From Stress to Satisfaction: Work-Life Balance as a Predictor of Job Satisfaction

Siti Nordiana Abdul Malek, Nor Sarah Mohd Nazerin, Noorie Haryaniee Moulton*

Faculty of Administrative Science and Policy Studies, University Technology MARA (UiTM) Cawangan Negeri Sembilan, Kampus Seremban, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

***Corresponding Author**

ABSTRACT

Maintaining a healthy work-life balance is increasingly recognized as a critical factor influencing employee job satisfaction and overall organizational performance. Employees often face challenges in balancing professional duties with personal responsibilities, which can lead to decreased motivation, lower productivity, and job dissatisfaction. This study explores the relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction among staff at University Technology MARA (UiTM) Kampus Seremban, Negeri Sembilan. Using a quantitative approach and data collected from 164 respondents, the findings indicate that flexible working hours, a positive social working environment, effective reward and recognition systems, and the management of job-related stress are significantly and positively correlated with job satisfaction. These results suggest that UiTM Seremban provides a supportive environment that promotes the integration of work and personal life. The study underscores the importance of implementing tailored work-life balance strategies to enhance employee satisfaction and foster organizational commitment.

Keywords: Work-Life Balance, Job Satisfaction, Flexible Working Hours, Organizational Support, Workplace Environment

INTRODUCTION

Research Background

Job satisfaction plays a pivotal role in influencing workplace outcomes, including employee performance, absenteeism, and turnover rates. Vroom (1964) defined job satisfaction as an affective orientation toward one's work, job satisfaction is not only a key determinant of professional success but also contributes significantly to an individual's quality of life, including social relationships, family dynamics, and health. Recent studies have indicated that job satisfaction is closely linked to the ability to achieve a fulfilling personal life. For example, Victoria et al. (2019) suggest that a positive family life is often associated with higher levels of workplace success and overall fulfilment. Additionally, French et al. (2020) highlights that factors such as flexible work schedules, autonomy, and organizational policies that support work-life balance (WLB) are instrumental in enhancing job satisfaction among employees. Moreover, Luthans and Youssef (2022) examined the impact of telecommuting and flexible work arrangements on job satisfaction during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their research found that employees who were allowed to set their own schedules reported higher levels of satisfaction and better work-life integration, particularly those in industries that adapted quickly to remote work. This finding underscores the importance of flexibility in modern work practices as a driver of job satisfaction.

The concept of work-life balance has become a focal point in international research and policy discussions, particularly in relation to its effects on employee well-being. Kalliath and Brough (2008) define WLB as the perception that work and non-work activities can coexist in a way that supports personal growth and aligns with an individual's life priorities. Greenhaus (1985) further elaborates on the idea, emphasizing that individuals thrive in environments where work and personal life are in harmony, free from negative interference. However, when personal or work demands become overwhelming, they can hinder the other domain, leading to lower job

satisfaction and decreased productivity. Smith and Chen (2021) also explored the role of organizational culture in fostering work-life balance, finding that organizations with supportive cultures, flexible working hours, and mental health resources saw increased employee satisfaction, commitment, and retention. This highlights the critical role of organizational support in fostering a balance between work and personal life, which is integral to enhancing job satisfaction.

In the context of Malaysia, work-life balance policies have become increasingly prominent in both public and private sectors. The Malaysian government has introduced several initiatives, such as flexible working hours, parental leave, and family-friendly benefits, as part of its broader strategy to enhance employee well-being and productivity. Recent studies have shown that these initiatives have a positive impact on job satisfaction, particularly in larger organizations with the resources to implement them effectively. Rahman et al. (2022) explored the impact of Malaysia's Family-Friendly Initiatives (FFI), finding that these policies led to improved employee satisfaction and loyalty, particularly among employees who benefited from extended maternity leave and childcare support. However, challenges remain in the widespread implementation of these policies across different sectors, particularly in smaller organizations, as noted by Salleh et al. (2019), who found significant variability in how work-life balance policies are applied in the Malaysian workforce. Despite these advancements, there are concerns regarding the consistency and effectiveness of policy execution, especially in smaller companies or less resourced sectors.

Statement Of Problem

Despite the growing recognition of the importance of WLB in enhancing job satisfaction and overall well-being, many organizations in Malaysia continue to face obstacles in implementing effective work-life balance policies. According to a survey conducted by the Malaysian Ministry of Human Resources in 2020, only 48% of companies in Malaysia have formal work-life balance policies in place. Furthermore, only 33% of employees in the private sector have access to flexible working arrangements, such as telecommuting or flexible hours, a stark contrast to 71% in developed countries like the United States and the United Kingdom (Labour Force Survey, 2020). This gap in policy adoption highlights the challenges Malaysian organizations face in creating supportive environments that promote employee satisfaction through work-life balance initiatives.

Job satisfaction in Malaysia is closely tied to employees' perceptions of their ability to balance the demands of their professional and personal lives. A report by the Malaysia Productivity Corporation (MPC, 2021) revealed that 73% of Malaysian employees reported high levels of job dissatisfaction due to excessive work stress, long hours, and a lack of family-friendly policies. Employees working in the manufacturing and service sectors face the highest levels of job dissatisfaction and work-life conflict, contributing to high turnover rates and low employee engagement. This issue is compounded by the cultural context in Malaysia, where employees often prioritize work over personal life due to societal expectations. Research by Salleh et al. (2019) indicates that employees in Malaysia who report high levels of work-life conflict are also more likely to experience burnout and increased job-related stress, leading to a decline in job satisfaction. Furthermore, despite recent efforts by the Malaysian government to implement policies such as the Family-Friendly Initiatives (FFI) and the Workplace Gender Equality Policy, the effectiveness of these policies remains inconsistent across different sectors. In 2022, only 18% of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) reported implementing such policies, compared to 68% of large enterprises (SME Corporation Malaysia, 2022). This disparity in policy adoption suggests that the smaller organizations lack the resources or commitment to support WLB initiatives, leaving a substantial portion of the workforce without adequate support for work-life integration. Therefore, while WLB policies have the potential to significantly enhance job satisfaction, the implementation and effectiveness of these policies in Malaysia remain a critical issue. The existing research shows that while larger organizations tend to adopt more comprehensive work-life balance strategies, smaller companies continue to struggle with their adoption and execution, thus limiting their impact on overall employee satisfaction and retention.

Research Objectives and Research Questions

Specifically, this study seeks to address two main research questions. First, it aims to determine the level of job satisfaction among staff at University Technology MARA (UiTM) Kampus Seremban, Negeri Sembilan. Second, it investigates whether there is a relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction among the

staff at the same campus.

These research questions correspond to the following objectives which are to assess the level of job satisfaction among UiTM Kampus Seremban staff, and to analyse the relationship between work-life balance by measured through flexible working hours, social working environment, rewards and recognition, and job stress towards job satisfaction. Addressing these objectives is essential for understanding how different dimensions of work-life balance influence employee satisfaction within the academic environment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Work Life Balance (WLB)

Work-life balance is a multidimensional concept that involves managing the often-competing demands of professional responsibilities, family obligations, and personal interests. Keelan (2015) and Kerdpitak and Jermsittiparsert (2020) define work-life balance as an individual's ability to allocate time and energy across work, family, and personal domains in a way that prevents conflict and promotes overall well-being. Haar et al. (2014) further emphasize the subjective nature of this balance, noting that it depends on an employee's personal perception of harmony between work and life. Konrad and Mangel (2000) setting work-life balance as the successful fulfilment of both professional and personal obligations without excessive overlap, which could lead to stress or burnout. Beyond the individual level, Jensenab (2017) argues that work-life balance policies must be evaluated not only in terms of employee satisfaction but also in relation to their long-term effects on team dynamics and organizational outcomes. In essence, work-life balance is not merely about accommodating employees' needs but also about creating sustainable strategies that enhance productivity, job satisfaction, and managerial effectiveness. Consequently, there are no universal standards for achieving work-life balance, as policies must be contextually adapted to suit organizational goals and workforce diversity.

Definition of Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a widely studied construct in organizational psychology, often defined as an employee's positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences. Rinehart and Short (1993) describe it as the combination of psychological and environmental conditions that lead an individual to express contentment with their job. Similarly, Luthans et al. (2007) and Tschopp et al. (2014) view job satisfaction as a favourable attitude held by an employee toward their workplace, shaped by both affective and cognitive evaluations. Cranny et al. (1992) further explain that job satisfaction arises from the perceived gap between what employees expect from their job and what they receive. Research has consistently shown that job satisfaction is closely linked to employee behaviour and organizational outcomes. Crede et al. (2007) found that higher satisfaction levels correspond with increased employee engagement and lower turnover. Noah and Steve (2012) argue that satisfied employees are more likely to be committed, motivated, and productive. Importantly, work-life balance plays a crucial role in enhancing job satisfaction, as it improves psychological well-being (Haider et al., 2017) and positively influences job performance (Dousin et al., 2019).

Job satisfaction is often conceptualized in two dimensions: affective and cognitive. Affective satisfaction refers to emotional responses toward the job, while cognitive satisfaction relates to specific job elements such as income, working conditions, and hours. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (Herzberg, 1959, as cited in Knight & Westbrook, 1999) provides a foundational framework by distinguishing between motivators (e.g., achievement, recognition) that enhance satisfaction, and hygiene factors (e.g., pay, job security) that prevent dissatisfaction. According to Oshagbemi (1997), motivators are intrinsic to the job and generate positive emotions, while hygiene factors, although external, can significantly impact overall job experience. Ultimately, job satisfaction is influenced not only by job characteristics but also by an organization's support systems. When employees perceive genuine organizational commitment to their well-being—such as through effective work-life balance policies—they are more likely to reciprocate with loyalty, performance, and organizational citizenship behaviours (Krishnan et al., 2018; Abdirahman et al., 2020; Dousin et al., 2019).

Relationship between Work Life Balance and Job Satisfaction

The studies outline four elements of WBL which are flexible working hours, social working environment,

rewards and recognition, and job stress. These past studies related with the relationship between WBL, and jo satisfaction based on the elements.

Flexible Working Hours

Long working hours have become a prevalent practice globally, often contributing to significant work–life imbalance (Lee et al., 2007). Extensive research has established that work demands such as extended working hours, irregular shifts, and heavy workloads are closely associated with work–family conflict and reduced job performance (Burke, 2002; Holly & Mohnen, 2012; Orogbu et al., 2015). Van Hoof et al. (2007) found that excessive overtime leads to increased work–life imbalance across genders, while Guest (2002) noted that persistent time pressures at work can result in employee demotivation and emotional exhaustion. These factors, in turn, negatively affect job satisfaction, as employees perceive a lack of personal time and diminished control over their lives.

Job satisfaction has been shown to decline in the presence of poor work–life balance, with long working hours and rigid schedules serving as key stressors (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). Conversely, studies indicate that flexible work arrangements—such as part-time work, flextime, telecommuting, and job sharing—can significantly enhance job satisfaction by allowing employees greater autonomy and control (Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Michel, 2018). When organizations implement supportive work–life balance policies, employees report higher levels of satisfaction, engagement, and commitment (Matilla-Santander, 2019). These arrangements reduce stress and facilitate better time management, contributing to both improved well-being and organizational outcomes. As highlighted in the HRM literature, flexibility in terms of work hours and location not only fosters a healthier balance between professional and personal responsibilities but also plays a crucial role in enhancing employee job satisfaction.

Social Working Environment

The social working environment plays a critical role in shaping employee experiences and overall job satisfaction. Colleagues are often perceived as a "second family," given the substantial amount of time spent together in the workplace (Sias, 2005; Verywell Mind, 2023). As such, the quality of interpersonal relationships significantly influences employees' emotional well-being, motivation, and engagement at work (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008). Although social dynamics can be complex due to individual differences, organizations can foster a positive environment by establishing supportive structures and promoting healthy social interactions (Beauregard & Henry, 2009). This includes the implementation of open communication channels, clear organizational hierarchies, anti-bullying policies, inclusive practices, and regular team-building initiatives (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012). A workplace that encourages mutual respect, psychological safety, and collaboration enhances employees' sense of belonging, which in turn boosts job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Kahn, 1990; Edmondson, 1999).

Conversely, when employees feel isolated, excluded, or are subjected to harassment, it can lead to emotional exhaustion and decreased job performance (Einarsen et al., 2011). Research has consistently shown that a toxic social climate in the workplace is strongly correlated with increased stress, higher turnover intentions, and lower levels of satisfaction (Leiter & Maslach, 2009). Therefore, cultivating a positive social environment is not only essential for individual well-being but also serves as a strategic tool for enhancing job satisfaction and workforce stability.

Rewards and Recognition

Reward and recognition are essential organizational practices that significantly influence employee motivation, satisfaction, and retention. According to Ndungu (2017), reward and recognition are deliberate efforts by management to appreciate employees for exemplary actions or contributions, serving both as acknowledgment and motivation. Rewards are typically categorized as either explicit such as salaries, bonuses, and financial incentives or implicit, which include non-monetary forms of recognition such as praise, appreciation, or being named "Employee of the Month." These rewards, when distributed fairly and based on objective evaluations, foster a sense of value and belonging among employees. Brun and Dugas (2008) emphasized that recognition is often overlooked in many organizations, despite being a fundamental human need. Recognition policies within

organizations are essential in reinforcing employee contributions and aligning them with organizational values. Tessema et al. (2013), in a comparative study conducted across Vietnam, the United States, and Malaysia, found that non-monetary recognition had a more substantial impact on employee motivation than financial rewards. This suggests that acknowledgment of effort and achievement plays a deeper psychological role in enhancing workplace satisfaction and performance.

Moreover, generational studies indicate that recognition remains a key factor in employee retention across diverse age groups. Close and Martin (2015) reported that Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials all place significant value on both reward and recognition, especially in retaining high-performing talent. Given that Millennials are increasingly represented in leadership and decision-making roles, the strategic implementation of fair, consistent, and meaningful recognition systems is vital for long-term organizational success and employee engagement.
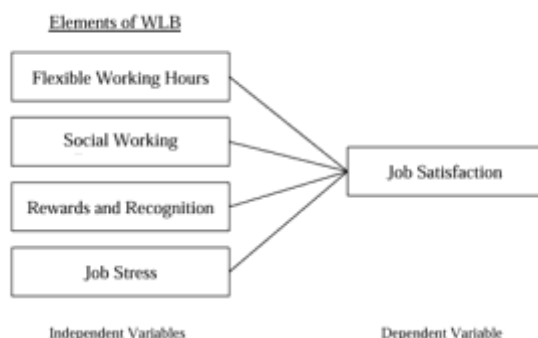
Job Stress

While moderate levels of stress can enhance focus and motivation, excessive stress often has detrimental consequences for both individuals and organizations. Lockwood (2003) notes that high levels of job stress are commonly associated with reduced productivity, low employee morale, and increased job dissatisfaction. Job stress is broadly defined as an employee's experience of tension, anxiety, emotional exhaustion, frustration, or distress related to job demands (Griffin et al., 2010). It reflects a mismatch between an individual's capabilities and the expectations or resources available to meet job requirements, often resulting in cognitive strain and impaired decision-making abilities.

A large body of research has demonstrated that poor work–life balance significantly contributes to heightened levels of job stress. For instance, Shockley and Singla's (2011) meta-analysis of 153 empirical studies revealed a consistent association between poor work–life balance and increased workplace stress across a wide range of occupations. Similarly, Carlson et al. (2009), in a study of 1,159 professionals, found that improved work–family balance correlated positively with job satisfaction and organizational commitment. This relationship is particularly evident in high-stress professions such as healthcare, where poor work–life balance has been linked to elevated burnout and diminished occupational satisfaction (Kaliannan et al., 2016; Kumar, 2016; Rich et al., 2016). In academic settings as well, several studies have reported strong positive associations between work–life balance and job satisfaction (Agha et al., 2017; Bell et al., 2012).

These findings collectively underscore the importance of managing job stress through supportive work–life balance initiatives. Organizations that address job-related stressors not only improve employee well-being but also enhance satisfaction, retention, and overall performance.

Analytical Framework

Figure 1 illustrates the expected causal relationship between elements of work-life balance and job satisfaction, demonstrating how improvements in work-life balance are anticipated to enhance employee satisfaction.

Sources: IV was adapted from CSRs model (John, 2011), a study on 'Does Job Satisfaction Differ at Different Levels of Employees? (Bablu, 2022) and 'A Study of Job Stress on Job Satisfaction among University Staff in Malaysia' (Syed, 2008).

Figure 1 – Analytical Framework of Work Life Balance and Job Satisfaction

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework for this study, which examines the relationship between elements of work-life balance and job satisfaction. The framework identifies four key independent variables, flexible working hours, social working environment, rewards and recognition, and job stress which are hypothesized to influence the dependent variable, job satisfaction. Flexible working hours refer to the degree of autonomy employees have in managing their work schedules to accommodate personal responsibilities, which can help reduce work-life conflict. The social working environment reflects the quality of interpersonal relationships and support systems within the workplace, which contribute to a positive emotional climate. Rewards and recognition represent the extent to which employees feel valued for their contributions, an important factor in fostering motivation and satisfaction. Conversely, job stress is included as a negative factor, as high levels of stress are likely to diminish employees' psychological well-being and satisfaction with their work.

This framework is adapted from established models and prior research, including the CSR model proposed by John (2011), Bablu's (2022) study on job satisfaction at different employee levels, and Syed's (2008) research on job stress among university staff in Malaysia. The framework posits that enhancing positive elements of work-life balance can significantly improve job satisfaction, while minimizing job stress is crucial in maintaining a healthy and engaged workforce. This model provides a foundation for understanding how work-life balance strategies can be effectively implemented to improve employee satisfaction and organizational outcomes.

Research Methodology

This section outlines the methodological framework adopted in this study, which is designed to examine the relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction among academic and non-academic staff at University Technology MARA (UiTM) Seremban 3. The methodology provides a structured and systematic approach to collecting, analysing, and interpreting data to achieve the research objectives and answer the research questions.

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design to explore the relationship between elements of work-life balance and job satisfaction among staff at University Technology MARA (UiTM) Seremban 3. A structured questionnaire was used as the primary instrument for data collection, allowing for systematic and objective analysis of responses.

Primary Data

The core of this study is grounded in primary data collection, which was conducted through a self-developed structured questionnaire. Primary data refers to information collected firsthand by the researcher specifically for the purpose of this study. The rationale for using primary data is to gather current, specific, and contextually relevant information directly from the target population—academic and non-academic staff at University Technology MARA (UiTM) Kampus Seremban.

The questionnaire was designed based on the research objectives and literature review, and it was structured into six sections. Section A collected demographic data such as gender, age, department, years of experience, and education level. Section B measured the dependent variable, job satisfaction, while Sections C to F assessed the independent variables: flexible working hours, social working environment, rewards and recognition, and job stress. A Likert scale was used for responses, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

The questionnaire was distributed to a randomly selected sample of 164 respondents from a total population of 297 UiTM Seremban staff members. The Simple Random Sampling (SRS) technique was employed to ensure that every member of the population had an equal chance of being selected. The Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table was referred to for determining the appropriate sample size.

Population and Sampling Technique

The population for this study consisted of 297 academic and non-academic staff members at UiTM Seremban 3. To ensure representativeness, the Simple Random Sampling (SRS) technique was employed, giving everyone

an equal chance of being selected. Based on the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size table, a total of 164 respondents were identified as the appropriate sample size for this population.

Research Instrument

Data were collected using a self-developed questionnaire constructed in alignment with the research objectives. The questionnaire was divided into six sections:

1. Section A: Respondents' demographic information
2. Section B: Job satisfaction (dependent variable)
3. Sections C to F: Independent variables – Flexible working hours, social working environment, rewards and recognition, and job stress

Each item was rated using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), allowing for measurement of perceptions and attitudes.

Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaires were distributed in both online and paper formats to facilitate response from all selected staff. Participation was voluntary, and anonymity was ensured to maintain data integrity and encourage honest responses.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 26.0, selected for its reliability and ease of use in handling quantitative data (Field, 2009). Two levels of analysis were conducted:

1. Descriptive Statistics: Used to analyze demographic data and determine the overall level of job satisfaction (Research Objective 1).
2. Pearson Correlation Analysis: Applied to examine the relationships between the elements of work-life balance and job satisfaction (Research Objective 2).

This structured analytical approach provided valuable insights into how work-life balance components affect employee satisfaction in a higher education setting.

Hypotheses

This study aims to examine the relationship between various elements of work-life balance and job satisfaction among staff at University Technology MARA (UiTM) Seremban 3. Based on the research objectives and supporting literature, the following hypotheses were developed:

- **H_{01}**: There is no significant relationship between flexible working hours and job satisfaction among UiTM Seremban 3 staff.

- **H_{11}**: There is a significant relationship between flexible working hours and job satisfaction among UiTM Seremban 3 staff.

- **H_{02}**: There is no significant relationship between the social working environment and job satisfaction among UiTM Seremban 3 staff.

- **H_{12}**: There is a significant relationship between the social working environment and job satisfaction among UiTM Seremban 3 staff.

- **H_{03}**: There is no significant relationship between rewards and recognition and job satisfaction among UiTM Seremban 3 staff.

- **H_{13}**: There is a significant relationship between rewards and recognition and job satisfaction among UiTM Seremban 3 staff.

- **H$_{04}$**: There is no significant relationship between job stress and job satisfaction among UiTM Seremban 3 staff.

- **H$_{14}$**: There is a significant relationship between job stress and job satisfaction among UiTM Seremban 3 staff.

These hypotheses were tested using Pearson correlation analysis, with a significance level of *p* < .05.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Findings for Demographic Profile

No.	Profile	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1	Gender	Male	63	38.4%
		Female	101	61.6%
2	Age	21–30 years	66	40.2%
		31–40 years	67	40.9%
		41–50 years	30	18.3%
		Others	1	0.6%
3	Department/Faculty	FSPPP	63	38.4%
		FSKM	35	21.3%
		FSR	29	17.7%
		Others	37	22.6%
4	Years of Experience	1–4 years	79	48.2%
		5–9 years	38	23.2%
		10 years and above	47	28.7%
5	Education Level	Degree	70	42.7%
		Master	58	35.4%
		PhD	36	22.0%

Table 1 – Demographic profiles

A total of 164 staff members participated in the study. The majority were female (61.6%), while male respondents accounted for 38.4%. In terms of age, the largest age groups were 21–30 years (40.2%) and 31–40 years (40.9%), followed by those aged 41–50 years (18.3%), with a small percentage (0.6%) in the "Others" category. Respondents represented various departments, with the Faculty of Administrative Science and Policy Studies (FSPPP) making up the largest group at 38.4%, followed by Faculty of Computer and Mathematical Sciences (FSKM) at 21.3%, Faculty of Sports Science and Recreation (FSR) at 17.7%, and others at 22.6%. Regarding years of work experience, nearly half of the respondents (48.2%) had 1–4 years of experience, while 23.2% had 5–9 years, and 28.7% had 10 years or more. As for educational background, most held a bachelor's degree (42.7%), followed by master's degree holders (35.4%), and PhD holders (22%).

Findings for Level of burnout

This section presents analysed data to answer research question 1: what is the level of satisfaction among staff

at University Technology MARA (UiTM) Kampus Seremban, Negeri Sembilan?

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Job Satisfaction	164	4.018	0.526

Table 2 - Level of satisfaction among staff at University Technology MARA (UiTM) Kampus Seremban, Negeri Sembilan

Based on the table above, the descriptive analysis shows that the mean score for job satisfaction among staff at UiTM Seremban 3 is 4.018, with a standard deviation of 0.526. Job satisfaction was measured using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree. This mean score falls within the high-level range (3.68–5.00), indicating that respondents generally reported a high level of satisfaction with their jobs in relation to work-life balance. The results suggest that, overall, staff members perceive their work environment and personal life to be positively aligned, contributing to a sense of fulfilment and satisfaction in their roles.

Findings of the relationships between work life balance and job satisfaction among staff

This section presents data to answer research question 2: is there any relationships between work life balance and job satisfaction among staff in University Technology MARA (UiTM) Kampus Seremban, Negeri Sembilan?

The results from the Pearson correlation analysis are summarized in Table 3. The analysis revealed that all four independent variables such as flexible working hours, social working environment, rewards and recognition, and job stress had a positive and statistically significant relationship with the dependent variable, job satisfaction

Variable	Pearson Correlation (r)	Sig. (2-tailed)
Flexible Working Hours	0.433	0.000
Social Working Environment	0.522	0.000
Rewards and Recognition	0.537	0.000
Job Stress	0.550	0.000

Table 3 - Correlation result between work life balance and job satisfaction among staff

The strongest correlation was observed between job stress and job satisfaction ($r = 0.550$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that effectively managing job stress is crucial to improving employee satisfaction. This was followed by rewards and recognition ($r = 0.537$, $p < 0.01$), social working environment ($r = 0.522$, $p < 0.01$), and flexible working hours ($r = 0.433$, $p < 0.01$).

Since all variables show positive and significant relationships, this provides strong empirical support for the acceptance of all alternative hypotheses (Ha1 to Ha4) and the rejection of the null hypotheses (H0). Thus, the findings confirm that each element of work-life balance significantly contributes to job satisfaction among UiTM Seremban staff.

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to explore the relationship between elements of work-life balance and job satisfaction among staff at University Technology MARA (UiTM) Kampus Seremban, Negeri Sembilan. The discussion is structured based on the research objectives and supported by relevant literature and hypothesis testing results.

Research Objective 1: To Determine the Level of Job Satisfaction Among Staff at UiTM Seremban 3

The descriptive analysis revealed a high level of job satisfaction, with a mean score of 4.018, indicating that

most staff members generally feel positive about their jobs. This finding aligns with previous studies that associate supportive work environments with increased job satisfaction. For example, Carlson et al. (2009) and Agha et al. (2017) noted that when employees perceive a healthy work-life balance, they are more likely to express satisfaction in their roles. The high satisfaction level among the respondents reflects positively on the institution's current practices related to flexibility, recognition, and support systems.

Research Objective 2: To Examine the Relationship Between Work-Life Balance and Job Satisfaction

To address this objective, four hypotheses (Ha1 to Ha4) were tested using Pearson correlation analysis. The results revealed significant positive relationships between all four components of work-life balance and job satisfaction, thus supporting all alternative hypotheses and rejecting the null hypotheses.

Flexible Working Hours

A moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.433$, $p < 0.01$) was found between flexible working hours and job satisfaction. This supports Ha1 and is consistent with Beauregard and Henry (2009) and Michel (2018), who argue that flexibility allows employees greater autonomy, leading to improved work-life balance and job satisfaction. This finding indicates that when employees can manage their own schedules, they feel more in control and satisfied in their roles.

Social Working Environment

The analysis showed a stronger correlation ($r = 0.522$, $p < 0.01$) between the social working environment and job satisfaction, confirming Ha2. This supports Chiaburu and Harrison (2008), who emphasize that a positive interpersonal climate fosters emotional well-being and motivation. The results also reflect Kahn's (1990) theory that meaningful relationships at work contribute to psychological safety and satisfaction.

Rewards and Recognition

A moderately strong correlation ($r = 0.537$, $p < 0.01$) was observed between rewards and recognition and job satisfaction, supporting Ha3. This finding aligns with Tessema et al. (2013) and Brun and Dugas (2008), who found that fair and consistent recognition—both monetary and non-monetary—is a key driver of employee morale, commitment, and retention. The results suggest that feeling valued enhances employees' emotional connection to their organization.

Job Stress

Interestingly, job stress also demonstrated a positive correlation with job satisfaction ($r = 0.550$, $p < 0.01$), supporting Ha4. While this may seem counterintuitive, it can be explained by the concept of "challenge stressors" proposed by Cavanaugh et al. (2000)—stress that is perceived as manageable and performance-enhancing. However, it is important to note, as Lockwood (2003) cautions, that prolonged exposure to high stress levels can ultimately lead to burnout and diminished job satisfaction. Therefore, stress must be managed carefully to sustain its potential benefits.

Overall, the findings confirm that all four elements of work-life balance such as flexible working hours, social working environment, rewards and recognition, and job stress have a statistically significant and positive impact on job satisfaction among staff. These results reinforce existing literature and underscore the importance of holistic work-life balance strategies in enhancing employee well-being and organizational effectiveness.

RESEARCH RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are proposed to enhance job satisfaction through improved work-life balance practices at University Technology MARA (UiTM) Kampus Seremban and similar institutions. Firstly, the university should consider implementing more flexible working arrangements such as flexible working hours, compressed workweeks, or remote working options. These approaches would allow employees greater control over their time and can help reduce work-life conflict, particularly among those

juggling professional and personal responsibilities.

Secondly, fostering a positive and inclusive social working environment is essential. Management should promote open communication, respect among colleagues, and team-building initiatives to strengthen interpersonal relationships at the workplace. Creating a culture of support and collaboration will increase employees' sense of belonging and overall morale.

In addition, it is crucial to strengthen the institution's reward and recognition systems. A combination of financial incentives and non-monetary acknowledgments—such as praise, awards, and opportunities for professional growth—can significantly improve employee motivation and retention. Employees who feel appreciated are more likely to remain committed and perform at higher levels.

Managing job stress is also a critical component. While certain levels of stress can serve as motivation, excessive and prolonged stress can lead to burnout and dissatisfaction. Therefore, it is recommended that the university provide stress management programs, access to counselling services, and initiatives that promote mental well-being.

Lastly, the university should tailor work-life balance policies according to the specific needs of academic and administrative staff, recognizing that each group faces different challenges and expectations. Regular feedback mechanisms, such as staff surveys or focus group discussions, should be established to monitor the effectiveness of current practices and identify areas for improvement. Through these strategies, UiTM can ensure a more satisfied, productive, and engaged workforce.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction among staff at University Technology MARA (UiTM) Kampus Seremban. The findings revealed that all four components of work-life balance such as flexible working hours, social working environment, rewards and recognition, and job stress have significant and positive correlations with job satisfaction. The results affirm that when employees experience flexibility, support, appreciation, and manageable levels of stress, their job satisfaction increases accordingly. These insights align with past literature emphasizing the critical role of organizational support in promoting employee well-being and retention.

Based on the findings, several strategic recommendations are proposed to further enhance job satisfaction at UiTM and similar institutions. These include implementing flexible working arrangements such as flexible working hours or remote options to help staff balance their personal and professional lives. Additionally, fostering a collaborative and respectful workplace culture through team-building initiatives and open communication is essential to improving the social work environment. Reinforcing reward and recognition systems with both monetary and non-monetary incentives can also motivate and retain talent. Moreover, job stress must be actively managed through wellness programs and access to counselling services. Finally, tailoring work-life balance initiatives to suit the distinct needs of academic and administrative staff, while incorporating regular feedback mechanisms, will ensure continuous improvement and relevance of policies. By adopting these strategies, UiTM can create a more engaged, productive, and satisfied workforce.

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