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The Effects of Job Satisfaction and Work-Life Balance on Employee Task Performance

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Abstract  
This study was aimed to examine the role of job satisfaction and work-life balance on task performance of academic staffs in a selected public higher learning institution in Malaysia. This study which specifically examined the direct effect of perceived job satisfaction and work-life balance on task performance employed a quantitative research method and was participated by 120 respondents. Interviews were conducted with key company personnel to obtain information about factors affecting the academics staff’s task performance. Secondary data acquired from internal and external sources were used to support the primary data obtained to ensure precise analysis and interpretation. The research finding showed a positive association between job satisfaction and work-life balance on academicians’ task performance. The findings also showed that job satisfaction tend to be the strongest predictor of academicians’ task performance compared to work-life balance. Practical implications, limitations of the study and directions for future research were discussed.  
Keywords: Job Satisfaction, Work-life Balance, Task Performance

Introduction  
Employee performance is often considered one of the most important issues in organizational development. A review of literature indicates significant progress in understanding factors that contribute to employee performance in organizations.(Campbell, Ford, & Rumsey,1990; Hye, 2014; Krishnan, Ismail, Samuel, & Kanchymalay, 2013). Job performance is considered as a multi-
dimensional concept by several researchers who did the research on job performance. According to Campbell (1990), job performance is formally defined as the value of the set of a contribution of employee behaviours, either positively or negatively, to achieve organizational goal accomplishment including behaviors that the employees can control within themselves and behavior that is goal-oriented. Borman and Motowidlo (1993) identified two types of employee behaviour that are necessary for organizational effectiveness: task performance and contextual performance. Task performance was defined as behaviours that are directly involved in producing goods or service, or activities that provide indirect support for the organization’s core technical processes (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997; Werner, 2000). Carmeli et al. (2007) pointed that the work outcomes of an employee’s task performance will define the career path of the individual in an organization. On the other hand, contextual performance is defined as individual efforts that are not directly related to their main task functions. Nevertheless, these behaviours are important because they shape the organizational, social, and psychological contexts serving as the critical catalyst for task activities and processes (Werner, 2000).

Researchers found various factors that affect performance of employees. Eysenck (1998) had explained that the ability of an employee to perform depends on the opportunities and willingness to perform that how much the effort the employees willing to put in to their tasks. In one developmental study among teachers, Nadeem, Rana, Lone, Maqbool, Naz, & Ali (2011) found social and economic conditions have an effect on performance. Factors such as low salary, lack of facilities, and status of teachers in society, teachers’ mental health and morale, work stress, relationship with staff and head teachers, and working environment are found to have strong impact on female teachers’ performance.

Although the topic of employee performance has been extensively researched in the western context, there has been very little research on task performance of employees in the Malaysian context. Our aim of this study is to examine how employee job satisfaction and work-life balance affects task performance of employees particularly among the academics staffs in selected educational institutions in Malaysia. Review of literature shows that research on the prediction of employee task performance focused more on the direct effects of various types of single variables (Lim, D.H, Song, J.H, & Choi, M, 2012) but very few study that focused on the combination of two or more variables. As such this study was aimed to examine the effects of two important variables namely job satisfaction and work-life balance in the prediction of employee task performance.

Literature Review

Job Satisfaction and Employee Performance

Locke (1969) defined job satisfaction as the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences as achieving or facilitating the achievement of one’s job values. Lai Wan (2007) stated that job satisfaction is an important goal for organizations to reach, as it has shown that profitability, productivity, employee retention and customer satisfaction are linked to job satisfaction of employees. Studies show that job satisfaction is influenced by various factors. In 2010, Amzat and Idris stated that employees who receive low salaries usually cause
serious upheavals, with regard to job satisfaction, across the world. According to Noordin and Jusoff (2009), salary, status, and age affect academic staff’s job satisfaction in Malaysian universities. Santhapparaj and Alam’s (2005) study among 173 academics of a private university in Malaysia indicates that pay, promotion, working conditions and support of research have a positive and significant effect on the university academics’ job satisfaction. Khalid, Irshad, & Mahmood (2012) indicates that a positive and healthy university structure increases the university academics’ job satisfaction and improves the learning environment as well as increases university productivity. However, in their study, it is concluded that private university academics are more satisfied in terms of pay, supervision, and promotional opportunities, compared to public universities, while public university academics are more satisfied in terms of co-workers’ behaviour and job security.

**Work Life Balance and Employee Performance**

Work-life balance has always been a concern of those interested in the quality of working life and its relation to broader quality of life (Guest, 2002). In the study by Johnsons (1995) todays’ employees are becoming increasingly concerned with balancing their work and family life and they are said to highly value organizations that help them achieve this balance. It is believed that balancing a successful career with a personal or family life can be challenging and impact on a person’s satisfaction in their work and personal life’s roles (Broers, 2005). Lockwood (2003) defined work-life balance as managing work and personal responsibilities. Several empirical studies have showed that the experience of work-life balance is positively related to employees’ performance and organizational performance (Harrington & Ladge, 2009; Parkes & Langford, 2008). More specifically, work-life balance has been shown to have positive outcomes, such as low turnover intention, improvement of performance, and job satisfaction (Cegarra-Leiva, Sánchez-Vidal, & Cegarra-Navarro, 2012; Nelson, Quick, Hitt, & Moesel, 1990; Scandura & Lankau, 1997). Work-life balance also contributes to increasing employees’ in-role performance (Magnini, 2009). The experience of psychological well-being and harmony in life helps employees concentrate on their work, resulting in better task performance. For example, Netemeyer, Maxham, & Pullig (2005) asserted that work-family conflict can yield a negative impact on both in-role performance and extra-role performance.

The theoretical explanation for the relationship between job satisfaction and task performance and between work-life balance and task performance can be referred to the Social Exchange Theory (Blau 1964) which stipulates that when both employer and employee abide by exchange rules, there will have a more trusting and loyal relationship. This is due to social exchange comprises actions contingent on the rewarding reactions of others, which over time provide for mutually and rewarding transactions and relationships (Corpanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Thus, when employers provide a satisfying job environment and accomodates the work family balance concerns and constraints of its employees, this will make the employee feel obliged to respond with a higher level of attitudinal work outcome such as task performance. In this study, it is expected that organizational interventions in the form of creating a satisfying job, will result in good task performance of employees. On the basis of the above discussion on the theoretical and empirical researches related to this study, the researchers proposed the following.
H1: There is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and task performance  
H2: There is a positive relationship between work-life balance and task performance

Methodology
Sample and Data Collection
This study has employed a non-probability sampling, which is convenience sampling method in selecting respondents who are consists of academic staffs in a selected private higher educational institution in Malaysia. Permission to conduct the study was sought from the Rector of the educational institution and data was collected from academic staffs of this educational institution who works in six of its branch campuses. A survey research design was chosen for this study whereby data on employee’s perceived job satisfaction; work-life balance and task performance were collected using a structured research questionnaire.

A pilot study was conducted prior to distribute the study questionnaires to assess the appropriateness of the questionnaire design. Majority of the respondents agreed that most of the items were clear and understandable. Out of 200 questionnaires that were distributed, 146 questionnaires were returned with 26 cases of missing values, leaving a final research sample of 120 cases that can be used in the final analysis. This study recorded an overall response rate of 73% and overall non response rate of 27%. 71.4% respondents in this study were female and 28.6% were male. The ethnic composition of the respondents of this study are as follows; 93.3% comprised of Malays, 3.9% comprised of Chinese, 2.3% comprised of Indians and the rest were from other ethnic groups. About 70.5% of the respondents were married and 28.6% were not married. 46.4% held bachelor degree qualification, 52.7% held master’s degree qualification and only 0.9% held doctoral qualification. The age range of the sample of participants was 24 to 58 years, with an average age of 37 years old (sd = 8.4). The mean organizational tenure was 8 years (sd = 7.1).

Measures
All constructs of the study was measured with scales adopted from existing scales.

Job Satisfaction. This study has adopted the 16-item questionnaire scales designed by Spector, P.E. (1997) to measure job satisfaction. These items measures various aspects of job satisfaction in the workplace such as rewards and benefits, recognition, promotional opportunities, organizational support supervisor support, peer support, work procedures and job demand . A sample item is “The benefits we receive are equitable and as good as most other organizations offer”. Participants indicated their response on a five point Likert-type scale from 1 indicating strongly disagree to 5 indicating strongly agree. A coefficient alpha reliability of .85 has been reported for job satisfaction.

Work Life Balance. This study has adopted the 7-item work-life balance measures developed by Fisher et al. (2003) that was evaluated by the respondents based upon a 5-point Likert-type scale indicating the extent or amount of each characteristics ranging from 1 (very little) to 5 (very
much). An example of the measure is “Because of personal life, too tired to be effective at work”. The coefficient alphas of .60 was reported for work life balance construct in this study is.

**Task Performance.** Task Performance scale with 7-items developed by William and Anderson (1991) has been adopted in this study. A sample item is “I fulfill responsibilities specified in job description” Participants indicated their response on a five point Likert-type scale from 1 indicating strongly disagree to 5 indicating strongly agree. A coefficient alpha reliability of .90 has been reported for this construct.

**Covariates.** Age and tenure of employees were investigated as covariates and potential confounders with reference to past researches (Coffeng et al. 2014).

**Results**
The data collected was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows Version 21.0. A hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted to investigate the relationship between job satisfaction variable, work-life balance variable and task performance. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was measured to investigate the bivariate relationship between all study variables. Table 1 shows the value of means, standard deviations, internal reliabilities and correlations among the study variables. The mean value for most of the study variables were above 3.0. The Pearson product-moment correlation analysis shows that most of the variables are significantly correlated with one another.

Table 1: Means, standard deviations, correlations and reliabilities of measures

| Variables             | M    | SD   | 1     | 2     | 3     |
|-----------------------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. Job Satisfaction   | 3.30 | 0.57 | (.85) |       |       |
| 2. Work-Life Balance  | 3.44 | 0.55 | .45** | (.60) |       |
| 3. Task Performance   | 4.27 | 0.56 | .34** | .35** | (.90) |

Notes: values in parentheses along the diagonal represent coefficient alphas, *p < 0.05; **p < 0.0

Table 2 shows the model summary of multiple regression analysis. The R-square value is 0.136 which indicates that 13.6% of the change in dependent variable (task performance) can be explained by the independent variables (job satisfaction and work-life balance). Meanwhile, the other 86.4% of variation could be explained by other variables that are not considered in this study.

Table 2: Model Summary of Multiple Regression

| Model Summary          | R   | R Square | Adjusted Square | R   | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|------------------------|-----|----------|-----------------|-----|---------------------------|
| Model 1                | 0.369 | 0.136    | 0.120           | 0.53313 |
| a. Predictors: (Constant), Job Satisfaction, Work-life balance |     |          |                 |     |                           |
Based on ANOVA in Table 3, the F value of 8.602 is significant at the 0.000 level. This shows that the independent variables of job satisfaction and work-life balance have a significant relationship with the dependent variable of task performance.

Table 3: ANOVA

| Model      | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F     | Sig. |
|------------|----------------|----|-------------|-------|------|
| Regression | 4.890          | 2  | 2.445       | 8.602 | 0.000 |
| Residual   | 30.981         | 109| 0.284       |       |      |
| Total      | 35.871         | 111|             |       |      |

Table 4 shows the significant effect of each independent variables towards the dependent variable. From the table, job satisfaction has the strongest effect (p=0.004) and is a significant contributor to task performance (B=0.285, t=2.904, p<0.05). Meanwhile, work-life balance seems to show no effect towards task performance (p=0.167) indicating work-life balance is not a significant contributor to task performance (B=0.142, t=1.390, p>0.05).

Table 4: Correlation Coefficient for Multiple Regressions

| Model      | Unstandardized Coefficients | Standardized Coefficients | t     | Sig. |
|------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-------|------|
|            | B                           | Std. Error                | Beta  |      |
| (Constant) | 2.848                       | 0.362                     | 7.856 | 0.000|
| Job Satisfaction | 0.285 | 0.098 | 0.288 | 2.904 | 0.004|
| Work-life balance | 0.142 | 0.102 | 0.138 | 1.390 | 0.167|

Effects of Job Satisfaction and Work-Life Balance on Task Performance

Hypothesis 1 proposed that job satisfaction positively related to task performance and hypothesis 2 proposed that work life balance positively related to task performance. A three step hierarchical multiple regressions was used to test hypothesis 1 and 2. To test these hypotheses, task performance was entered as the dependent variable and two control variables (age and tenure) were entered in step 1 of the regression. These demographic variables were controlled as previous study shows the impact of these variables on task performance. In step 2, the predictor (job satisfaction) was added. Any significant increase in variance explained, as shown by R² in step 2, and the corresponding significance value for beta, would indicate the relationship
between the predictor and the dependent variable. In step 3, the predictor (work-life balance) was added. Any significant increase in variance explained, as shown by $R^2$ in step 3, and the corresponding significance value for beta, would indicate the relationship between the predictors and the dependent variable.

Results of Step 1 of the regression showed that demographic control variables, respondent age and tenure had a significant effect on task performance. In total these demographic factors could explain a small variance (6.2%) in task performance. When job satisfaction variable was entered in Step 2, the total variance explained by the model as a whole was 17.0%, $p < 0.001$. Job satisfaction explained an additional 10.8. % ($\Delta R^2 = 0.108, p<0.001$) of the variance in task performance, after controlling for age and tenure. When work-life balance variable was entered in Step 3, the total variance explained by the model as a whole was 20.0%, $p < 0.001$. Work-life balance explained only an additional 3.8. % ($\Delta R^2 = 0.038, p<0.001$) of the variance in task performance. The result of the multiple regression analysis shows that the job satisfaction has the strongest effect ($p = 0.004$) and significant contributor to task performance. However, work-life balance has no effect ($p = 0.167$) and not a significant contributor to task performance. Between job satisfaction and work-life balance, only job satisfaction significantly predicted task performance whereas work-life balance did not significantly affect task performance. In terms of the hypothesized direction of the relationships, job satisfaction and work-life balance show a positive relation with task performance as hypothesized. Based on the above findings, Hypothesis 1 is fully supported while Hypothesis 2 is not supported in this study.

Discussion and Implications

The result of the multiple regression analysis shows that the job satisfaction as the significant contributor to task performance. However, work-life balance did not significantly contribute to task performance. This result is in line with the study conducted by Hye (2014) who stated that the work-life balance was not found to have a statistically significant impact on employees’ in-role performance ($B = 0.07$, $t = 0.86$). However the result of this study is inconsistent with the findings of other studies (Magnini, 2009) which show that work-life balance has a significant influence on employees’ in-role performance. Because job satisfaction is significantly predicted task performance, it is suggested that the management to focus its attention in providing a conducive work environment that may increase job satisfaction of academicians that will eventually leads to high level of task performance. As working environment was found to be one of the factors that will affect the job satisfaction of academicians of completing their routine tasks successfully, employers can provide an engaging, communicating, encouraging and socializing work environment between supervisors and coworkers. Appreciating and acknowledging the commitment and achievement of their academics by the management is also crucial to improve job satisfaction that may lead to higher task performance. A better grade and salary scheme for the academicians is also can be considered by the management as a way to improve employee satisfaction because salary satisfaction and dissatisfaction determines employees’ level of performance and productivity. For example, the Ministry of Higher Education in Malaysia need to revise the salary grade of academic staffs on a continuous basis. Besides that, additional allowance should be given to Masters and PhD degree holders for both existing
academicians and newcomers. This may increase the level of job satisfaction and boost the productivity of academic staffs.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research
We acknowledge that there are also some limitations in this study although this study has provided some important insights into the relationships among job satisfaction, work-life balance and task performance. First, the respondents in this study are mainly academic staffs employed in a public higher learning institution in Malaysia. Thus, future study should replicate our study using samples taken from different occupations and type of work. Second, the current study has employed a cross-sectional design in which data were collected from respondents at a single point in time. One of the weaknesses in this method is that it does not allow us to draw firm conclusion regarding the causal direction of the relationships among the predictor and outcome variables. Given this limitation, future research should examine the relationships among the variables using longitudinal designs that examine the continuity of the response. Finally, this study has only focused on two variables as the predictor of task performance. Future research can be extended by examining other potential predictors and also examine any potential mediators in the relationship between job satisfaction and task performance and in the relationship between work-life balance and task performance. For example, employee trust towards the supervisor as a potential mediator.

Conclusion
This study has provided an empirical evidence for linking employees’ perception about their job satisfaction and work-life balance to task performance, thus providing support for a key theoretical proposition of social exchange theory. This study found a strong support for the direct effect effect of job satisfaction and work-life balance on task performance of employees. This suggests that employers who focus its attention in providing a conducive work environment that may increase job satisfaction and at the same time provide work life balance to their employees will eventually leads to employees who achieve high level of task performance. This finding reinforces the role of job satisfaction and work-life balance consistent with theorizing in social exchange theory.

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