Work-life Balance of Malaysian Lecturers

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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 faced 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 R². The value of R² 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, F² 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 (F² = 0.662) and health factor (F² = 0.414)

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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.
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.

References


