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THE IMPACT OF THE WORK-LIFE BALANCE ON WORK ENGAGEMENT OF NON-ACADEMIC EMPLOYEE IN HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTIONS IN MALAYSIA

Mohammadd Wazir Shafie b. Hj. Aliasah^{a*}, Assoc.Prof. Dr Zuraidah Abdullah^b, Dr. Salwati Shafee^c

 ^{a*}Fakulti Psikologi dan Pendidikan, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Malaysia <u>wayn89@hotmail.com</u>
^bFakulti Pendidikan, Universiti of Malaya Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia <u>zuraidahab@um.edu.my</u>
^c Institut Aminuddin Baki
Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia salwashafee@gmail.com

Abstract

Work Life Balance is an important aspect in the lives of individual employee. It is highly associated with their ability to perform well at work and live a happy and contented life. Work life balance affects every aspects of individual either emotionally or psychologically. This study looks at the level of work-life balance as well as the work involvement of non-academic employees of higher learning institutions in Malaysia. Additionally, it also looks at how the work-life balance affects individual work involvement. Data of this quantitative study were gathered through a set of questionnaire which was administered to 335 non-academic employees of higher learning institutions in Malaysia. Analysis of findings were based on descriptive analysis using SPSS 23 version by looking at the mean and standard deviation. It also looked at the effects of work life balance on work engagement by undertaking pearson correlation analysis. The findings of the study provide and insight on the level of work life balance and work engagement as practiced by the non-academic employees of Malaysian higher learning institutions. The findings also illustrates the significant relationship between work life balance as well as work engagement among non-academic employees in Malaysian higher learning institutions.

Keywords: human resouce management, work engagement, work life balance

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I. INTRODUCTION

The imbalance between work and life has often created many problems to individuals which has caused the decline in the quality of work human and life Therefore, resources management (HRM) in an organization plays a major role to ensure a balance between the two elements (Ahlstrand et al., 2003). This include managing issues related to employee's personal concerns as well as issues arising in their working lives. The feedback from the employees on this matter is indispensable as additional information to the employee. Issues

such as providing facilities for childcare services at work and paid maternity leave are a great concern to employees and therefore should be addressed appropriately. By practicing the right elements of human resource management, would result in happier employees.

However, there are some conditions at work that set common terms and regulations for employees' priorities to balance between work and their lives by creating more work divisions (Studies, 2009). This has resulted in the imbalance between work and life.

Therefore, this study focuses on the practice HRM that affect the balance between life and work engagement of employees(Beauregard and Henry, 2009). In addition, this study is used to determine the practice of HRM and how it affect work-life balance of each employee, which is also the key element at work as well as in achieving organizational goals (Zhu, 2011).

Work life balance (WLB) refers to the level of involvement of a person in balancing between job responsibilities and his / her responsibilities towards family or life, and he is satisfied with the outcome of both elements (Greenhaus, Collins and Shaw, 2003). In this context, an individual who are balanced in work and life will be able to demonstrate a balanced commitment between the two domains (Igbal, Zia-ud-din, Arif, Raza &Ishtiaq, 2017). Work life balance occurs when an employee is able to constructively manage all activities related to career as well as social activities in an individual's life. Examples of life's important activities include medical care, family-life, activities involving other members of the community, leisure activities and many others.

WLB is an important issue in an organization as it could influence work excitement and commitment that of individuals towards their job (Dundas,2008). Not only that, it also employee's psychology and affects the surrounding environment (Kluczyk, 2013). WLB is a key feature in debates between academicians, policy makers and among ministries (Eikhof, Warhurst, & Haunschild, 2007). Dundas (2008) states that the balance of life and work is about effective management between career and personal activities which involves various individuals and authorities of different levels and fields. The capability to stabilize between professional and personal obligations is considered as principal matter among workers in various fields and organizations globally (Mohd Noor, Stanton, & Young, 2009; Kluzyk, 2013; Frye & Breaugh, 2004, Hill, 2005).

The main focus of this study is to understand the importance of the relationship between human resource practice and work-life balance on the work engagement of the employee. According to Shrout and Fleiss (2009), WLB is a key factor that inspires employees to provide the best organizational outcome. Organizations will occasionally experience situations that can reduce employee's involvement at work and also affect the overall achievement of an organization. The discussions in this article will answer the following research objectives:

- 1. The level of work life balance (WLB) and work engagement of non-academic employees in higher learning institutions in Malaysia
- 2. the relationship between the WLB and work engagement of non-academic employees in higher learning institutions in Malaysia

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of work-life balance is often used by an organization in making a policy framework to be a special guide to employees in the organization concerned with their career prospects. Wayne et al. (2009) defines WLB as an understanding of the career and life of a person. However, Wright (2009) describes work-life balance of each individual is different although they work in the same environment. In understanding the concepts associated with WLB, we need to understand in advance the term that does not explain what WLB is about. The term WLB does not merely refer to adequate stability between work and life but instead refers to a good plan for doing personal activities with work. However, the schedules or plans of a worker are not fixed for each day but vary according to current needs and situations.

Conflicts related to work and family take place when work-related-activities intervene with family-related-activities. On the contrary, conflicts associated with family and work take place when family-related-activities intervene with work-related-activities (Breaugh & Frye, 2007; Hill, 2005). In both occassions, one element would stand in the way of the other element and therefore does not present positive outcome to individuals. Based on the research's highlights, there are various

definitions which are associated with both types of conflicts. Netemeyer, Boles and McMurrian (1996) relate to family andwork conflict as "a friction associated with the roles played by individuals at home as opposed to the role played at work. Thesa conflicts result in time consumption and not to mention the pressure produced by the family disrupts individuals obligations at work. On the other work-family conflicts as "a form of hand. friction associated with the different roles played by individuals at the work place which affects time allocation spent at home or in social life, and tensions produced by employment disrupt family related responsibilities ".

Work engagement on the other hand is defined as the participation of individuals at work as well as contentment and keenness towards the job (Harter et al 2002). The different discernment on work attributes has resulted in conceptual overlap between job involvement and job satisfaction. Lawler and Hall (1970) relate to engagement as a concept that focuses on how work helps establish one's identity. Those who are involved in their work will find their job highly motivating. They will also show their committment towards the work as well as the organization while at the same time themselves engage in professional relationships with the co-workers (Brown 1996). In general, engagement at work can be defined as a positive, satisfying, and working state of mind which is distinguised by strength, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Many scholars agreed that the three elements present the most precise, rightful and detailed conceptualization to date (Kim et al, 2009; Schaufeli & Bakker 2004; Schaufeli, Martinez, Pinto, Salanova & Bakker 2002; Shimazu & Schaufeli 2009)

Employee engagement are shaped by value at work and has a direct impact on employee attitudes and behavior (Dose, 2011). A clear difference in the value of work is an impression of intrinsic and extrinsic work values (Ryan & Deci 2000). The extrinsic value of work focuses on the outcome of the work, namely, a real reward for individuals such as salaries, status, incentives and promotions. However, the intrinsic value of work focuses on the work process, that is, unrealistic rewards reflecting the interests of the job such as chances to discover new things, exploring creativity, making decisions, having flexible time and others.

There are several reasons as to why people work. For instance, two things that usually happen are the goals of people working mainly to maintain their economic status and also due to dominant extrinsic values. Firstly, people are working to earn money which then allow them to have consumer power (Noon & Blyton 2002). People who work and receive earnings stands higher chance to have better living with the existence of consumer power. This power allows them to have a preferring lifestyle. Second, in view of the significance in the relationship between work and spending power, the revenue earned is very important to explain the purpose of their work. Ideas related to external rewards such as property and status are the main factors that encourage people to work (Noon & Blyton 2002).

II. METHODS

This quantitative study was conducted based on a survey. Therefore, for the purpose of the study, a set of questionnaire was administred during data collection process. This is in line with the objective of the study which sought to describe the work life balance and the work engagemnet as practiced in the Malaysian higher education institutions. This quantitative study involved statistical and inferential analysis based on numerical evidence aimed at exploring relationship between variables (Burns & Grove, 2009) involved in the practice of WLB and work engagement. For the purpose of this study, 335 non-academic employees higher learning institutions from were randomly chosen as samples for a pilot study.

A total 500 questionnaire were distributed and only 335 questionnaires were completed and returned. The instrument for measuring work life balance was adapted from (Kluczyk, 2013). while the instrument for measuring work engagement was adapted from Rich, LePine, &

Crawford, (2010). All the items were based on 5 point Likert Scale with 1 being Strongly Disagree and 5 being strongly Agree. The instrument consisted of 10 items on work life balance construct and 10 items on work engagement construct. The instrument has been validated by four panel of experts in the field of human resource management for content and construct validity. In order to test the reliability of the instrument, the Cronbach Alpha values were looked at. The result of Cronbach's alpha values for the instrument are .741 for WLB construct and .904 for work engagement construct.

For the purpose of data analysis, both descriptive and inferential analysis methods were undertaken using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 23 (Creswell, 2013; Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2014; Ramayah, Cheah, Chuah, Ting, & Mumtaz, 2018) related to the constructs of WLB and work engement practices. The analysis were based on the mean score and standard deviation. Descriptive statistics using means and standard deviation was undertaken in providing the answer the first objective of the study which is aimed at analysing the practive of WLB as well as work engagement. Interpretation of mean score at each level of the variables was obtained based on interpretation table modified from Nunally and Bernstein (1994). The interpretation of the level of mean value is as follows, mean value of 1.00 to 2.33 as low, mean value of 2.34 to 3.67 as moderate and mean value of 3.68 to 5.00 as high (Nunally& Bersntein 1994; Zuraidah 2010, Syafinaz 2016; Salwati, 2019).

In addition, inferential analysis was undertaken for the purpose of determining the relationship between variables of study (Hair, 2016; Ramayah et al., 2018). In this study, Pearson correlation was undertaken for inferential analysis for the purpose of analysing the relationship between work life balance and work engagement constructs.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION A. Results

The Level Of Work Life Balance and Work Engagement of Management Employee in Higher Learning Institutions in Malaysia Descriptive data analysis was carried out based on the response received from 335 respondents which reflects the level of work life balance as well as work engagement practiced in Malaysian higher learning institutions. Table 2 illustrates mean values and standard Deviation of the practive of work life balance and work engagement of non-academic employee in public higher learning institutions in Malaysia

To evaluate the level of each variable, the following mean score range between 1.00 and 5.00 is used by the researcher. The mean score between 1.00 and 2.33 was categorized as low, mean score between 2.34 and 3.67 was categorized as moderate, while mean score between 3.68 and 5.00 was categorized as high level (Nunally & Bersntein 1994; Zuraidah 2010, Syafinaz 2016; Salwati, 2019). The table below shows the mean score interpretation of the study variables.

Table 1 Mean Score Interpretation				
Mean Score	Interpretation			
1.00 - 2.33	Low			
2.34 - 3.67	Moderate			
3.68 - 5.00	High			

(Nunally& Bersntein 1994; Zuraidah 2010, Syafinaz 2016; Salwati, 2019)

Table 2 Mean Values and Standard Deviation for Work Life Balance Practice

	Work Life Balance			Std.	
		Ν	Mean	Deviation	
C1	After work, I feel too tired to do the things I like	335	3.12	1.141	Moderate
C2	My family or friends do not like it when I do office work at home.				Moderate
		335	2.91	1.226	
C3	My work takes up the time that I should spent with family or friends.	335	2.58	1.183	Moderate

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ibilities at home like housekeeping, airing, paying bills and taking care of 335 2.32 1.265 hildren.	Low
e unable to spend time with my family. 335 2.28 1.012	Low
because of the work done at home. 335 2.23 .847	Low
too high that I forgot my work. 335 1.87 .904	Low
nging personal matter at workplace. 335 3.05 1.081 M	Moderate
at work for my personal agendas 335 2.31 1.104	Low
my responsibilities at workplace e.g 335 2.10 .854	Low
nging personal matter at workplace.3353.051.081at work for my personal agendas3352.311.104my responsibilities at workplace e.g3352.10854]

Table 2 illustrates the result of the descriptive analysis based on mean values and standard deviation for Work Life Balance construct. Based on the result of the analysis, the practice of work life balance of non-academic employees of Malaysian public higher learning institution were between moderate to low. However, majority of the items scored low mean values which ranges between 1.87 (SD=.904) to 2.32 (SD= 1.264). Item C7 (My personal desire was too high that I forgot my work) scored the lowest with mean value 1.87 which shows that the respondents did not agree that their personal desire causes them to forget their work responsibilities.

Similarly, all the other items with low mean values (C4, C5, C6, C7, C9 and C10) suggest that the respondents have a balance between life and work. For example, the respondents did not agree that their work hinders the

responsibilities at home (C4), the job makes them unable to spend time with family(C5), become too tired at workplace because of the work done at home (C6), spend their time at work for personal agendas (C9) and their daily life activities disrupt their responsibilities at workplace (C10). Overall, the result of the analysis reflects that the work life balance of the non-academic employee of Malaysia higher learning institutions is low, which reflects their disagreement towards the idea that there is an imbalance between life and work.

On the other hand, items with moderate mean values ranges between 2.58 (SD=1.183) to 3.12 (SD=1. 140). Item C1 (After work, I feel too tired to do the things I like) scored the highest mean values which reflect that the respondents agree that they feel tired after work that they could not pursue their personal activities.

	Work Engagement	Ν	Mean	SD	
G1	I contributed wholeheartedly to my job	335	4.30	.550	High
G2	I put a lot of effort into my work	335	4.25	.565	High
G3	I tried hard in doing my work	335	4.33	.575	High
G4	I try my best in completing my work	335	4.35	.552	High
G5	I am very excited about doing my job	335	4.23	.584	High
G6	I have a positive attitude towards my work	335	4.22	.691	High
G7	When at work, my mind is very focused on my work / task.	335	4.05	.569	High
G8	When at work, I give full attention to my work	335	4.13	.573	High
G9	When at work I forgot about all the other things around me	335	3.01	1.078	Moderate
G10	When at work I am very absorbed with my job	335	4.09	.638	High

Table 3 Mean Values and Standard Deviation for Work Engagement Practice

Table 3 illustrates the mean values and standard deviation for work engagement practices. Based on the result of the analysis, the practice of work engagement of nonacademic employees of Malaysian public higher learning institution were high. However, only one of the items scored moderate mean values with 3.01 (SD=1.077). On the other hand, items with high mean values ranges between 4.05 (SD=.596) to 4.35 (SD=.552).

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Overall, the result of the analysis reflects that the work engagement of the non-academic employee of Malaysia higher learning institutions is high.

As a conclusion, the analysis of the work life balance of the non-academic employee of Malaysia higher learning institutions suggests that there is a balance between life and work. Subsequently, their work engagement is high. In the next section, we will analyze the correlation between the two variables while simultaneously prove the hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between WLB and work engagement of non-academic employee of higher learning institutions in Malaysia.

Correlation Between Work Life Balance and Work Engagement

Inferential data analysis was undertaken using Pearson Correlation to analyse the correlation between work life balance and work engagement as practiced in the Malaysian higher learning institutions. Table 4 illustrates the result of the correlation analysis between work life balance and work engagement of non-academic employee in public higher learning institutions in Malaysia.

Table 4 Correlation between work Life Datance and work Lingagement				
		WLB	WE	
Work Life	Pearson Correlation	1	198**	
Balance (WLB)	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	
	Ν	335	335	
Work	Pearson Correlation	198**	1	
Engagement	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
(WE)	Ν	335	335	

Table 4 Correlation between Work Life Balance and Work Engagement

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation result in Table 4 shows that the correlation level between WLB and WE is small at the value of -.198 and the correlation is significant at the value of 0.01. Therefore, it can be interpreted that the result of the study shows that WLB has a small influence on work engagement of non-academic employees of Malaysia public higher educational institutions. Nevertheless, the result proves the hypotheses of the study that there is a weak significant relationship between WLB and work engagement of non-academic employees of higher learning institutions in Malaysia.

B. Discussion

WLB is an important aspect in the life of individual employee as it would affect not only individual commitment at work but also other social commitments. Therefore, employee should be able to practice a balance between life and work so that they could contribute more at work while at the same time lead a happy life.

The results of data analysis reveal that majority of the items scored low mean values (C4, C5, C6, C7, C9 and C10) which suggest that the respondents did not quite agree that elements of work disrupt their personal life or vice versa. For item C4, the respondents did not agree that their work hinders the responsibilities at home which is suggesting that although they are working but their work does not not stop them from carrying out other responsibilities in lie. The respondent also di not agree with item C5 which states that the job makes them unable to spend time with family. Additionally they also disagree that they become too tired at workplace because of the work done at home which suggests that their responsibilites at home does hinder their commitment at work. For item C7 (My personal desire was too high that I forgot my work) scored the lowest with mean value 1.87 which shows that the respondents did not agree that their personal desire causes them to forget their work responsibilities. Additionally the respondents disagree that they spend their time at work for personal agendas (C9) which shows their commitment towards work which also reflect that their daily life activities does not disrupt their responsibilities at workplace (C10). This is in line with various findings from previous studies which suggest that workers who experience higher stress levels caused by work family conflict are not happy with their work This situation causes them to

become less productive and lack of commitment towards the organization (Frye & Breaugh, 2004).

Overall, the analysis also reflects that the WLB of the non-academic employee of higher learning institutions in Malaysia is low, which reflects their disagreement towards the idea that there is an imbalance between life and work. The analysis also suggests an equilibrium between life and work among non-academic employees of Malaysia public higher educational institutions. Nevertheless, there are certain items which the respondents feel that they might be an imbalance between work and life but only moderately.

Moreover, the result of the analysis on work engagement reflects that the work engagement of the non-academic employee of Malaysian higher learning institutions is high. The majority of the respondents reported themselves to be significantly engaged with their jobs. For example, they contributed wholeheartedly to their job (G1), they put a lot of effort into work (G2), and they tried hard in doing their work (G3). They even feel excited about doing their job(G5) besides having positive attitude towards their work (G6). This is line with what is suggested by Harter et al (2002) work engagement involves individual that involvement, satisfaction and enthusiasm for work. It also supports the suggestion by Schaufeli et al.. (2002) that employee engagement involves positive, satisfying, and working state of mind characterized by strength, dedication and absorption

The analysis also shows that the respondents are focused on their work (G7), they were very attentive (G8) and they were even absorbed with their work (G10). This is line with what is suggested by Brown (1996) that someone who are engaged in their work will find finds their job highly motivating, committed to their work and organization and engage in professional relationships with co-workers. However, did not really agree that they forgot about all other things around them when at work due to the fact that each individual plays a dual role; an employee and a member of the society. Nevertheless, the different role does not affect their commitment towards work or social life. To sum up, the result of analysis of the work life balance of the non-academic employee of Malaysia higher learning institutions suggests that there is a balance between life and work. Subsequently, their work engagement is high. This is line with Dose (2011) who suggested that employee engagement are shaped by value at work and has a direct impact on employee attitudes and behavior and vice versa.

Subsequently, the correlation value between WLB and WE show that WLB has a small influence on work engagement of non-academic employees of Malaysia public higher educational institutions. Therefore, the result proves the hypotheses of the study that there is significant relationship between WLB and work engagement of non-academic employees of higher learning institutions in Malaysia, but at a very weak level. This suggests that WLB does not really affects work engagement of non-academic employees of Malaysia public higher educational institutions.

IV. CONCLUSION/RECOMENDATION

A balance between life and work would affect individual employee either emotionally of psychologically. This would in turn affect the quality of life as well as employees' work performance. Therefore, it is up to the human resource management to ensure that the employee have a balance proportion between elements of work and life . This could be achieved by ensuring a better human resource practices which contribute to employees' emotional and psychological wellbeing. This, is turn would lead to better work engagement as well as performance. Employee engagement is by far considered as a crucial element of successful organizational outcomes and therefore, it needs to be thoroughly looked at in the social work field. Work engagement allows employees to contribute significantly towards reaching positive outcomes. Therefore, work engagement concept among others should be a

major focus when designing or implementing a certain human resource management practices.

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