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THE EFFECT OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE, JOB STRESS, JOB MOTIVATION AND JOB SATISFACTION – A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.

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ABSTRACT

Women employees are vital in any organisation, including the public sector. The primary duty of the public sector is to support citizens by providing public services and products. It indeed signifies the importance of public employees in society. One primary concern regarding the perception of women employees toward job satisfaction during the Work-From-Home (WHM) policy has been debated among researchers. However, very few studies were found to examine public employees' job satisfaction. Thus, it is timely to explore the job satisfaction of public employees, especially women, due to the significant role that public employees play in assuring efficient delivery of public services and products, more particularly during the lockdowns following the Covid-19 pandemic. Assuming role conflicts faced by them, especially when working from home, this study aims to examine the factors that affect women public employees' job satisfaction during implementation the WFH policy in Malaysia. However, problems still prevail which include quality of services and accidents that affecting users and government's image. The problems are closely related to the employees in respect of their performance in managing their responsibility. Hence, there is great significance to examine factors that influence employee job satisfaction. This paper provides a literature review on the relationship between work-life-balance, work stress and job motivation on job satisfaction.

ABSTAK

Pekerja wanita adalah penting dalam mana-mana organisasi, termasuk sektor awam. Tugas utama sektor awam adalah untuk menyokong rakyat dengan menyediakan perkhidmatan dan produk awam. Ia sememangnya menandakan kepentingan pekerja awam dalam masyarakat. Satu kebimbangan utama mengenai persepsi pekerja wanita terhadap kepuasan kerja semasa dasar Work-From-Home (WHM) telah dibahaskan di kalangan penyelidik. Walau bagaimanapun, sangat sedikit kajian yang didapati untuk mengkaji kepuasan kerja pekerja awam. Oleh itu, adalah tepat pada masanya untuk meneroka kepuasan kerja kakitangan awam, terutamanya wanita, kerana peranan penting yang dimainkan oleh kakitangan awam dalam memastikan penyampaian perkhidmatan dan produk awam yang cekap, lebih-lebih lagi semasa sekatan pergerakan berikutan pandemik Covid-19. Dengan mengandaikan konflik peranan yang dihadapi oleh mereka, terutamanya apabila bekerja dari rumah, kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi kepuasan kerja pekerja wanita semasa pelaksanaan dasar WFH di Malaysia. Walau bagaimanapun, masalah masih berlaku termasuk kualiti perkhidmatan dan kemalangan yang menjejaskan pengguna dan imej kerajaan. Masalahnya berkait rapat dengan pekerja berkenaan dengan prestasi mereka dalam menguruskan tanggungjawab mereka. Oleh itu, terdapat kepentingan yang besar untuk mengkaji faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi kepuasan kerja pekerja. Kertas kerja ini menyediakan tinjauan literatur mengenai hubungan antara keseimbangan kerja-kehidupan, tekanan kerja, dan motivasi kerja mengenai kepuasan kerja.

Introduction

Women employees play a vital role in any organisation around the globe, including Malaysia's public sector. In Malaysia, women account for 38% of the workforce, one percentage point higher than the 37% average in Asia-Pacific. They also contribute about 32% to Malaysia's GDP, compared with 36% in Asia-Pacific. Along with building a more equitable workforce, bringing participation in the workforce by women closer to parity would have economic benefits (Koh et al., 2019). The primary duty of the public sector is to support citizens and provide public services and products, which also signifies the importance of public employees (Lu & Chen, 2022). During the pandemic, the government ruled out the workforce to work at home (Pekeliling Perkhidmatan Bilangan 5, 2020). Public agencies, including Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA) have adapted to this change by applying WFH, which had never been implemented before 2020. This policy dramatically impacts women employees since they have another important role at home. They face more challenges while working at home since they have multiple roles such as a mother, wife and motivator to their kids since the schools and colleges are closed too. Many organisations take employees' job satisfaction seriously, develop strategies to keep them satisfied and achieve a certain level of satisfaction in performing their jobs at home (Hassan et al., 2020). However, how much the WFH policy impacts women employees' satisfaction remains unknown. Only a few studies were found concerning the job satisfaction of public employees, especially during the lockdowns due to the Covid-19 outbreak, particularly in Malaysia.

Irawanto et al. (2021) revealed that WFH raised issues of work-life balance, work stress and job motivation, which resulted in WFH directly affecting employees' job satisfaction. Some employees may have faced more distractions when WFH while others may have not, which would have affected their job satisfaction, increasing or vice versa (Klerk et al., 2020). Therefore, this study aims to provide a literature review on the relationship between the factors contributing to job satisfaction, namely work-life balance, work stress and job motivation that impacts the job satisfaction of women public employees.

Problem Statement

Women in public sectors play significant roles in delivering the primary duty and function to citizens. However, the WFH policy introduced by the government in 2020 following the massive lockdowns gave rapid change to the working environment for public employees in Malaysia. A comparable situation can also be learned from the neighbouring country, Indonesia, where Indonesians have found it quite challenging to adapt to the WFH during the Covid-19 pandemic (Irawanto et al., 2021), (Sutarto et al., 2021), and (Purwanto et al., 2020). The issues surrounding WFH have been widely discussed in preceding literature (Rodr, 2020), (Papanikolaou & Schmidt, 2020), and (Marx et al., 2021). Those issues include dual roles, more burdens, and interruptions at home have impacted employees' job satisfaction. A similar impact also concerns women employees (Nath & Dwivedi, 2020a, Raišienė et al., 2021, Lott, 2020).

Nonetheless, many studies conducted were on the job satisfaction of employees of private sectors or private organisations (Hassan et al., 2020, Tanpipat et al., 2021, Hasan et al., 2021), while a few were concerned with job satisfaction among employees of public sectors or civil servants (Peters et al., 2010, Hotchkiss et al., 2015, and Quratulain & Khan, 2015). Public employees' job satisfaction needs serious attention, too, especially women. In addition, public service motivation is paramount in elevating public employees' job satisfaction as they play significant roles in improving public service (Lu & Chen, 2022). Concerning that, the job satisfaction of Malaysian women public employees needs to be addressed in implementing the WFH policy regarding individual factors such as work-life balance, job stress and job motivation, as women are assumed to be the home

caretaker. It is expected that they have to face some conflicts due to several factors, such as work-life balance, work stress, and work motivation which could affect their job satisfaction.

Literature Review

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction of employees is one of the notable studies conducted by researchers for years to gain better insight for the benefit of both employers and employees (Anafarta, 2011), (Sorensen & McKim, 2014), (Hayes et al., 2015), (Kabir et al., 2016), (Batura et al., 2016), (Zhang, 2016), (Jang et al., 2017), (Chong et al., 2018), (Zito et al., 2019), (Conte et al., 2019), (Talukder, 2019), (Feng & Savani, 2020), (J. Abbas et al., 2021), and (Id et al., 2022). Job satisfaction was first introduced by Hoppock back in 1935 (Saner & Eyupoglu, 2015). Hoppock described job satisfaction as meaning a person is truly satisfied with their job, considering psychological, physiological, and environmental circumstances (Munir & Rahman, 2016).

Job satisfaction is subjective from one person to another. It relates to an employee's mental, emotional, and state of mind to measure if they attain a certain level of job satisfaction (Taheri et al., 2020). Job satisfaction can be understood as a positive feeling and pleasurable emotion that an employee attains from work done or from what the employee experienced (Batura et al., 2016). It is closely related to one's happiness and good feeling when doing a job (Muafi, 2021). Similarly, job dissatisfaction means one's negative and unpleasurable emotions that an employee experienced in their position (Pakistan et al., 2020).

Thus, it varies among employees as the level of job satisfaction of a person is not the same as their colleague. Nevertheless, employees' happiness is paramount to creating loyalty with the organisations they work with (Batura et al., 2016) and retaining them (Adegoke et al., 2015; Wurie et al., 2016). It means job satisfaction also relates to employees' feelings of job insecurity. A highly satisfied employee will feel secure with his job, while an employee with low satisfaction will experience insecurity towards his career as he perceives threats (Mahmoud et al., 2021).

From the literature, job satisfaction refers more to one's feelings, emotions, and experiences toward the job. Factors affecting it can be either internal or external. One is stress, where Hassan et al. (2020) revealed that by removing tension, satisfaction would increase, and it also refers to the job description itself. Similarly, external factors can also influence job satisfaction, such as relationships with colleagues and supervisors, working conditions, and salary (Batura et al., 2016). Others focused on attitude toward the job, whereby a positive attitude will attract satisfaction while a negative attitude will attract dissatisfaction (Muafi, 2021). Some employees gain satisfaction in completing their tasks irrespective of their environment (Klerk et al., 2020), while others prefer to work in a working office environment as work coordination and team communication is more direct (Felstead & Henseke, 2017).

A satisfied employee signifies a happy and satisfying life as they enjoy doing their jobs and positively impact job performance (Aruldoss et al., 2021). It shows that a healthy work-life balance assumes high job satisfaction (Soomro et al., 2018). Increased job satisfaction indicates that an organisation is well-managed and demonstrates effective employee leadership (Muafi, 2021). Furthermore, job satisfaction significantly impacts job performance (Kabir et al., 2016). Satisfied employees can perform excellently, but unsatisfied employees demonstrate lower performance.

Moreover, work motivation also increases or decreases employees' job satisfaction (Musinguzi et al., 2018), and (J. Abbas et al., 2021). A highly motivated employee can reach job satisfaction (E. A. Rinaldi & Riyanto, 2021),

and (Lawson & Frimpong, 2021). This is why organisations try to effectively manage their employees to sustain their job satisfaction, which can reduce absenteeism and turnover intention (Rajamohan et al., 2019). By supporting employees' job satisfaction, organisations expect them to demonstrate high performance hence achieving organisational goals (Talukder, 2019).

Consequently, Taheri et al. (2020) suggested that employers should consider a better working environment as it facilitates employee job satisfaction. In addition, a public service motivation theory is discussed by scholars attributable to individuals and organisations that explain public employees' work attitudes, including job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Lu & Chen, 2022).

Muafi (2021) confirmed that employees who experience better job satisfaction are likelier to perform better than their dissatisfied counterparts. Therefore, women public employees' job satisfaction is crucial for an organisation to pay attention to, especially during implementing of the Work From Home (WFH) policy in Malaysia. As a result, it is critical to investigate predictors of women employees' performance in Malaysia. Given that the public sector is recognised as one of Malaysia's growth engines, they should give women public sector employees special attention to boost their productivity.

Job Satisfaction and WFH

WFH has been practised earlier in European countries like the Netherlands (Groen et al., 2018), and Spain (Rodr, 2020) as well as in Asia countries like India (Aruldoss et al., 2021a). WFH holds similar meanings and concepts in various literature like flexible working arrangements (Menezes & Kelliher, 2017), teleworking (Groen et al., 2018), remote working (Davies, 2021), and virtual Work (Karácsony, 2021). However, in Malaysia, it was only in 2020 the government introduced the WFH policy due to the lockdowns following the Covid-19 virus outbreak.

Implementing the WFH policy outcries issues due to various factors, domestically (Schade et al., 2021) or organisationally (Zito et al., 2021). Nevertheless, a positive link is found between WFH and job satisfaction (Karácsony, 2021). Irawanto et al. (2021) supported WFH as it positively affects job satisfaction, work-life balance, and autonomy. WFH was also proven to encourage positive performance, increase productivity, reduce absenteeism, and reduce organisation turnover (Klerk et al., 2020). WFH introduced due to the coronavirus had a positive effect on the job satisfaction of the employees. As a result of WFH, the relationship between manager and subordinate has improved, and the work-life balance has also developed favourably (Karácsony, 2021).

Nonetheless, factors to be considered relates typically to individuals in terms of work-life balance, work stress, and work motivation. Thompson (2019) and Ka-Hei Fung et al. (2021) indicated that work-life balance affected job satisfaction. Besides, Irawanto et al. (2021) and Galanti et al. (2021) revealed that work stress also impacts job satisfaction. Moreover, work motivation also increases or decreases employees' job satisfaction (Musinguzi et al., 2018), and (J. Abbas et al., 2021).

In addition, WFH is preferable to and appreciated by women employees than men as women can manage their home care and work flexibly, especially in European countries like Lithuania (Raišienė et al., 2021). It is suggested that a healthy work-life balance contributes to increasing job satisfaction of women employees working from home (Nath & Dwivedi, 2020a). On the other hand, an increased workload during WFH makes women feel more stressed. It decreases their job satisfaction, particularly in ASEAN countries like Indonesia, as women are not familiar with handling work tasks at home (Irawanto et al., 2021). However, most women employees adapted well to WFH when they sustained work motivation, ensuring job satisfaction (Schade et al., 2021).

Based on the literature, job satisfaction is an ambiguous term, a state of uncertainty, and rarely the same from one employee to another. Nonetheless, a generally accepted definition of job satisfaction can always be similar

in that it relates to the contentment and enjoyment of employees toward their job, which involves feelings and emotions from what they experience. Moreover, job satisfaction can be measured (Lawson & Frimpong, 2021) and (E. Rinaldi & Riyanto, 2021). Karácsony (2021) supported that WFH had an apparent positive effect on job satisfaction. However, it is to be examined how the current WFH policy in Malaysia effectively affects public employees' job satisfaction. As a result, organisations can benefit from it to provide a better working environment for their employees.

Factors Affecting Job Satisfaction During WFH

Based on the literature, various factors can affect job satisfaction whether they are from the individual or the organisational side. However, this study intends to tackle those factors concerning the individual or personal side that can affect job satisfaction, especially for women public employees when WFH. For this study, the dependent variable is job satisfaction while factors affecting it namely work-life balance, work stress, and work motivation are the independent variables and their relationships that this study focuses on.

Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance means balancing a person's work and personal life (Irawanto et al., 2021). Work includes the professional demands of the job and activities related to the position that person performs for an organisation. In contrast, personal includes non-related work matters such as family, child, and home care (Aruldoss et al., 2021).

However, work-life balance is not as simple as its name denotes. Researchers have long debated about finding an ideal work-life balance concept. Nonetheless, it is generally accepted that employees are said to have achieved work-life balance when they are happy with their work and personal life (Erdogan et al., 2022). Apart from that, employees face a demanding dual role conflict. Role conflicts always occur between job and individual demands at home (Kulik, 2019). The work-life balance concept urges employees to find a balance to such needs in which they can fulfil both job and homecare demands (Kahei Fung et al., 2021).

Many studies discussed work-life balance due to the increasing workforce consisting of women. As women are synonymous with responsibilities to take care of home demands, yet they are also working to earn for the family, the concept of work-life balance emerged rapidly (Nath & Dwivedi, 2020), (Lott, 2020), and (Raišienė et al., 2021). It is undeniable that WFH can interfere with work-life balance because of the increasing female workforce requiring family-friendly policies since they strive hard to balance work and personal demands (Irawanto et al., 2021). Working women always face conflicts between their professional and personal life (Alqahtani, 2020). Basically, work-life balance is achieved when one's physical, physiological, emotional, and psychological needs are fulfilled and satisfied (Hasan et al., 2021).

Furthermore, studies showed that work-life balance impacts job satisfaction. It was found that employee work-life balance is positively related to organisational pride and job satisfaction (Mas-Machuca et al., 2016). Irawanto et al. (2021) supported that work-life balance significantly affects job satisfaction for Indonesian workers during WFH. Similarly, Aruldoss et al. (2021) supported that work-life balance positively correlates with job satisfaction. Due to its importance, employers are encouraged to review and offer employees a better work-life balance policy to increase their job satisfaction, hence improving their commitment and productivity (Ngari & Mukururi, 2014). It means that as one can achieve a better work-life balance, one can also achieve better job satisfaction. Taheri et al. (2020) suggested that employers need to emphasise a better working environment for better job satisfaction among the employees.

As for women, work-life balance is hard to achieve as they assume dual roles as employees and home caretakers (Kaushik & Guleria, 2020). Women are difficult to maintain a balance between work and home demands when WFH is due to the dual responsibilities. However, Aruldoss et al. (2021) suggested that work-life balance positively impacts women's job satisfaction. In other words, women who are happy doing their job will similarly maintain enjoyment and happiness in their personal life and at home and vice versa. Work-life balance has also developed favourably due to teleworking (Karácsony, 2021). Thus, work-life balance has a positive impact on job satisfaction. Therefore, work-life balance is positively related to job satisfaction, which can consequently impact women public employees' job satisfaction.

Work Stress

Work stress is a condition that affects one's emotions, mental and capabilities (Hassan et al., 2020). Work overload is one of the critical challenges faced by employees when WFH during Covid-19 (Tanpipat et al., 2021). As work demands increase, employees feel more stressed when WFH due to double demands of work and home that they need to satisfy under one roof. Work demands that are incompatible with existing resources or facilities provided by employers will cause work stress and make employees feel more negative and dissatisfied, impacting their job satisfaction (Irawanto et al., 2021).

Work stress has increased during WFH due to little teamwork, less support, and decreased communication when performing the work instead of working in the office with colleagues (Felstead & Henseke, 2017). Galanti et al. (2021) found that social isolation was negatively related to stress when WFH. Pending tasks when WFH also leads to work stress (Galanti et al., 2021). Work stress is closely associated with burnout and negatively predicts job satisfaction (Mahmoud et al., 2021). Goswami & Dsilva (2019) also supported that work stress has negatively impacted job satisfaction.

In addition, N. Abbas et al. (2022) indicated a significant difference between men and women and between married and unmarried people in terms of work overload and role management when WFH and it serves different impacts on their job satisfaction. Kulik (2019) revealed that assuming role conflict for a long time will sometimes stress a person, especially a woman. Women synonyms with their primary responsibility to take care of the family and home matters (Alqahtani, 2020). WFH is associated with more stress, less happiness, and burnout for women (Mahmoud et al., 2021). Since they perform work tasks at home alongside the house chores, women are expected to be burdened and feel less happy, which leads to work stress that can affect their job satisfaction (Klerk et al., 2020). Women with children at home experience more distractions and are forced to attend more interruptions during WFH, increasing work stress and decreasing job satisfaction (Klerk et al., 2020). Therefore, work stress is negatively related to job satisfaction and consequently can impact women public employees' job satisfaction.

Work Motivation

The term motivation is complex. Motivation can be defined as something that sparks and energises human behaviour (Journal, 2020). Many scholars describe it as intrinsic and extrinsic (Studies et al., 2015). Extrinsic motivation comes from the factors surrounding the workplace, while intrinsic motivation is the inner drive that pushes oneself to achieve more (J. Abbas et al., 2021). In the work context, motivation is one's willingness to exert and attempt to the fullest toward organisational goals (Hotchkiss et al., 2015). Work motivation signifies excellence, agility, ability to transform and self-development, dedication, focus, and enthusiasm to contribute to organisational objectives and goals (Studies et al., 2015). Employees seek to be motivated at work and achieve high job satisfaction.

Work motivation refers to one's drive and enthusiasm to achieve specific goals when completing tasks. A highly motivated employee can perform better and contribute to increasing productivity and higher performance (Hotchkiss et al., 2015). Similarly, (Lu & Chen, 2022) supported that job satisfaction has increased among employees with higher public service motivation. In other words, work motivation can mean the desire or willingness to make an effort in one's work.

Moreover, appreciation and rewards are motivating factors that drive employees to achieve something desired by their employers, which can also lead to job satisfaction (Taheri et al., 2020). Khalid & Rathore (2018) suggested that motivating factors include the elements of money, employer attitude, incentives, and a meaningful piece of work. All of these can increase the employees' work motivation, increasing their job satisfaction (J. Abbas et al., 2021).

However, work motivation can also decrease when WFH. Employees are facing emotional and psychological strains, which reduce their work motivation hence reducing work commitment (Tanpipat et al., 2021). Low work motivation can also affect employees' job satisfaction, leading them to underperform (N. Abbas et al., 2021). Thus, employers need to evaluate and reformulate strategies that can help to increase and boost their employees' work motivation. Employers may have demonstrated adequate leadership to stimulate employee motivation, assuring job satisfaction (Musinguzi et al., 2018). A highly motivated employee will attain high satisfaction and vice versa (Hassan et al., 2020). In addition, public service motivation is paramount in elevating public employees' job satisfaction as they play significant roles in improving public service (Lu & Chen, 2022). Therefore, work motivation is positively related to job satisfaction, which can consequently impact women public employees' job satisfaction.

The Two-Factor Theory in Job Satisfaction

The hygiene theory is a well-known theory among researchers in measuring job satisfaction. This theory lies in the two-factor approach developed by Herzberg in 1959 that there are two dimensions of job satisfaction: motivation and hygiene. It is also known as Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory or dual factor theory (Pakistan et al., 2020). Herzberg identified it as motivating and hygiene factors affecting job satisfaction. The approach means that motivating factors refer to job satisfaction or are known as satisfiers while hygiene factors relate to job dissatisfaction or are known as dissatisfiers (Bhatt et al., 2022). Employers emphasise motivating factors to ensure their employees achieve job satisfaction that leads to retention and loyalty (Alrawahi et al., 2020). However, the hygiene factors cannot be disregarded by employers due to its importance in mitigating employees' dissatisfaction, which can also minimise employee turnover (Chun Chiat & Aisyah Panatik, 2019).

Furthermore, the theory defines motivating factors as what lies within the job, such as recognition, achievement, responsibility, and growth (Alrawahi et al., 2020). On the other hand, hygiene factors are related to the job surrounding or environment, like workplace conditions, supervision, relationship with co-workers, and policies (Chun Chiat & Aisyah Panatik, 2019). Thus, these two dimensions brought by Herzberg in the two-factor theory are interchangeably indispensable for job satisfaction. It still holds immediate attention for organisations to develop adequate policies for managing employees. The hygiene factors are paramount in this study as it concerns the WFH policy in Malaysia, which can also affect the job satisfaction of women public employees.

Therefore, the factors discussed in this study, namely work-life balance, work stress, and work motivation, are founded on Herzberg's two-factor theory to examine the job satisfaction of women public employees. Based on this theory, work-life balance and work stress factors are within the hygiene factors which relate to dissatisfiers. In contrast, work motivation derives from the motivating factors as satisfiers to employees' job satisfaction. Table 2.1 summarises the characteristics in Herzberg's Theory (Alshmemri et al., 2017).

Table 2.1: Summary of Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

Motivation Factors (Satisfiers)	Hygiene Factors (Dissatisfiers)
Performance and achievement	Salary
The work itself	Working conditions
Personal growth	Policies and rules
Responsibility	Supervision
Recognition	The physical workplace
Job status	Relationship with colleagues
Opportunities for advancement	Relationship with supervisor
Improving these factors helps to increase job satisfaction.	Improving these factors helps to decrease job dissatisfaction.

Conceptual Framework

This study proposes the following conceptual framework to show the nexus between the variables.
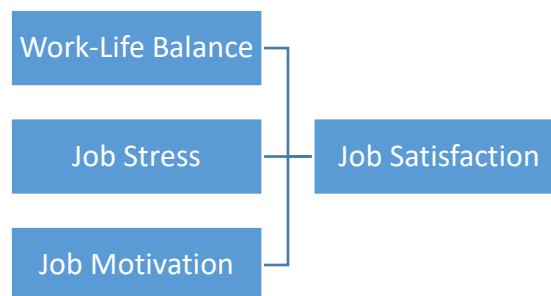

Figure 1: Nexus between work-life balance, work stress, work motivation, and job motivation

Hypothesis

This study focuses on the independent variables: work-life balance, work stress, and motivation. It aims to examine the influence of these variables on the dependent variable, namely job satisfaction among women in Malaysia's public employees during the WFH policy's implementation. Based on the above literature review. This study proposes the following hypothesis.

Work-Life Balance and Job Satisfaction

Work-life balance is hard to achieve for women as they assume dual roles as employees and home caretakers (Kaushik & Guleria, 2020). Women struggle to balance work and home demands when WFH is due to

the dual responsibilities. However, work-balance life balance has also developed favourably due to teleworking (Karácsony, 2021). Aruldoss et al. (2021) suggested that work-life balance positively impacts women's job satisfaction. In other words, women who enjoy and are happy doing their job will similarly work stress to maintain enjoyment and happiness in their personal life and at home and vice versa. Thus, work-life balance has a positive impact on job satisfaction. As such, this study proposes that work-life balance can affect Malaysian women public employees' job satisfaction. It is positive motivation related to job satisfaction. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: An increase in work-life balance will increase women public employees' job satisfaction.

Work Stress and Job Satisfaction

WFH is associated with more stress, less happiness, and burnout for women (Mahmoud et al., 2021). Kulik (2019) revealed that assuming role conflict for a long time will sometimes stress a woman. Since they perform work tasks at home alongside the house chores, women are expected to be burdened and feel less happy, which leads to work stress that can affect their job satisfaction (Klerk et al., 2020). Women with children at home experience more distractions and are forced to attend more interruptions during WFH, increasing work stress and decreasing job satisfaction (Klerk et al., 2020). Thus, work stress has a negative impact on job satisfaction. As such, this study proposes that work stress can affect Malaysian women public employees' job satisfaction. It is negatively related to job satisfaction. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: A decrease in work stress will increase women public employees' job satisfaction.

Work Motivation and Job Satisfaction

Employees face emotional and psychological strains during WFH which reduce their work motivation and hence reduce work commitment (Tanpipat et al., 2021). Low work motivation can also affect employees' job satisfaction, leading them to underperform (N. Abbas et al., 2022). Employers may have demonstrated adequate leadership to stimulate employees' work motivation, hence assuring job satisfaction (Musinguzi et al., 2018). A highly motivated employee will attain high satisfaction and vice versa (Hassan et al., 2020). Thus, work motivation has a positive impact on job satisfaction. As such, this study proposes that work motivation can affect Malaysian women public employees' job satisfaction. It is positively related to job satisfaction. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Increased work motivation will increase women public employees' job satisfaction.

Conclusion

This paper contributes to the relationship between work-life balance, job stress, and work motivation affecting employees' job satisfaction in various industries. This review provides vital insight into the need to examine further the job satisfaction of women employees in the public section of Malaysia under the identified problem. Undoubtedly, employees are valuable resources in which their performance dictates the attainment of organisational value. Most importantly, women employees in the public section play a significant role in contributing to Malaysia's aspiration towards sustainable growth as envisaged by Malaysia's aptly renowned policy, the Shared Prosperity Vision 2030. It shall be noted, it is important to investigate that exploring one of the significant concerns regarding employees, namely job satisfaction is significantly pertinent to be conducted on public employees, especially women. Challenges during implementing the WFH policy in Malaysia outcry numerous issues that can impact job satisfaction. This literature proved that work-life balance, work stress, and motivation might influence job satisfaction. Therefore, this study is hoped to be an eye-opener on the importance of job satisfaction for women public employees to ensure the efficient delivery of public services and products to citizens.

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