

Analyzing Work Stress, Job Satisfaction and Organizational Citizenship Behavior: A Case of Private Higher Learning Institution in Kuala Lumpur

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Abstract: *University colleges in Malaysia have to look for new ways to conduct their businesses to be competitive because of high competition from local and international higher education institutions, ever-changing business environments, shifting preferences in the education market, government requirements, and advancements in global technology. The search for and implementation of new methods, on the other hand, imposed a strain on the workforce. This tension may create stress, affect job satisfaction and citizenship behavior. Hence, a research was carried out to see if stress, satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behavior are linked. The study selected one of the college universities in Malaysia, UCA, and obtained 226 data from both academic and administrative workers. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression techniques. Results showed that work stress influenced job satisfaction. Furthermore, job satisfaction also affected organizational citizenship behavior. The study is critical because it could assist management in developing intervention programs that will result in not just stronger human capital but also a good attitude towards UCA.*

Keywords: mental health, performance, motivation, education, human resource

1. Introduction

University College A (hereafter is called UCA) is one of the private higher education institutions in Malaysia operating under intense business operation due to the implementation of trimester sessions, development of new academic programs, compliance with accreditation and audit certifications, and adaptation to changes in market preferences. The demand in working in such situations could lead to work stress among the staff in UCA. A test conducted by the Counseling and Alumni Unit in April 2019 (A. Nik Mazlinahaiza, personal communication, October 1, 2019) found that the stress level for 23% of the respondents was outside of the 'normal' area. Furthermore, 56% of respondents had anxiety levels outside the normal range, and 19% of respondents had problems with depression. While not much, these figures provide signals on stress among staff in UCA. In addition, a report by the Quality and Audit Division revealed that the percentage of the staff satisfied working in UCA was below the performance standard set by the headquarter. The factors contributing to the unfavorable performance included work content and load, promotion, recognition, compensation, and facilities (Hirnis, 2019, November).

The issue of work stress and job satisfaction is vital. Highly stressed workers would affect their emotional and physical health, and consequently, job performance (Cassidy, 2011). Following the Affective Event Theory, stress and job satisfaction are related, and these affective factors could, in turn, influence the behavior in an organization (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). One of the essential behaviors is organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). OCB measures workers' altruism, courtesy, civic virtue, sportsmanship, and conscientiousness; these sorts of conducts are determined internally and reach out past what is needed by their conventional set of working responsibilities (Jehad et al., 2011). And because OCB means workers behave beyond the call of their formal duty and obligations, the behavior is associated with productivity and performance (Tambe & Shanker, 2014).

The study of work stress, job satisfaction, and OCB are needed in the context of UCA. This is because, in the end, these factors may contribute to the overall organizational performance of UCA, be it financial or non-financial. Therefore, a research to study the relationships of job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behavior was conducted.

2. Literature Review

Work Stress

Person-environment fit (P-E) proposed that work-related pressure is an aftereffect of an individual's incapability to fit with the working environment, whether the individual's talents are helpful to perform assigned tasks, and the adequacy of an organization's supports (French et al., 1974). Later, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) added that stress is due to the relationship between an individual and the working environment, which leads to the individual's perception of his or her unsuitability with the organization.

Stressors or the factors that make the workers "unfit" with the work environment can be due to several factors. According to Seňová and Antošová (2014), work-related stress can be caused externally and internally. These include working environment, organizational culture, work demands, relationships, communication, lifestyle, way of thinking, and even mental attitude. Later, Mukosolu et al. (2015) found that job demand, co-worker support, depression, anxiety, focus, and venting of emotion and self-blame were why academic and non-academic staff in one of the public universities in Malaysia stressed. Arma and Noor Hassim (2016) found that factors associated with work stress among academicians in one of the research universities in Malaysia were career development, research, and teaching. The university's condition for professional development, conceptualizing research problems, and development of course content was the top contributing factor for each of the stressors. And a study conducted by Amirul Arbae et al. (2019) found that work demand, relationships in an organization, and role were among the top factors affecting stress among academicians at the higher institutions in Malaysia. Based on the past findings, work stressors can be work demand, relationship and support, recognition, and organizational resources.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a positive feeling resulting from a favorable evaluation of job experience (Locke, 1983). In other words, job satisfaction reflects a worker's like or dislike towards his or her job (Spector, 1997). Few elements were viewed as related to job satisfaction. Kamaruddeen et al. (2019) found that factors contributing to job satisfaction among construction site artisans in Kedah were workplace environment and facilities, personal factors, and supervision. Hasan and Aljunid (2019) found challenging work contributed the highest for job satisfaction, while salary was the main contributing factor towards job dissatisfaction. In studying a single factor,

Idris et al. (2018) demonstrated that employee empowerment influenced job satisfaction of Malaysians who worked in Kuala Lumpur.

The previous findings showed that job satisfaction factors could be derived either intrinsic or extrinsic. Intrinsic satisfaction was factors like challenging work and empowerment, while extrinsic satisfaction was factors such as pay, relationship, supervision, and facilities. These findings are confirmed to Herzberg's Two Factor theory that associates motivator factor to job satisfaction and hygiene factors to no job satisfaction.

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)

Organ (1988) claimed that OCB is demonstrated by committed employees, which reflected "good soldier syndrome." By definition, OCB represents voluntary individual behavior, not formally recognized within the organization's policies, but promotes efficiency and effectiveness of the organization. OCB is associated with the behaviors of performing organizations as it contributes to the social and psychological supports for task performance (Organ, 1997). OCB cannot be forced but based on the workers' need for belongingness and achievement (Tambe & Shanker, 2014).

Several dimensions construct OCB. The basic ones are five elements, including conscientiousness, sportsmanship, civic virtue, courtesy, and altruism. Conscientiousness refers to behavior that is not required by workers' formal responsibilities; sportsmanship reflects workers' willingness to work and tolerate inconvenience; civic virtue is the dutiful and participative behavior; courtesy demonstrates workers' behavior that prevents creating problems; and altruism simply means helpfulness (Tambe & Shanker, 2014).

Affective Event and The Two-Factor Theory

Affective Events Theory focuses on the structure, causes, and consequences of affective experiences at work (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Affective work behaviors are explained by employee psychological conditions, which determine how an individual manages his or her working environment. Stress exists due to affective processes whereby workers make judgments and interpret whether they could fit with the working environment. If the workers found that they could cope with the working environment (such as job demand, physical facilities, relationship with superiors and co-workers), they shall like their job. In other words, stress affects job satisfaction. Satisfaction then influences behavior. When a worker likes his or her job, he or she will behave positively as the feeling of belongingness to and love the organization is built.

The Two-Factor Theory also explains job satisfaction. Herzberg argued that job satisfaction is caused by intrinsic aspects, including achievement, recognition, challenge, responsibilities, and advancement that would satisfy the basic need of personal growth and self-actualization. In contrast, job dissatisfaction is caused by extrinsic aspects, including organization policy and administration, supervision, interpersonal relation, job security, working condition, and compensation (Miner, 2005).

Work Stress and Job Satisfaction

While high job satisfaction is very much aim, increased work stress is not something to look forward to by any organization. Hence it is expected that work stress and job satisfaction are negatively correlated. Most past studies concurred with this idea; for example, a study of community pharmacists in Klang Valley by Teong et al. (2019), a survey of lecturers aged less than 45 years old by Chichra et al. (2019), and the investigation of staff in one of the hospitals

in Korea by Kim and Kim (2019). These studies found negative and significant relations between job satisfaction and stress. However, some findings were found differently, such as by Prasetyo et al. (2019), where work stress was found to have a positive but not significant relationship with job satisfaction. Hence the first hypothesis of this research is:

H1: Work stress and job satisfaction is negatively related among the staff in UCA

Job Satisfaction and Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Job satisfaction should influence OCB because when a person is delighted with his or her job, he or she will show a positive attitude and hence behavior towards the organization. Many studies found the positive contribution of job satisfaction on OCB in the past. For example, Jehad et al. (2011) found that job satisfaction measured by both intrinsic satisfaction and extrinsic satisfaction were significantly and positively associated with OCB. Similarly, Ibrahim et al. (2018) found a strong correlation between job satisfaction and OCB among academicians in one of the higher learning institutions in Malaysia. Later, an investigation conducted on the employees of the manufacturing and service sector in India by Saxena et al. (2019) also found a positive relationship between job satisfaction and OCB. Hence the second hypothesis of this research is:

H2: Job satisfaction and OCB is positively related among the staff in UCA

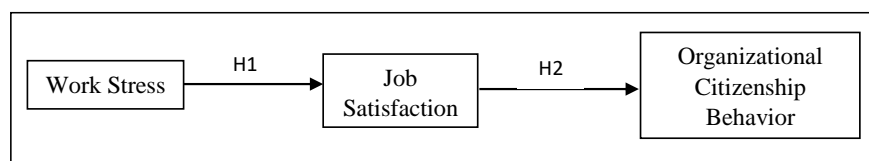


Figure 1: Research Framework

3. Methodology

This study is a quantitative research. Questionnaires were distributed to all staff (academic and non-academic) in UCA. Data were analyzed using regression analysis. All questions were in Malay, as respondents understand this language more. The measurement for work stress was adapted from William and Cooper (1997). The measurement for organizational citizenship behavior is based on the items built by Podsakoff and MacKenzie (1989). Job satisfaction items were adopted from Warr, Cook, and Wall (1979). All items were agree/disagree answers, except for one single item with a 4-point scale (i.e., very agree, agree, disagree, very disagree) for each variable, which is used in the regression analysis. A total of 226 data were successfully collected and analyzed.

4. Findings

Mean and Standard Deviation

On average, the age of the respondents was between 31 to 40 years old (i.e., mean = 3.32). As for the academic qualification, most respondents have a Bachelor's Degree education (i.e., mean = 4.32). The average working years of respondents' services is between 11 to 15 years (i.e., mean = 3.62). In terms of work stress, respondents acknowledged that they did not suffer from it based on the mean of 2.48. Respondents also have a moderate level of organizational citizenship behavior based on the mean of 2.48. Similarly, respondents also have an acceptable

level of job satisfaction, based on the mean of 2.73. The mean and standard deviations are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation

| | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|-------------------------------------|------|----------------|
| Age of respondent | 3.32 | .785 |
| Education qualification | 4.32 | 1.322 |
| Years of services | 3.62 | 1.265 |
| Work Stress | 2.48 | .709 |
| Organizational Commitment Behaviour | 2.94 | .462 |
| Job Satisfaction | 2.73 | .706 |

Work Stress, Job Satisfaction and Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Table 2 and Table 3 show the findings of regression analysis. From Table 2, it was found that work stress had negative relationship with job satisfaction ($p = .001$, $\beta = -.228$). In other words, the higher the work stress, the lower the job satisfaction. The finding confirmed the first hypothesis.

Table 1: Relationship between Job Stress and Job Satisfaction

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | | t | Sig. |
|--------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--|--------|------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | | |
| 1 (Constant) | 3.300 | .168 | | | 19.624 | .000 |
| Work Stress | -.227 | .066 | -.228 | | -3.468 | .001 |

Table 3 shows that job satisfaction had positive relationship with organizational citizenship behavior ($p = .000$, $\beta = .279$). That is, the higher the job satisfaction of staff, the higher their citizenship behavior. The finding confirmed the second hypothesis.

Table 3: Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Citizenship Behavior

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | | t | Sig. |
|------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--|--------|------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | | |
| 1 (Constant) | 2.441 | .119 | | | 20.537 | .000 |
| Job satisfaction | .183 | .042 | .279 | | 4.356 | .000 |

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Results from the regression analysis coincide with the affective event theory. In UCA, staff's interpretation of their 'fit' with the institution would determine their job satisfaction, influencing their behavior. That is, if staff feels that he or she could cope with the work demand in UCA, he or she would love the job and demonstrate citizenship behavior such as helping peers, abide rules and regulation, voluntary actions, and taking care of the institution's image.

Even though the findings might be expected, there are times when simple matters are taken for granted and being overlooked. Hopefully, UCA's management would continuously monitor the work stress level of the staff regardless of positions and provide development training.

Lately, the pandemic Covid-19 has added another reason for stress for workers. Coping with children's school works, losing income, increasing debt, deteriorating health, losing social contacts, and separating from spouse and family, are just some of the issues that occurred. These issues provide additional burdens that could affect stress at the workplace. If business organizations are unable to design intervention programs to help their workers to manage stress, job dissatisfaction might incur; and this will, in turn, may reduce citizenship behaviors. Perhaps, future research could reinvestigate the impact of works stress, job satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behavior post-pandemic.

This study is not without some limitations. One, the findings presented here apply only to UCA. And two, the regression analysis was done to analyze one single item of work stress, job satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behavior. More items may generate different findings.

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