

An Exploratory Study on Critical Factors Affecting Work-Life Balance among Academicians: A Case Study

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In everyday life in this modern and sophisticated world, many of us forget about the importance of life balance. Most of us have to prioritize the work of the family to meet the needs of the day. This study aims to investigate the factors affected the work-life balance among academician in University Utara Malaysia. This study is very important because if the employee is productive, they will bring the vast transformation into the Educational Institutions and individual levels. Currently, a few literature shows the study is not widely explored in Malaysia yet and many studies of work-life balance have been carried out in western country. Therefore, this study takes an opportunity and also initiated to fill the gap by conducting and explore towards which factors that ideally affected the work-life balance among the academician at that one kind of public university in Malaysia. A study was implemented among academicians in UUM based on the available factors that discovered in the literature and from the experts. The data collections were done through survey. The method that we used in the study is Mann Whitney Test and the Spearman correlation since the data is not normal. The finding showed it is no different in the work-life balance between male and female academician. Meanwhile, the correlation analysis showed that several factors such as top management, work environment, family, and friends are highly correlated to each other. This study may provide an initial overview of the factors affecting the work-life balance and provide an awareness of this among academicians.

Keywords: Work-life balance, Academician, Mann-Whitney, Spearman correlation, Nonparametric

1. Introduction

Although so many definitions of work-life balance in literature had been discussing among the researchers, the one suitable for this study is coming from Greenhaus, Collins and Shaw (2003). He defined the that work-life balance as identical satisfaction, time, and engagement in each of which family and work scope regardless of family demands, family structure, job demands, financial pressures, and so on. The developing reason of why every employment must strive to achieve a healthy balance of work-life is because to maintain high performance and competent work as well as to assist in managing minimal stress between work and life. According to Allen, Herst, Bruck, and Sutton (2000) the most common effect experiences at work due to failed imbalance between consistent the family and the work are vulnerable to poor performance, fatigue, job turnover and job dissatisfaction. Work-life balance policies and practices becoming seriously increasing include to higher education and can find out the examples of good practice given in Scott (2002). By adopting this practice, it has accommodated institution to sustain supporting the flexible working arrangement and trigger awareness of the beneficiary of work-life balance approach (Manfredi and Holliday, 2004). Since this study is not fully been explored and investigate relating to substantial factors in the work-life balance which focuses to academician, so we take this opportunity to compare a work-life balance between male and female academician and to identify the relationship among the factors affecting the work-life balance in Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) as our aim.

2. Factors of Work-Life Balance

The study done by Roseli Wünsch Takahashi, Lemos Lourenco, Alexandre Sander, and Patricia da Silva Souza (2014) in Brazil aimed to understand the teaching and research effects management professor's work-family relation and they found a several conflicts distract their work-life balance. They found that

spending more time at work and time management is an enormous challenge for them because the professors need excessive time doing professional matters and they also fully engaged in teaching and research. The study also identified the factors of poor administration concerning distribute activities to professor in educational institutions, difficulties to create boundaries and marital support regarding to domestic activities are also affecting the professor's work-life balance.

According to research by Waters and Bardoel (2006) in the Australian University found that the respondent from academician claimed they are too stressed because of workloads when they have to take an extra administrative task. A focus group study consists of men, women academician and general staff also noted that they are continuing stress and difficult to complete the job due to incorporate the research and teaching. They added the leaves given are not fully useful and to go on holiday with a family is impossible to do.

Achour, Binti Abdul Khalil, Binti Ahmad, Mohd Nor, and Zulkifli Bin Mohd Yusof (2017) focused on work-family demands among female academicians in Malaysian universities. The present study highlighted the main factors of working family conflict (WFC), including long working hours, office work overload, household work and matters related to children. Also, in this study, management and supervisory support were found to be directly related to well-being, including life satisfaction, job satisfaction and family satisfaction. The definition of WFC is about the type of inter-role conflict, whether from family and work role demands that is always being problematic in some respect (Greenhause and Beutell, 1985; Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek and Rosenthal, 1964).

Another study is about the demographic antecedents towards turnover intention by Chong, Keh, Tan, and Tan (2013) among academic staff at private universities in Malaysia. One-way ANOVA and Independent sample t-test were adopted to test the hypotheses. The findings showed married academic staffs have a higher job commitment compared to unmarried staff because the unmarried staffs have higher intentions to leave an institution. This study is aligned to Akintayo (2010) argued that married staff do not easily migrate for jobs because it will be costly. The fact that, married academic staffs have a big responsibility to their family in terms of financial support especially among male academic staff.

Literally, contextual meaning of satisfaction has been asserted as to what extend the worker feels positively or negatively about their jobs (Locke, 1976; Odom, Boxx and Dunn, 1990). The study has been conducted by Nordin and Jusoff (2009) on job satisfaction as one of the indicators related to the work-life balance of academic staff of a public university in Malaysia. So far this study is an attempt made to disclose the current status of job satisfaction among academics in a public university in Malaysia using principal component analysis. The result of this investigation shows that there are moderate level of job satisfaction among academic staff in university and several factors in the demographic section like age, marital status, salary and current status have a significant impact on the level job satisfaction.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Data collection

This study was using the primary study by distributing questionnaires before doing the real data collection. We did a pilot study and take it to test the reliability of the questionnaire.

3.2 Reliability Test

The reliability of a scale means how free is random error which has two indicators almost been used widely are test-retest reliability and internal consistency. This study uses the second one of reliability type where it indicates the degree to which the items that makes up the scale are measuring the same attribute (Pallant, 2013). The most commonly used to be measured is Cronbach's coefficient alpha and the recommended minimum level is 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978).

3.3 Normality Test

For normality test, we used Shapiro-Wilk and Q-Q plot. We considered the Shapiro-Wilk because it is acknowledged as the main test in assessment normality because it has good power properties (Mendes and Pala, 2003). It is preferable to look both the normal quantile-quantile plot (Q-Q plot) also as the graphical method that basically used and effective diagnostic tool to indicate the data whether fall along the straight line. In the meantime, other commonly graphical test which are histogram, box-plot and stem-and-leaf plot are take account. The normality hypothesis testing is:

H_0 : The population is normally distributed.

H_1 : The population is not normally distributed.

According to Changyong, Hongyue, Naiji, Tian, Hua, and Ying (2014) claimed that log transformation in various circumstances does not help make data more normal and data less variable but sometimes make data more skewed and more variable. As due to shares little in common with the original data, the log-transformed data usually unable facilitate inferences regarding the original data.

3.4 Parametric or Non-parametric Test

Through screening data, the hypothesis testing for normality test is the data normally distributed. If the p -value is more than the significance value, we can say the data is normally distributed and continue with the independent samples t -test as the parametric test. Literally, t -test usually used where two independent groups A and B are divided into experimental subjects with cases, one group treated by A and otherwise (Kim, 2015). But in case the p -value found that it is less than the significance value, we say the data is non-normal distributed and will be proceeding with a nonparametric test which is a Mann-Whitney U test. Mann-Whitney test requires a general assumption which is random samples and independent observations. Meanwhile the variables are needed in this test is one categorical variable with two groups and one continuous variable (Pallant, 2013).

Table 1: Statistical Parametric Test versus Nonparametric Test

Test	Independent-samples t -test	Mann-Whitney U test
Hypothesis testing	$H_0: \mu_{\text{male}} = \mu_{\text{female}}$ $H_1: \mu_{\text{male}} \neq \mu_{\text{female}}$	$H_0: \theta_{\text{male}} = \theta_{\text{female}}$ $H_1: \theta_{\text{male}} \neq \theta_{\text{female}}$
Similarity	Two independent groups on a continuous measure.	Two independent groups on a continuous measure.
Difference	Comparing a mean of the two groups.	Comparing a median of the two groups.

3.5 Correlation

Correlation analysis is used to determine the relationship between two variables, whether it is strength or weak direction. The range value to indicate the good relationship is from -1 to 1 of correlation coefficient (r). The sign explains whether there is a positive or negative correlation of independent variables and dependent variables. There are two types of correlations which are Pearson product moment correlation if the data is normal and Spearman rank order correlation if the data is non-normal.

H_0 : There is no linear correlation between the factors that affected work-life balance.

H_1 : There is a linear correlation between the eight factors that affected work-life balance.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Reliability Test

The sample of this study is thirty-one of academicians from the School of Quantitative Science in Universiti Utara Malaysia by using questionnaire as the instrument. There are include nine factors considered in this study. There is job demand, top management, acknowledgement, work environment, family, friends, cost of living, and characteristics since they have a higher reliability value as shown in

Table 2.

Table 2: Reliabilistic Statistics on Instrument

Factors	Cronbach Alpha
1. Job demand	0.736
2. Top management	0.825
3. Acknowledgement	0.704
4. Work environment	0.728
5. Family	0.738
6. Friends	0.913
7. Cost of living	0.849
8. Characteristics	0.802

4.2 Normality Test

The next step after complete the reliability test, we proceed to test whether the data are normally distributed or the other way around. In this study, we use Shapiro-Wilk because the data are less than 50 and the hypothesis testing as below:

Table 3: Test of Normality

Factors	Shapiro-Wilk (p-value)
1. Job demand	0.00
2. Top Management	0.00
3. Acknowledgement	0.00
4. Work Environment	0.00
5. Family	0.00
6. Friends	0.00
7. Cost of Living	0.00
8. Characteristics	0.00

Since all the p -value for eight factors are less than $\alpha = 0.10$, then we reject H_0 . The data are non-normally distributed.

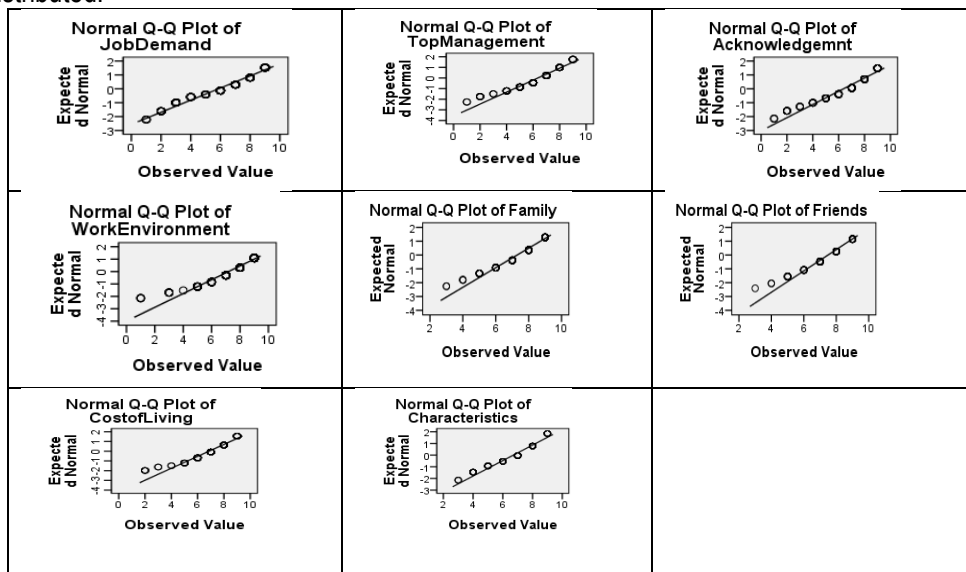


Figure 1: Normal Q-Q Plot

In Figure 1 of q-q plot, the observed value of each factor is plotted against the expected value of the normal distribution. Apparently, the result shows the data are not constantly lie along the straight line and

conclude there is non-normal distribution. Since the data is not normal, then we use the Mann-Whitney test as our comparison test.

4.3 Mann-Whitney Test

Next we continue to the non-parametric test that alternative of the independent-sample *t*-test. Undergo Mann-Whitney U test in this study is to identify the effect of gender of academician towards work-life balance.

Since the *p*-value = 0.129 is greater than the significant value $\alpha=0.10$, hence, we do not have enough evidence to reject the H_0 . It means there is no difference between Male and Female academician towards the work-life balance. So, we can say that the gender is no longer became the excuses because each of which has the biggest responsibility and demanding in daily life.

4.4 Correlation Analysis

In order to identify the relationships among the factors affecting work-life balance, the correlation analysis, which is Spearman rank correlation with 90% confidence interval being considered since the data is non-normal.

Table 4: Correlation Coefficient

Factor	Rho value
Top Management with Work Environment	0.803
Family with Work Environment	0.752
Friends with Characteristics	0.781

The result above shows the factors of top management, work environment, family, friends and characteristics are highly correlated among them respectively. That means, these factors have a strength relationship among them and directly affected the work-life balance. Ideally, the top management takes efforts to provide a conducive environment, even yet the satisfied accessible facilities for their employees to perform well at work. The family as well as influence the work environment because when the family is delighted it will help boost a joyful mood and productive in the workplace. For every individual there is a strong-willed friend beside to help and motivated always that change us to become successful and it was aligned with this study of factor friends influence the characteristics to achieve work-life balance.

5. Conclusion

It is found that there is no differences between gender that can be affected the work-life balance and it should possible to anybody achieve it. The correlated factors as such mentioned before will be the contribution to institutions making significant efforts to promote the work-life balance programs to ensure male and female academician is successful in handling stress, managing time between family and work, good performance in work and live in healthy and happy. The programs such as promoting the flexible schedule and also personal and professional balance where employees learn how to manage their time when dealing with multitask and collaborate.

The findings also have implications for academician with regard to a better understanding of factors could imbalance the work-life and provides intuitive while seeking the way how to keep a healthy work-life balance. Besides that, this study will give the chance to the government authorities to start the policy in providing day care centers or crèches at the workplace and healthcare delivery to remain the employee in the workforce in tandem moving towards TN50 which concerning the childcare centers starting with local authorities in Kuala Lumpur.

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