A CASE STUDY OF A SERVICE ORGANISATION IN MALAYSIA: EMPLOYEES' WORK-LIFE BALANCE, WORK COMMITMENT & LEADERSHIP STYLE ON JOB SATISFACTION DURING REMOTE WORKING

Rozainun Abdul Aziz[1*], Rudzi Munap[2], Sarina Mohamad Nor[3], Nur Farizah Mohamed Zakir[4], Nurul Nadiah Jufri[5], Muhammad Nu'aim Abdul Kadir[6]

[1] Faculty of Business and Technology, UNITAR International University, Malaysia
     Email: rozainun@unitar.my
[2] Faculty of Business and Technology, UNITAR International University, Malaysia
     Email: rudzi@unitar.my
[3] Faculty of Business and Technology, UNITAR International University, Malaysia
     Email: sarina@unitar.my
[4] Faculty of Business and Technology, UNITAR International University, Malaysia
     Email: farizahzakir@gmail.com
[5] Faculty of Business and Technology, UNITAR International University, Malaysia
     Email: nadiajufri26@gmail.com
[6] Faculty of Business and Technology, UNITAR International University, Malaysia
     Email: nuaim2020@gmail.com
[*] Corresponding Author: rozainun@unitar.my

Article Info:

Abstract:

The objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between work-life balance, work commitment, leadership style, and job satisfaction during remote working among non-managerial workers at the workplace of a service organisation in Malaysia. A total of 169 respondents participated in the survey. The findings of the study indicated that a healthy work-life balance and a good work commitment have a significant positive relationship on employee's level of job satisfaction during remote working. Leadership does not have a significant influence on one's level of job satisfaction during remote working. Employees who report high levels of satisfaction in their jobs tend to be more dedicated and productive. The findings of this study can give a potential to make a significant contribution to previous investigations on the management and organisational behaviour of organisations when they wanted to apply work from home policy to their employees. As a direct consequence of this, it is much simpler to address conflicts in the organisation such as high employee turnover, unethical behaviour, low productivity, and excessive absenteeism. In addition, this study provides readers, future researchers, HR managers, and the

government with information that can be helpful in gaining a better understanding of the factors in the workplace that can influence employee job satisfaction.

Introduction

Job satisfaction in remote working is doing work outside of the organisation. An employee may work from home, a partner organisation's office, or a specific location (Revenio Jalagat, 2019). However, because of the COVID-19 epidemic, employees may only work remotely from their homes. Both for the person and the business, there are several benefits, difficulties, and drawbacks. Reduced operating costs, savings on transportation, letting an employee work while away from the office during the Covid-19 outbreak, and other similar events are advantages for the organisation (Revenio Jalagat, 2019).

Problems for the employer include a lack of supervision, inconsistent work hours, poor communication, a sluggish decision-making process, and an increase in spending on communication technology (Prasad et al., 2020). Employees as a whole are impacted by a number of factors, including workplace isolation, increased investment in communication channels, working too much or too little, a lack of management visibility to quantify outputs, delayed decisions, a lack of trust in the organisation's management, difficulties with career development, job insecurity, a lack of work-life balance, social isolation and family disruptions, and an increase in occupational stress (Prasad et al., 2020).

The term "work commitment" is the commitment and willingness of employees to put their effort into an organisation. Commitment is characterized as having faith in an organisation's core ideals, a drive for excellence, and a desire to build enduring bonds with co-workers. Basel Al-Jabari & Issam Ghazzawi (2019) introduced the three-component model (TMC) of commitment in 1991.

According to Barrios & Pitt (2020), leaders and staff must adjust when work moves out of the traditional office and work together to ensure a smooth process of working. Leaders must enhance communication to have more specific communication about the activities that are most essential and become better at assigning the work that the team needs to do (Barrios & Pitt, 2020).

Therefore, this study is to examine the relationship between work-life balance, work commitment, and leadership style and employee job satisfaction during remote work, and to determine if there is an empirically demonstrable relationship between these three independent variables and the dependent variable.

Research Problem and Objectives

One of the major issues experienced when an organisation decided to change their nature of work from office to remote working is the job dissatisfaction due to blurred lines of work and life, increasing work commitment and leadership style during remote working. The COVID-19 lockdown in the year 2020 has caused many businesses to remote work across the world,

including industries that had not traditionally held it. As the pandemic begins to ease, some businesses are likely to continue remote working and virtual meetings. In February 2022, a service organisation, which is named SVO to protect private and confidentiality of the actual name, it has its headquarters in Kuala Lumpur, was up for sale. In order to increase efficiency and agility and to accommodate hybrid working circumstances, SVO stated that it is now moving most of its office buildings into properties owned by the Holding company, along with its other properties in Klang Valley. Due to the hybrid working new environment, the employees of SVO must therefore reflect on both their job and personal lives.

Even though there are benefits to WFH, there are also numerous negative aspects of remote working. According to Becerik-Gerber et al. (2021), people who live alone and work remotely without frequent in-person interactions and social support may have mental health issues such as depression and social isolation. Moreover, Becerik-Gerber et al. (2021) mentioned how in some cases, some parents choose to work late at night or early in the morning when there are no children around since these are the only quiet moments when they can concentrate on their job without being continually disturbed. Ongoing work-family conflict can lead to emotional weariness. Moreover, leaders who are now managing remotely because of remote working, which relies for different skill sets than face-to-face management.

Nonetheless, the remote working study does have people studied internationally. In Malaysia alone, there are only few and not much studies that studied employees' work-life balance, work commitment and leadership style during remote working. This has not been thoroughly studied in Malaysia. According to Mohd Iskandar (2022), as working from home becomes the "new normal" in many businesses, it is hoped future researchers will provide a chance to properly solve and further study some of the issues. This study attempts to fill these gaps in employees' work-life balance, work commitment and leadership style for leaders and management to lay the groundwork for looking at how to support a successful SVO work-from-home (WFH) experience.

Literature Review

Job Satisfaction
Gina & Henry (2018) reported that work organisations should develop into an excellent social system that supports human resources, as these resources play a significant role in accomplishing an organisation's objectives. As such, these will contribute to job satisfaction. Furthermore, employee satisfaction should be given considerable consideration because it is a primary factor that can affect organisational performance. Moreover, Manzoor et al. (2019) found that job satisfaction is a known contributing factor in the development of behavioural organisation and reflects employees' feelings against their work. Thus, the degree to which this fundamental need is increased or decreased has a direct bearing on organisational performance.

Due to the issue of dissatisfaction, it has been described those poor levels of satisfaction are a key indicator of abnormal behaviours, such as turnover and absences (Jabbar, 2018). Identifying both internal and external factors that contribute to the transformation of satisfaction to dissatisfaction can help the management oversight and limit the harmful effects of such motivations. These factors can also influence employee performance in the context whereby both internal and external factors play crucial roles in determining job satisfaction (Jabbar, 2018).

Based on Ebtsam (2019), job satisfaction refers to a person's subjective opinion of both their employer and their job, which includes how they feel about both. Positive and admirable attitudes about one's work demonstrate work fulfilment. Negative and problematic attitudes about the work reveal work dissatisfaction. Each person uses different standards to gauge their level of job satisfaction (Ebtsam, 2019).

Several research on employee dissatisfaction reveal that employees with low job satisfaction are more likely to resign or be absent on purpose as opposed to employees with higher job satisfaction. According to Daisy Mui & Rudresh Pandey (2020) when employees are contented with their jobs, they occasionally show up for work. Additionally, this mentality increases organisational devotion to their organisation. Furthermore, according to Alfina Bakar et al., (2020) when employees are delighted, their productivity and loyalty are higher. In addition, it further stated that job satisfaction is a crucial indicator for every organisation's management performance. It aids in determining at the management level if a business is meeting the needs of its workers.

Work-life Balance

Work-life balance is the state of equilibrium where a person equally prioritizes the demands of one's career and the demands of one's personal life. Lonska et al. (2021) empirical studies explore the ability of Latvian employees in various socio-demographic categories to balance work and personal life. By employing quantitative method from a total of 1006 respondents, it resulted that employees struggled to balance their professional and personal lives, precisely employed women between the ages of 18 and 44 and respondents who lived with young children.

Meanwhile, Palumbo (2020) explores the negative impacts of working from home on work-life balance mediated by job engagement. Conflicts between work and personal life rose for employees who worked remotely from home (Palumbo, 2020). Palumbo (2020) further investigated the negative consequences of working remotely from home on work-life balance, concerning the role of job engagement and fatigue as mediators. This quantitative study adopted the Sixth European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) with a sample of 9,877 respondents.

In another empirical study carried out by Grant et al. (2019), involving 260 e-workers, from 11 organisations, across three sectors resulted that a pattern of significant correlations between job efficiency, relationship with the organisation, well-being, and work-life balance elements as markers of general health. The purpose of the study was to create the new E-Work Life (EWL) Scale and give preliminary validation. The effectiveness of the job, the relationship with the organisation, one's well-being, and the ability to balance work and life are all evaluated by this measure, which also considers other theoretically significant characteristics of e-working used quantitative research and exploratory factor analysis. It will be interesting to assess if individuals are comfortable at work and at home in their personal lives, and whether there is any work-life balance the employee's practise.

Work Commitment

Working commitment refers to the employee's deep belief in and acceptance of an organisation's mission and core values, as well as their exertion on its behalf to achieve these objectives and their fervent desire to ensure they remain a part of the organisation (Basel Al-Jabari & Issam Ghazzawi, 2019). Employee's readiness to support organisational objectives is

referred to as organisational commitment. Employee commitment to stay with a certain organisation is higher when they are confident and remain loyal (Yvonne Gerarda et al., 2018).

At all levels of the organisation, more powerful and efficient motivational strategies are required to increase job satisfaction and loyalty. Besides that, Ali Tatar (2020) have discovered a robust correlation between contentment in one's job and dedication to one's employer. Thus, it further believes that job satisfaction is largely determined by how satisfied the employees expectations towards their organisation.

Leadership Style

Leadership philosophies are important determinants of job happiness and are essential to every firm. In other words, leadership is a management approach that places a strong emphasis on people and interpersonal connections (Bernarto et al., 2020). Masduki Asbari et al., (2019) define leadership as the process through which a leader motivates a group of people or followers to achieve common goals. This outside force is thought of as a stimulator that, when used with the appropriate attitudes or behaviours, may alter basic human behaviour (Bright, 2020).

Numerous worldwide studies have shown a strong correlation between leadership style and employee happiness, demonstrating that external motivation may change how content individuals feel at work (Buil et al., 2019). Currently, leaders are more concerned with working with their peers, advancing and extending the interests of their subordinates not only depending on their own power but to persuade followers to carry out or obey commands (Laukaitis, 2021).

Both transactional and transformational styles are viewed as extremely significant and common in leadership research and organisational practise (Manzoor, 2019). According to Jabbar (2019), transformational leadership is characterised by a focus on inspiring employees to achieve organisational goals as well as helping them grow in their connections, beliefs, values, and insights. Following Gina et al., (2018) and Mesh'al & Adnan, (2018), transformational leaders work to avert workplace issues while assisting their subordinates in being productive, innovative, and compliant in a variety of organisational environments. Transformational leaders work to prevent work-related issues and help their employees be productive, innovative, and compliant in a variety of organisational environments.

In contrast, transactional leadership relates to the interaction between leaders and subordinates. This can be described as a leader-and-follower exchange-based leadership style in which the leader exchanges rewards or punishments with followers for the completion of duties, and in return, expects productivity, efforts, and loyalty from followers (Mwesigwa & Ssekiziyivu, 2020). To satisfy their own self-interests, transactional leaders control the techniques that motivate followers to perform as desired (Mwesigwa & Ssekiziyivu, 2020). During the awards procedure, they are regarded to be less engaging and less enticing, more concentrated on the tasks accomplished and errors made, and avoiding interfering with organisational procedures (Mwesigwa & Ssekiziyivu, 2020). It has been noticed that most employees favour transformational transactional leadership for the same reasons (Mocheche & Bosire, 2018).

In a study conducted with French and non-French employees aimed to investigate the remote leadership behaviours that would have a beneficial impact on the connection that exists between employees and their respective leaders (Jawadi et al., 2021). The study concentrated on a few roles of behaviour to identify which behaviour had the greatest influence on quality

(Jawadi et al., 2021). According to the study while the various positions had varying degrees of influence on employee-leader interactions, the social roles of mentor and facilitator had the most positive effects (Jawadi et al., 2021). More specifically, the study revealed that leaders in open system roles, jobs requiring logical goal-pursuit, and roles involving human interactions all significantly improved the link between these parties (Jawadi et al., 2021).

Methodology

This study employs a quantitative approach. From a total population of 300 non-managerial employees who are currently working in SVO, Malaysia, a total of 169 respondents was chosen using a Table in Determining Sample Size (Krejcie and Morgan,1970). The variables of interest indicated an alpha value of above 0.7, meaning the items are valid and reliable. The questionnaire was distributed via Google form and Table 1 illustrated the reliability test during pilot study.

Table 1: Reliability Test

	n	%	Cronbach's Alpha	No of Statements
Dependent Variable Job Satisfaction During Remote Working	50	100.0	.809	5
Independent Variables Work Life Balance	50	100.0	.784	5
Work Commitment	50	100.0	.730	5
Leadership Style	50	100.0	.829	5

Findings and Discussion

The study framework proposed earlier is to find out the relationship between work life balance, work commitment, leadership style and job satisfaction during remote working. Table 2 illustrated the regression analysis of the variables involved.

Table 2: Regression Analysis

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	2.24	0.24	90.44	0.0000
WLB	0.59	0.34	1.70	0.0900
WC	0.61	0.21	2.83	0.0050
LS	-1.08	0.31	-3.46	0.0007

R-squared = 0.08   **F-statistic** = 4.79

Adj. R-squared = 0.06   **Prob (F-statistic)** = 0.003

$$JSDR = 2.24 + 0.59\ WLB + 0.61\ WC - 1.08\ LS$$
$$(0.00)** \quad (0.09)* \quad (0.005)** \quad (0.0007)***$$

The p-value for work-life balance is 0.09 which is significant at 10 percent significance level. Therefore, the result can conclude there is positive impact on job satisfaction during remote working in SVO. The value of coefficient for WLB is 0.59 indicating that when WLB increases by one percent, then JSDR will also increase by 0.59% while assuming all other variables remain constant. Consequently, the positive value indicating that the WLB is positively impacting the dependent variable, JSDR. It shows that work-life balance has a significant impact on employees' job satisfaction during remote working in SVO.

The p-value of WC is 0.005 at 5 percent level of significance indicating there is significant impact of JSDR by WC. Hence, the result concluded that work commitment has a positive impact on job satisfaction during remote working in SVO. The coefficient value of WC is 0.62 shows that if WC increases in one percent, JSDR will increase by 0.6% while assuming other variables remain constant. The negative value shows that there is a positive impact on the JSDR by WC. It shows that employees' work commitment has a significant impact on employees' jobs satisfaction during remote working in SVO.

The p-value of LS is 0.0007 which is significant at 1% level of significance. Therefore, there is positive impact on job satisfaction during remote working in SVO. The coefficient value of the variable is - 1.09 showing a negative impact the LS may have on the JSDR and that when one percent LS increases, JSDR will decrease by 1.08% while assuming all the other variables remain constant. It shows that leadership style has a significant impact on employees' jobs satisfaction during remote working in SVO.

It shows that 8% can be explained of the relationship between JSDR and the independent variables which are WLB, WC and LS. Otherwise, 92% can be explained by other factors. The results of the study show that work life balance and work commitment have significant positive relationship with work performance, while leadership style shows insignificant negative relationship with work performance.

Conclusion

Employees who are unable to establish a healthy work-life balance between their professional and personal lives tend to experience lower levels of work-life balance and job satisfaction (Grant, et al., 2019). On the other hand, employees that have a healthy work-life balance, report a higher level of job satisfaction.

In this regard, the findings revealed the effect of work-life balance on job satisfaction during remote working is significant with a coefficient of 0.59 (t-statistic of 1.70), indicating a positive relationship between maintaining a healthy work-life balance and job satisfaction during remote working. These empirical results also suggested that an employee's level of job satisfaction while working remotely will also increase with a higher level of work-life balance. The findings of this study are coherent with the spill over theory, which suggests that an employee's level of job satisfaction can be expected to be higher when they are satisfied with their daily lives outside of the workplace. The findings of this study supported the finding of the study carried out by by Lonska et al. (2021) which stated that individuals who have a high work-life balance are also more likely to report being satisfied in their jobs.

The regression analysis of the findings showed that work has a significant positive impact on job satisfaction during remote working with coefficient value 0.61 (t-statistic 2.83), indicating positive relationship between these two variables which is work commitment and job

satisfaction during remote working. This findings supported the study of Ahmad Suffian Mohd Zahari et al., (2020) indicates that organisational commitment influences job satisfaction, which would then influence the inclination to leave an organisation. Both employer and employee anticipated to have direct effects on the decision-making process of correctional staff members regarding their future employment, when there is poor working commitment happen, employee's job satisfaction will affect job satisfaction which will increase the employees' turnover rate, similar to what Hussein Isse Hassan, (2018) said where high-commitment employees are loyal to the organisation, share its goals, and identify with its objectives.

The findings of this study indicated the effect of leadership style on job satisfaction during remote working is significant with a coefficient of -1.08. It shows a negative relationship between leadership style and job satisfaction during remote working. This resulted that the relationship between leadership style and job satisfaction during remote working can be explained that the leadership style is found to affect its job satisfaction negatively during remote working in SVO. This contradicts with Jawadi et al. (2021) where the study revealed the leadership style has significant and positive impact towards the job satisfaction during remote working.

Recommendations

Recommendation to Organisations and Their Leaders
The first and most important responsibility of management is to develop methods for assisting teams in achieving their goals by providing them with the resources necessary to maintain connections between each other and work effectively. This includes promoting the use of proper workstation, a work project tracking application, up-to-date software, and any other necessary equipment to enhance the morale of the employees in completing their task.

Recommendation for Future Research
Enlarge the scope of the study to include other industries by investigating the relationship of work-life balance, work commitment, leadership style and job satisfaction in public and private sectors. This kind of investigation would help to explain the comparison among the facets of work-life balance, work commitment, and 75 leadership style in developing job satisfaction. With larger sampling size and bigger population, the accuracy of the data collected will be increased.

Acknowledgement

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