

INFLUENCE OF WORK HOURS AND MANAGEMENT SUPPORTS TOWARDS WORK-LIFE BALANCE AMONG MANAGERIAL LEVEL WORKER IN CONSTRUCTION COMPANY

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ABSTRACT

A research among 92 employees in managerial level at Johor Bharu, Malaysia in construction industry, was conducted to examine the relationship between work hour and management support towards work-family balance. Work-life balance (WLB) is one of an effective way to boost up the working spirit of the employee in order for them to work effectively. Work hour (WH) and management support (MS) is one of the effective catalyst in increasing WLB among the workers. Nature of work in construction industry have different types of works, continuous and uncertainty in the projects. Therefore, these have created conflict in terms of work hours (WH) and management supports (MS) especially to the managerial level employees. It is vital to know the level of WLB received by the workers and the relationship of WH and MS towards WLB among the construction workers. The objective of this study are to measure the level of work-life balance experienced by the employees, and to identify the influence of work hours and management support towards work-life balance. All the data were analyzed using SPSS such as descriptive analysis and regression analysis. The findings show employee experienced higher level of WLB at construction company. Then, higher WH will have lower WLB but higher MS have higher WLB among the managerial level employee in construction company. All the two variables, WH and MS, are significant and positively correlated to WLB among the managerial level employee in construction company.

Keywords: Work Hour, Management Support, Managerial Level, Work-life Balance.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The good and well-coordinated responsibilities management between work and family can be referred as the work-life balance (Lingard and Francis, 2008). The importance of having live in a state of equilibrium between work and life does not lies only at the employee but as well as on the shoulder of the employer. As mentioned by Naithani (2010), there is a need to have employees with improved work-life balance during the current situation of economic. During this situation, employees tend to increase their job performance in order to contribute for more meaningfully to organizational success and growth. When they experienced balance in their work and family responsibilities, they will increase their job performance in order to contribute for more meaningful organizational success and growth. Other than that, they will not jeopardize their safety, health and well-being (Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 2014).

Align with the WLB practices, many employees reported that their organizations are not doing much to promote work-life balance. Other than that, out of 75% respondents mentioned that they were interrupted about work during their holidays. These finding have supported that technological advances have created a blurring between the boundaries of work and nonwork (see Lewis, 2008), whereby employees may be contacted by employers at any time via emails, text messages and others. This blurring of work-life boundaries can be seen as a mechanism by which organizations maintain their hold on employees (Fleming & Spicer 2004), which ultimately results in even more work-life interference for employees.

From theoretical perspective, theory of work-fit model by Turner (2013) that derived from the person-environment (P-E) theory (Edwards, 1996; Edwards and Cooper, 1990) can be linked to WLB. The theory posits that when an individual perceives that they have enough resources to meet other demands such that role performance is effective. In this case, the resource are work hour and management support.

Working on longer hour and less support from the management have an impact towards employee's work-life balance. Literary, there is a need to know about how and why individuals engage in different patterns of long work hours. Lingard *et al.* (2010) stated that some people may work on long hours due to meet the work deadlines.

In this research, the objective of this study are to measure the level of work-life balance experienced by the employees and to identify the influence of work hours and management support towards work-life balance.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Work-Life Balance

From the literature reviews, this research had concluded that work-life balance is not merely equal state of work and non-work but also included the challenges to integrate the life domains. The listed life domains are working and family role responsibilities, time allocated, strain and energy needed to be fulfilled in order to be in the state of equilibrium and to be able to achieve financial gain.

WLB defined as whereby the individuals are equally engaged and satisfied with the roles of work and family (Clark, 2000; Kirchmeyer, 2000). WLB also referred as the ability of individual to continuously balance temporal demands of paid work and family responsibilities (Gröpel, 2005). On the other hand, Kirchmeyer (2000) defined a balanced life as achieving fully satisfy experiences in all life domains. Bailyn *et al.* (2001) defined work-life balance as well parallel integration of work and non-work, so that both gender can achieve their potential across the domains in which they play out their life roles.

It happened to be that the interaction in work-life balance involves role engagement in work and non-domains. Apart from that minimizing the conflict between work-related roles and other social roles are also part of work-life balance intersection (Sirgy and Lee, 2018).

Fisher (2001) stated that work-life balance has four components. First component is time, i.e., time spent at work compared to time spent in other activities. When the time spent at work is more than the time spent in personal activity, it will result in lower WLB.

The second component is behaviour, i.e. work goal accomplishment. As mentioned by Fisher (2001), whenever the employee believe that they have the ability to accomplish his work and life goals, then WLB will be increase. Other components are strain and energy. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) has identified strain as the third source of inter-role conflict.

Employee who faced strain tends to be burnout and less productive in their work. Therefore, the level of WLB will decrease. Energy is included as it is consistent with the notion of time whereby energy is a limited and scarce resource and vital for an employee to being able to accomplish both work and/or non-work related goals. For every employee with adequate energy will have a higher level of WLB.

Kossek and Laustch (2018) mentioned that flexibility to control work location is rarely available for lower level jobs; but benefits middle- and upper level employees, provided that individuals are able to control separation from work when desired and self-regulate complexity.

Several researchers have proposed a model of work-life fit (Turner, 2013) which originally derived from the person-environment (P-E) theory (Edwards, 1996; Edwards and Cooper, 1990). The P-E theory predicts that the perceived match between the person and environment have more benefits to mental and physical well-being while mismatch between the person and environment leads to stress and contribute to the mental and physical strain (Edwards *et al.* 1998).

The work-life fit model has the capacity to view the person as whole and emphasis the work-life experience rather than work-family experience. Therefore, it is suitable with the research whereby this research wants to explore the work-life balance as a whole.

The findings of this study will encourage the organization, especially in the construction sector to implement the best work-life balance practices and intervention. Therefore, it will able to improve the company productivity, generate wealth revenue and ultimately improving Malaysia economic development.

Other than that, having able to counter the work life imbalance among the employees will brings more competitive advantages for the company to implement the best work-life balance practices in their work system.

2.2 Relationship between Work Hour and Work-Life Balance

Work hours happen to be one of the key mechanisms for employee to show their commitment and productivity to their employer. Japan has been known as one of the country that implies long working hour to show their commitment to their company. Nemoto (2013) stated that *karoshi* and *karo-jitsatsu* or else known as suicide because of work has remain to be a common thing to happen in Japan. This thing still happens despite the companies have been acknowledged (in some cases) by government to give compensation and responsible since 1990s for the family victims.

The use of time is not just for its monetary value and demarcation of public time at work and time-off from work (Fujimoto, 2004). Time use is affected by culture and yet is embedded in the way of structured society (Kalleberg and Epstein, 2001). Fujimoto (2004) also added that at the cultural level, most societies use time as a way of differentiating spheres of life and activities, and they create ideals concerning how time should be used. In addition, its use is also embedded in social structure, and patterns of time use and the relationships between time and work are socially constructed. On the other hand, social norms define certain lengths of time as “desirable” or “ideal” for work activities while going through the life cycle.

Discrepancy theory is a theory of satisfaction that emphasizes on the individual differences (Lawler, 1973). The theory indicates that the job satisfaction is related to the extended on what the individual obtains from a job matches that desired by the individual. The closer the job match, then the discrepancy will become smaller and thus the higher the job satisfactions are. The theory is also have been extended by Abraham (1999); Jiang and Klein (2002) to other job attitudes and also behaviours such as the commitment and turnover.

In this research used discrepancy theory on work hours. The researcher argue that the work hour discrepancy can influence individual's job attitudes and behaviour. The arguments are built on the fact that work hours are one of the most important aspects of work and life (Tucker and Rutherford, 2005) and employees have different desires in terms of the preferred number of work hours (Golden and Gebreselassie, 2007). As the individual differences are the base of the discrepancy theory, therefore the huge variances in the desired work hour imply that the issue of work hour is an ideal candidate to apply discrepancy theory. In this study it implies that when employees are faced with discrepancy between actual and desired hours, they will seek to adjust their behaviours or reduce in order to achieve the ideal work hours by assuming that the work conditions such as wages and benefits remain unchanged.

Therefore, the research proposed that that;

H1: Work hour does have influence towards work-life balance.

2.3 Relationship between Management Support and Work-Life Balance

The social support framework (House, 1981) suggests multiple sources and types of support. Source of support can arise from domains such as work and family, and can come from specific sources, such as the organization, supervisor, coworkers, community, friends, and family members. This come with much of the emphasis on organizational support, these other support networks have received less consideration. He then had proposed types of social support which are emotional, instrumental, information and appraisal. The most prevalent and relevant types that have been studied in the work-family area are emotional and instrumental (King *et al.* (1995).

Emotional support is being characterized by being empathetic, expressing care and concern and listening whilst instrumental support includes providing tangible and objective assistance. Back then, emotional support and instrumental support have been combined as single general measure (Rooney and Gottlieb, 2007) but according to House *et al.* (1985), emotional support or affect should be distinguished from instrumental support. They also argued that if emotional and instrumental support did not being distinguish, it will limit the ability to identify antecedents of support, for instance specific work and family stressor.

Researchers have found that emotional support from the organization, supervisors, and co-workers had a positive impact on important outcomes, such as less work-interference-family (Ford *et al.*, 2007) and burnout (Lingard and Francis, 2006) and greater job satisfaction and intent to remain (Stamper and Johlke, 2003). Instrumental support from the organization has been related to WIF in various studies (Anderson *et al.*, 2002).

Equity theory is pertinent with these situations. Janasz *et al.* (2013) mentioned that the equity theory set that the fair treatment that employees received in the workplace will motivate them. Fairness in employee perceptions is when they considered received the same and equal level of treatment on the work outcomes that they have given their input.

Thus in the context of this research, equity theory implies that when employees received adequate support from the management, they will perceive adequate work-life balance experience in their work and non-work activities. In a nutshell, this theory is in line with the study objective in determining the relationship between management support and work-life balance.

Hence, the research proposed that;

H2: Management support does have influence towards work-life balance.

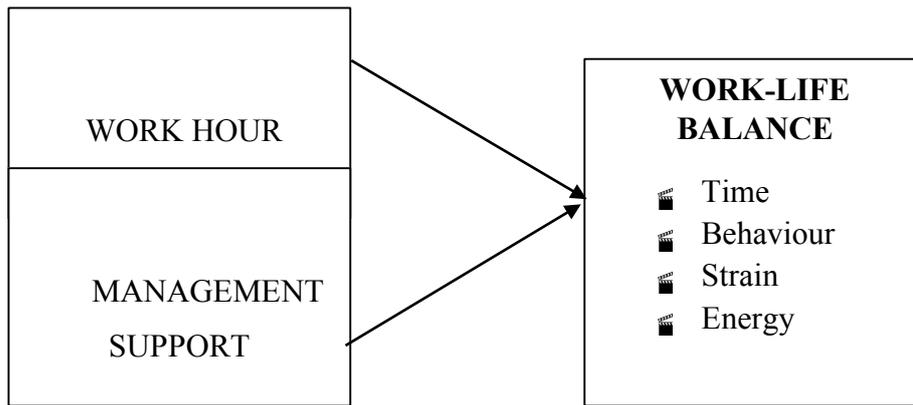
2.4 Conceptual Framework

Figure 2.1 depicts the proposed conceptual framework for this study where the working hours and management support will be the independent variables of while the work-life balance will be the dependent variables of this study. This study proposed that working hour and management support does have influence towards the work-life balance.

Figure 2.1: Research framework on the relationship between working hours and management support towards work-life balance (WLB)

Independent variables

Dependent variables



3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

By referring to the research question of this study, the researcher attempts to investigate the relationship of work hour and management support towards work-life balance among the construction workers. In answering the questions, the researcher used and adapted method from previous study and also quantitative research design that related to the relationship between working hours and management support towards work-life balance. This method is seconded by Henn, Weinstein, and Foard (2005) whom stated that quantitative surveys are apposite for studying the relationship between two or more variables.

For this study, the primary tool that was used to gather data is through questionnaires. The content of the questionnaires was adopted from various authors. The questionnaire consists of four sections, specifically the working hours, management support, work-life balance and includes the demographic information. The Likert scale is the most widely used methods for gauging attitudes or perceptions in a quantitative based research (Henn *et al.*, 2005). The demographic variables such as age, marital status, gender, and types of employment will be in the section A of demographic information. Others are as follow;

Table 3: Questionnaires sections and instruments.

	Instruments	No. of item	Cronbach Alpha
Section A: Demographic information	Gender, Age, Marital Status, Education, Years in Industry, Position	6	NIL
Section B: Work Hours	Using instruments developed by Fujimoto (2004).	7	0.78
Section C: Management Support	Using instruments developed by Scott <i>et al.</i> (2014)	6	0.84
Section D: Work-life balance	Using instruments developed by White <i>et al.</i> , (2003)	6	0.85 (1992); 0.75 (2000)

Other study has been done previously, but in different countries and within different environments. Research carried out by Lingard and Francis (2008), Turner *et.al.* (2009), Kadarko *et al.* (2014) and Haines *et al.* (2014) have adopted similar mechanism. Employment of existing instrument is advantageous as it saves time and cost effective as well. In addition to that, when a similar instrument is applied, both researches can be compared and analysed if it produces similar results.

As stated by Jenny (2014), to select potential respondent, one must consider the population of the study. Population is a group of individuals or objects that possesses the entailed characteristics as required by researchers (Welman and Kruger, 2006). For that, in this study, researcher has decided to focus among selected companies in JB. With reference to the geographical location, majority of the construction organizations in Malaysia are situated in Selangor. This study focus Johor Bharu as the location for data collection are due to the practical reasons of convenience, as well as rapid development happen here in Johor Bharu. Bureau of Statistic Malaysia reported that Johor was the number one contributor in gross output for year 2013 in southern region in Malaysia.

For the sampling frame, the study had chosen to use non-probability sampling. This is because of there is no clear view with regards of numbers of skilled employee in construction sector at Johor Bharu, Malaysia. Jenny (2014) stated that most social science research relies heavily on non-probability sampling. Further extend, this situation happened as the result of not having clear view of the population that they wish to generalize. In addition, the boundaries with regards on who might or not might to be included in the population are vague. Thus, using non-probability sampling is the best for this research as the study did not have clear numbers on skilled worker in construction worker in construction sector at Johor Bharu, Malaysia.

Under the non-probability sampling method, this study chooses convenience sampling. In convenience sample, the sample is built by cases that are accessible (Jenny, 2014). For instance, organization in a certain region or members of social networking site. This study used convenience sample as the sample is picked from selected construction company in Iskandar region, Johor Bharu where the researcher has the access to distribute the questionnaires and engaged with the selected respondents. Noted that all the selected company are public listed in Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange (KLSE) and have under-going project in Iskandar region.

This study focused on few of local major companies that have undergoing projects at Iskandar development region, JB which are; UMLand Berhad, UEM Sunrise Berhad, TNH Holdings and SP Setia. The list of companies obtained was from Iskandar Region Development Authority (IRDA) while the number of staff was from the listed companies per phone interviews with one of the senior project manager at UMLand company. From an interview session with one of the senior project manager at UMLand, he stated that for each construction site, there will be approximately 10 staff in charge ranging from senior project manager, project manager, architect, and maintenance & electrical, safety, engineers and surveyors. All of the named position were responsible in building materials that involved the use of high-technology machinery and items. In nutshell, for every company, this study picked minimum 2 site and maximum of 5 site and times by 10 staff to gain number of population. Based on the number of projects they hold, the total number of sample has been identified with the reference from Krejcie and Morgan table. Respondents must complete at least 92 questionnaires to achieve 10% of response rate and 5% of margin error.

Figure 3.1: Population and sample of the research

Company	No. of Staff
UMLand Berhad (2 site project; Medini and JB town)	20
UEM Sunrise Berhad (5 project at Medini)	50
TNH Holdings (2 project at Medini)	20
SP Setia (3 project at Medini and JB town)	30
TOTAL	POPULATION: 120 SAMPLE : 92

Construction activities in 2013 were concentrated in the central region with a value of gross output of RM67.0 billion (51.0%) as illustrated in table below. The highest gross output in the central region was impelled by the rapid construction activities in Klang Valley.

Meanwhile, the ongoing projects of infrastructure development in Johor have induced the construction activities in southern region with a value of gross output amounting to RM20.3 billion (15.4%). Therefore, conducting the study in Johor will depicts good location as Johor was the premier contributor in southern region.

Based on this research, data analysis that used descriptive analysis to analyze the level of WLB experienced by the employee in the construction organization. To analyze the relationship between work hour and WLB, the researcher has used multiple regression.

4.0 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Reliability and Response Rate of Study

To ensure the reliability of this study, Cronbach's Alpha test was done. It was observed that for all variables the Cronbach's Alpha values exceed 0.7. Peterson (1994) stated that variables with Cronbach's Alpha more than 0.7 are statistically reliable.

Table 4.1: Reliability of Variables

Variables	No. of Items	α
Work Hours	7	.709
Management Support	6	.721
Work-Life Balance	6	.750

Total questionnaire that have been distributed was 120 in order to achieve targeted sample which is 92 respondents. Therefore, the response rate was 57.5%. In this case, the study achieved good response rate with regards to guide by Jenny (2014). Although it had good response rate, bear in mind that the sample picked is by convenience sample method. Thus, the selected respondents are from those groups of employee in accessible construction company (as mentioned in chapter 3).

4.2 Level of Work-Life Balance

This study concluded that employees experienced higher level of WLB at the construction company from WLB items which were time (3.7011), behaviour (3.6902), strain (3.7283) and energy (3.6326). The mean for items; time, behaviour, strain and energy were above 3.68 and indicate a high level of work-life balance. Therefore, as mentioned in chapter 2, when the mean of time, behaviour, strain and energy were high, it indicates that employee experienced a higher level of WLB at the construction company.

4.3 Influence of Work Hour and Management Support Towards WLB

Multiple regression models were applied to determine the relative importance and significance influence of work hour and management support towards WLB. The R square and adjusted R square value implies independent variable that create certain percentage of variance over the dependent variables.

The overall model explained that 29.4% of variance in WLB. An inspection of individual predictors revealed that all two variables are significant and positively correlated to WLB. The one variable which affect WLB the most is work hour, where $r = 0.359$, $p < 0.05$.

Therefore, the hypothesis of work hour and management support does have influence towards work-life balance is accepted.

Table 4.7: Multiple Regression Analysis- Model Summary Results

Variable	Dependent	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Work-life Balance	0.542 ^a	0.294	0.278	0.32997	

a. Predictors: (Constant), MS, WH

ANOVA^b

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	4.028	2	2.014	18.498	0.000 ^a
Residual	9.690	89	0.109		
Total	13.719	91			

a. Predictors: (Constant), MS, WH

b. Dependent Variable: WLB

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficient		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.767	0.324		5.457	0.000
WH	0.328	0.104	0.359	3.165	0.002
MS	0.215	0.101	0.241	2.122	0.037

a. Dependent Variable: WLB

5.0 CONCLUSION

This research found that managing work and life balance is very problematic for many employees. The analysis showed that all the respondents in this study experienced high level of work-life balance. Roles by upper management and organizations are vital in creating a better work-life balance. Other than that, there are number of action that can be ponder and adopted by the organization in order to have a better work-life balance policies and benefits particularly in high-paced sectors.

The combination of better work and life through well planned employment flexibility denotes an opportunity for the stakeholders of organizations and a challenge which has implications for hierarchy, authority and contribution which surpass the originals boundaries of cost effective. For example, increase customer's satisfaction as the result of having high morale employee.

The findings of this study may enhance the ability to assist in identifying and promote understanding of work hours and management support in managing work-life balance issues, especially in the construction company. Construction industry is one of the main contributor of economic revenue in Malaysia. Employee's work hour and management support are important to achieving better employment system.

The result of this study indicates that employer needs to understand the basic need of employee which is achieving better work-life balance. Top and upper management also plays a role in order to clinch the needs. Different top management roles are needed in order for their employee can implement and use the WLB policies available in the organization. In term of work hour, organizations can create flexible working hours in terms of working days or number of hour work. Other than that, in term of management support, organization might create family day or any other appreciation day to increase the morale of employee.

When the management convey and encourage their employee to focus on WLB practices will be a cheaper tool to attract higher level of skills worker and reducing the recruitment cost. Other than that, it will also increase employee's emotion intelligence in doing their work, apart from increase their employee relations and competitiveness. When employee received and able to facilitate WLB, it will create reciprocity situation whereby employee will put high commitment towards their work and thus will also increase customer satisfaction (as the result of reciprocity).

It was recommended to conduct this research in other industry to obtain other varying results. Suggested industry were health department (nurses and doctors), education department (teachers) and also security guard under the private company that have the exact number of population. This is important in order to have reliable data.

Other than that, using mixed-method for instance, interviews and surveys would append depth into the study of affective commitment by showing more on the reasons why employees not achieving work-life balance. This study focuses on the correlation between work hours and management support only. As for future study, the correlation between organizational commitment and other human resource practices for instance; compensation, organizational culture and job satisfaction should be taken into account.

There is also some vitality to include a wide range of outcome measures, such as effects on work life balance and other social outcomes, well-being, health, absence, work environment, and, if possible, also productivity, injuries, errors and quality of service or product (Colligan and Rosa (1990)). In addition, effects on some outcomes may be positive, while effects on others may simultaneously be negative.

Other than that, there is a need for more well-designed and well-conducted studies of the consequences of long hours, overtime work, and nonstandard hours for children's development, performance, and well-being and for marital-quality satisfaction (Lingard and Francis, 2009). The study mentioned that the intervention should include the managerial 'decision maker' in managing, supporting and implementing the intervention. (Townsend *et al.* 2011).

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