2018). Research by Malik et al. (2020) job control and job demands are two significant work domains that can influence a teacher's work-life balance. Factors such as excessive workload, working environment, irregular working hours and poor systems may be the reasons that can lead to deterioration in work-life balance among teachers and even health workers during the COVID-19 pandemic (Althobaiti et al., 2020). In a study by Aperribai et al. (2020), teachers in Chile encountered stress and depression due to high workloads, burnout and exhaustion during the pandemic. Time demands for class preparation and online classes have contributed to greater stress and led to mental health issues.

H2: There is a relationship between job demands and work-life balance among secondary school teachers in Negeri Sembilan during COVID-19.

Job Stress and Work-Life Balance

According to Nabors (2019), employee stress consists of two components: organisational trust and manager transparency. The study done by Nabors (2019) was to clarify that a relationship existed between trust and stress, and between transparency and stress. The importance of employee stress, as laid out in the study by Love (2019), is pertinent to the productivity of the organisation. Subramaniam et al. (2017) also pointed out that employee stress affects employee engagement, motivation and productivity. Bell (2017) has shown that stress levels rise when personnel experience conflict between work and family and will decrease when personnel do not encounter any conflict. According to Kim et al. (2020), due to the current situation, job satisfaction among teachers may reduce as these teachers are facing work stress, role conflict, time pressure and overwork, which can affect their mental health as well. Stress has a significant relationship with job satisfaction as it is the key predictor that may cause a decrease in the level of satisfaction among employees (Hsu et al., 2019).

The study done by Nabors (2019) indicates that a relationship existed between trust and stress, as well as between transparency and stress. Which correlates with organisational identity and flexibility under work-life balance (Tapp, 2018). Due to this pandemic, the way organisations work and the relationship between the employers and workers have been deeply impacted by the transition (Irawanto et al., 2021). This is due to the new job norm that people worldwide have to obey for them to curb from spread of the virus. Other than that, the relation of stress level also has a positive relationship with personal experience conflict (Bell, 2017), and might also have a relationship with work-life balance (Swarnalatha, 2017). Moreover, Nelson et al. (2021) have identified stress and confusion among teachers due to the distance education and abruptness of such closures and poor knowledge received by the students. As expected, groups of teachers with children, those with chronic diseases showed higher stress levels than teachers who do not (Silva et al., 2021). Indeed, some studies have shown that at the beginning of COVID-19, teachers were having symptoms of depression, anxiety, and sleep disturbance, resulting in the deterioration of their mental and physical health (Besser et al., 2020).

H3: There is a relationship between job stress and work-life balance among secondary school teachers in Negeri Sembilan during COVID-19.

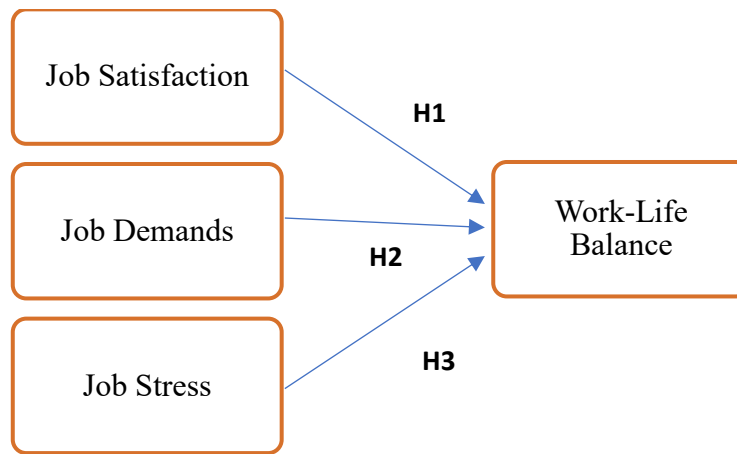


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

This study is a quantitative and cross-sectional study. The study is a descriptive study to collect data pertinent to the Research Questions. The extent of researcher interference is kept to a minimum from the researcher. The study setting is not a contrived setting where everything is done as per usual at secondary school teachers in Negeri Sembilan. The research strategy used is survey research with cross-sectional studies as the time horizon. The questionnaire distributed to the respondents contains 3 parts, namely Section A, Section B and Section C, where Section A contains questions about the demographics of the respondents, Section B covers the independent variables, and Section C covers the dependent variables. The survey method is one of the popular methods used to obtain information about respondents (Grady & McCarthy, 2008).

Non-probability sampling is the type of sampling technique that researchers use to select samples in non-random ways. This technique is usually used by researchers due to cost and time considerations. The sampling design that would be used in this study is non-probability sampling (Bougie & Sekaran, 2019). The sampling procedure used is to select the subject from the population. This study uses convenience sampling as the researcher is facing time constraints due to distancing. In addition, the researcher chose this technique because this sampling is more cost-effective and faster as compared to probability sampling. Ultimately, the goal of sampling is to have a sample that represents the population. The population of educators or teachers in the state of Negeri Sembilan of Malaysia is around 8,024. Therefore, the minimum sample size should be 368 according to Krejcie and Morgan (1970). However, due to limited time and cost, this study successfully collected 184 responses. Those are conveniently available at the time of data collection. Hence, the unit of analysis for this study is the individual teacher, regardless of grade or hierarchy in service.

Questionnaires were distributed among secondary school teachers via electronic or online mediums (Google Forms). The electronic questionnaire is selected as it is easy and has wider accessibility. (Bougie & Sekaran, 2019). A link was provided to the respective respondents through social media messaging platform like group chat of WhatsApp or Telegram of secondary school (either official or non-official group) to complete the survey, and the answers were then collected and saved in electronic form to ease the administration, to be globally reached, and respondents have the flexibility to answer at their convenience during the data collection period. The measurements for each variable in this study were adopted from prominent researchers as per following Table 1.

Table 1. Adapted Questionnaire from Previous Researchers

No.	Items	Source
	Work-life Balance (Dependent Variable)	Tapp (2018)
1	I am preoccupied with my work while I am not at work.	

2	Because of my job, I do not have the energy to do things with my family or other important people in my life.	
3	The time consumed doing my job hinders me from fulfilling my responsibilities.	
4	My energy is drained by my chores, which prevents me from doing another job.	
5	I struggle to balance the demands of work and personal life.	
6	The skills I use on my job help me deal with personal and practical issues at home.	
7	Overall, I feel successful in balancing work and personal life.	
	Job Satisfaction (Independent Variable)	Aruldoss et al. (2021)
1	I am satisfied with the responsibilities given to me for teaching.	
2	I am very content with the work itself.	
3	I am glad about my achievement overall.	
4	I am proud to have the authority in my job performance.	
5	I am satisfied with the working conditions.	
6	I am satisfied with the salary provided.	
7	I am satisfied with my job security.	
8	I am satisfied with the communication received from my superiors.	Shea & De Cieri (2011)
	Job Demands (Independent Variable)	
1	I decide on the order in which I do things.	
2	I decide when I will finish a piece of work.	
3	I set my own pace of work.	
4	I can control how much I produce.	
5	I can vary how I do my work.	
6	I can decide how to go about getting my job done.	
7	I can choose the methods to use in carrying out my work.	Nabors (2019)
8	I have come across problems that I haven't met before.	
	Job Stress (Independent Variable)	
1	Working here makes it hard to spend enough time with my family.	
2	Working here leaves little time for other activities.	
3	I have too much work and too little time to do it in.	
4	Too many people at my level in school/educational institutions get burned out by job demands.	
5	I have felt fidgety or nervous because of my job.	
6	There are lots of times when my job drives me right up the wall.	
7	Sometimes when I think about my job, I get a tight feeling in my chest.	
8	I feel guilty when I take time off from my job.	

FINDINGS

This study focuses on secondary school teachers in Negeri Sembilan during COVID-19. 184 teachers were involved in this study. The teachers' demographic data, specifically their gender, race, marital status, age, highest level of education, and working experience as a teacher, are presented in the form of a table using frequency and percentage. The respondents' demographic distribution is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents' Background

Demography	Sub-profile	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	145	78.8
	Male	39	21.2
Race	Malay	171	92.9
	Indian	8	4.3
	Chinese	5	2.7
Marital status	Single	42	22.8
	Married	142	77.2
Age	30 years old and below	40	21.7
	31 - 40 years old	55	29.9
	41 - 50 years old	45	24.5
	51 years old and above	44	23.9
Highest education	Degree	158	85.9
	Master	26	14.1
Working experience as a teacher	5 years and below	51	27.7
	6 - 10 years	19	10.3
	11 - 15 years	36	19.6
	16 years and above	78	42.4

Table 3. Descriptive, Reliability, and Normality Analyses

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha	Skewness	Kurtosis
Work-life balance	3.18	.654	0.787	-.803	.360
Job satisfaction	3.81	.548	0.831	-.858	1.743
Job demands	3.77	.433	0.711	-.507	1.572
Job stress	3.29	.774	0.862	-.018	-.121

Multiple linear regression analysis was carried out with 3 factors as important predictive variables: job satisfaction, job demands and job stress. The results showed that the prediction model for work-life balance was significant [$F(3, 180) = 33.773, p < 0.05$], and the R-square of this model was 0.360, which is this model explained 36.0% of the variance of work-life balance among secondary school teachers in Negeri Sembilan during COVID-19. The outcomes show a significant negative relationship between job stress and work-life balance among secondary school teachers in Negeri Sembilan during COVID-19, $\beta = -0.570, t(180) = -8.319$,

$p < 0.01$. Meanwhile, job satisfaction, $\beta = 0.018$, $t(180) = 0.255$, $p > 0.05$; and job demands, $\beta = -0.050$, $t(180) = -0.712$, $p > 0.05$ did not show any significant relationship with work-life balance among secondary school teachers in Negeri Sembilan during COVID-19.

Table 4. Coefficient Analysis for Work-life Balance

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig. P
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.963	.535		3.668	.000
Job satisfaction	.021	.084	.018	.255	.799
Job demands	-.075	.105	-.050	-.712	.477
Job stress	-.482	.058	-.570	-8.319	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Work-life balance					
R-square = 0.360, F(3, 180) = 33.773, Sig. F = 0.000					

DISCUSSION

This study aims to investigate the relationship between the three independent variables and the dependent variable. Based on the result of the analysis shows that job stress has a significant and negative relationship with work-life balance. According to Moidunny (2009), the level of work-life balance among secondary school teachers in Negeri Sembilan during COVID-19 is low, which is (mean = 2.45 and, deviation = 0.779). Therefore, the result of the hypothesis testing is based on Table 5.1.2. The table shows the result that H3 has a negative relationship, while H1 and H2 have no significance. In this hypothesis, H3 shows that teachers get stressed during COVID-19. According to Nelson et al. (2021), has been identified stress and confusion have been identified among teachers due to the distance education and abruptness of such closures and poor knowledge received from the students. Research done by Ozamiz-Etxebarria et al. (2021) stated that female teachers face more stress and frustration because their hands are full of commitment and their work, which they must cope with within a limited time frame.

Table 5. Hypotheses Testing

	Hypotheses	Result
H1	There is a significant relationship between job satisfaction and work-life balance among secondary school teachers in Negeri Sembilan during COVID-19.	Not Significant
H2	There is a significant relationship between job demands and work-life balance among secondary school teachers in Negeri Sembilan during COVID-19.	Not Significant
H3	There is a significant relationship between job stress and work-life balance among secondary school teachers in Negeri Sembilan during COVID-19.	Significant and Negative Relationship

COVID-19, a global pandemic that began at the end of 2019, had devastating effects on the human population. Multiple aspects of daily life in Malaysia were disrupted by the COVID-19 epidemic that began in February 2020. All facets of society (political, economic, and social) are impacted. The educational sector is similarly impacted in this case. Since the COVID-19 outbreak, educational institutions have frequently undergone an open-close cycle whereby the students' knowledge process is surviving under difficult conditions, which is the home-based teaching and learning method. This is because this method is difficult to implement, especially given the challenges that teachers, parents, and students must face. Teachers are under tremendous stress. Multiple

variables contribute to teachers' stress. First, students had to execute two tasks simultaneously. These two jobs consist of daily activities at home, such as cleaning and babysitting, and teaching pupils online (Asadullah, 2022). Online learning presents several obstacles, including the inability to regulate student conduct and attendance, as well as several technical issues, such as an inadequate Internet connection. In the end, teachers had to work the entire day due to the incessant questions from parents and pupils in the WhatsApp group. These factors enhance the teacher's workload and stress level.

Reducing teachers' stress in the face of such work pressures is an appropriate solution for addressing these problems. First, teachers must effectively manage time through timetable management and establish a clear separation between break time and work time. At the end of the workday, all communication devices, including smartphones, must be turned off. This can, to some extent, reduce the workload of teachers. Teachers are also required to attend therapy or morale-building sessions to maintain their mental health. This activity is essential to ensure that teachers have a location to effectively release their frustrations and let go of various challenges. This enables the burden to be lessened sustainably. Furthermore, teachers require their area for daily activities such as recreation, movie watching, and family time. In this environment, a healthy work-life balance is crucial. No one was prepared to handle the COVID-19 pandemic when it struck. This includes the MOE, which lacks clear procedures for responding to a catastrophic health catastrophe like COVID-19 (Abdul Rashid et al., 2021). Several problems are evident based on the previous situation:

1. Some teachers are having difficulty implementing new online approach methods in their classrooms. Teachers are underprepared for new millennium education approaches (Industrial Revolution 4.0).
2. The MOE lacks an efficient and practical application for implementing online education.
3. The Internet coverage is still poor.

Before addressing the challenges, the MOE must have a clear Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) manual for dealing with unanticipated calamities. These SOPs must clearly outline the plans and methods for ensuring that the education system continues to function in the event of an emergency. This can serve as a guideline for the MOE in the event of future catastrophes. Second, teachers must receive more advanced teaching training, particularly in kaboutar technology. Continuous training with more challenging and advanced training programmes is required to ensure that teachers are more skilled and highly competent (Asadullah, 2022). The practical aspect must also be implemented regularly. MOE should hold online learning simulations so that teachers and students are familiar with this situation. With theoretical and practical preparation, this situation can provide teachers and students with a major skill set for handling emergencies like COVID-19. Finally, the government must collaborate with the private sector to create sophisticated teaching applications to ensure that the teaching process runs smoothly. The application created must have a comprehensive function, such as the ability to be used for student exercises, activities, teaching, and note-taking. Collaboration with the private sector ensures that developed applications are of high quality, effective, and efficient.

In this issue, it is expected that future researchers will analyse more deeply regarding this matter to improve and reinforce new ideas. Hence, the following researchers can proceed with more schools to get better opinions and views to get concrete and holistic results. Furthermore, the current researcher is only able to analyse the state of Negeri Sembilan due to time constrain and distance. So, the next researchers can prolong their research to the national level. Next, the researchers can conduct their research using different variables besides "job satisfaction" and "job demand". It is because, based on the results from the multiple regression analysis of the current researcher, it is shown that there is no significant relationship between work-life balance and the variables stated. Moreover, new researchers can also focus more on variables such as work environment and job resources. The researcher had to face some obstacles during the Movement Control Order (MCO) since the COVID-19 pandemic had arisen. The period to get data became difficult due to the teachers working from home (WFH) and following the rules and regulations of the Ministry of Education (MOE). In addition, some articles and journals that are available on the Internet need to be purchased for the researcher to view them. Due to this matter, the researcher was not able to view some of the literature.

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, this research proves that "job stress" has a significant impact on the work-life balance of secondary

school teachers during the pandemic. The significance of the study is to provide a better insight into factors that affect secondary school teachers in Negeri Sembilan's work-life balance at their workplace. The organisation could use the study to understand the factors and as evidence to produce some guidelines or initiate improvement activities or make the best possible choices for the secondary school teachers. Besides, this study could also help the upper-level management team to understand and develop ideas for improving the level of work-life balance at a department or unit in the school. Indirectly, the contribution of work-life balance will have a positive impact and outcomes for the secondary-level teachers at Negeri Sembilan. As for other similar organisations, the study could be used as a base for the development or improvement of work-life balance practices at the organisation, especially during this pandemic.

Many organisations that are like the study lack insights which govern the working environment, job demands and employee stress, not only for the teachers but for most employees generally. Furthermore, the form of work-life balance sought by many would not imply equal weight on both sides. The study may also provide evidence that the working environment has yet to be improved, along with the job demands and possibly a new turn for employee stress. Thus, the study is significant in providing evidence for developing policies to restore work-life balance for secondary school teachers. This will not only give balance but will also create happy personnel who will contribute more to the organisation. Furthermore, the findings of this study are also beneficial for future studies of other factors about work-life balance, as the organisation or employers are attempting to figure out what else they can do to give their personnel a better work-life balance, personnel are also thinking of leaving the organisation for the same reason.

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