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Factors Influencing Job Satisfaction: A Case Study at Credit Counselling and Debt Management Agency (AKPK), Malaysia

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Abstract: Employee performance, retention, and organizational success are crucially impacted by job satisfaction. While a multitude of prior studies have identified its determinants, less attention has been devoted to understanding the drivers of job satisfaction in the context of financial counseling in Malaysia. The goal of this research is to understand the level of job satisfaction of employees at the Credit Counselling and Debt Management Agency (AKPK) in Kuala Lumpur by examining the effects of work-life balance, extrinsic rewards, intrinsic rewards, employee empowerment, organizational support, and perceived organizational support. A quantitative approach was utilized to collect data from a structured questionnaire administered to 127 employees. The data was processed and analyzed statistically using SPSS version 28.0, where correlation and multiple regression analyses were performed to ascertain the predictors of job satisfaction. This study found strong relationships between intrinsic rewards ($r = 0.751$, $p < 0.01$) and perceived organizational support ($r = 0.734$, $p < 0.01$) with job satisfaction. Moreover, multiple regression analysis showed both intrinsic rewards ($\beta = 0.482$, $p < 0.01$) and perceived organizational support ($\beta = 0.290$, $p = 0.002$) strongly predicted the outcome.

Keywords: *Job Satisfaction, Work-Life Balance, Intrinsic Rewards, Extrinsic Rewards, Employee Empowerment, Perceived Organizational Support.*

1. Introduction and Background

Employee job satisfaction significantly impacts workplace performance, retention, and organizational success. A satisfied workforce is more productive, committed, and innovative, making it essential for sustainability (Robbins & Judge, 2017). Hoppock (1935) explains job satisfaction as a result of psychological, physiological, and environmental factors affecting employees' contentment with their roles. In Malaysia, job satisfaction is particularly crucial as organizations adapt to globalization, technological advancements, and workforce diversity. Findings demonstrate moderate satisfaction levels among Malaysian workers determined by workload, incentives, work-life balance, and organizational support (Hasan & Aljunid, 2019; Ganesan, Shanmugan & Subramaniam. 2017).

Job satisfaction is crucial for the Credit Counselling and Debt Management Agency (AKPK) to understand, considering its high-pressure activities of financial education, advice, and debt management. As a main organization in Malaysia's financial sector, AKPK's effectiveness relies on the performance of its human resources. This study investigates the relationship between job satisfaction and other factors such as work-life balance, extrinsic rewards, intrinsic rewards, empowerment, and perceived organizational support, relevant in high-pressure settings such as AKPK. Drawing from Herzberg's Motivation Theory, the study elucidates these factors' influence on job satisfaction. Findings will contribute to organizational behavior research and offer practical recommendations to HR practitioners and policymakers to enhance job satisfaction.

2. Literature Review

Job satisfaction has been a central area of research due to its inherent impact on employee commitment, retention, and organizational performance (Hoppock, 1935; Robbins & Judge, 2017). Various factors influence job satisfaction, which can be broadly categorized into intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, and organizational and contextual dimensions (Mosadegh & Yarmohammadian, 2006). This study focuses on five concern variables: work-life balance, extrinsic rewards, intrinsic rewards, employee empowerment, and perceived organizational support, according to Herzberg's Motivation Theory.

Herzberg's Motivation Theory

Herzberg's two-factor theory segregates job satisfaction determinants into motivators (intrinsic factors) and hygiene factors (extrinsic factors). Motivators such as recognition and personal growth lead to job satisfaction, and hygiene factors such as pay and conditions of work prevent dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1968). This theory was chosen due to its applicability to the identification of drivers and inhibitors of satisfaction. This theory has been examined in research, which verifies that intrinsic motivators have a stronger impact on satisfaction than hygiene factors (Aziz, Noor & Fauziyana, 2021).

Work-life Balance

Work-life balance (WLB) refers to the balance of work and personal life. Studies show that a successful WLB increases workplace satisfaction by reducing work stress and absenteeism (Panda & Sahoo, 2021). Low-quality WLB, in contrast, equates to lower job satisfaction and turnover (Lavanya & Sree, 2021). In Malaysia, scholars have highlighted the organizational policy as being key in promoting the practice of WLB in an effort to preserve employee health (Rashmi et al. 2021). Another study by Agarwal and Bhakuni (2024) explains the beneficial impact of a healthy harmony between professional duties and personal life on organizational performance and employee well-being. The results depict a significant positive correlation between work-life balance and job satisfaction, which means that the employees who have a healthier balance tend to be more satisfied with their jobs.

Extrinsic Rewards

Extrinsic rewards, such as salary, bonuses, and promotion, are hygiene factors of Herzberg's theory and prevent dissatisfaction but do not necessarily lead to satisfaction (Mottaz, 1985). Malaysian studies, including Zuraida and Chandrakala (2020), show that these rewards are significant predictors of employee retention and performance. However, their long-term impact on job satisfaction may be limited compared to intrinsic motivators (Siti & Nadzirah, 2018). Muhamad et al. (2024) emphasize the crucial roles of intrinsic rewards, such as personal growth and recognition, to improve employee job satisfaction in private and public organizations.

Intrinsic Rewards

Intrinsic rewards such as recognition, significance of work, and autonomy play a crucial role in improving job satisfaction. Herzberg (1968) emphasized that intrinsic motivators generate long-term job satisfaction. Mosquera Ruiz and Torres (2020) study demonstrated that intrinsic rewards greatly increase employees' motivation and commitment. Autonomy and task variety are increasingly valued in Malaysia, in accordance with global trends (Groblena & Tokarz-Kocik, 2017). Muhammad Kolawole, Ayo and Sulaiman, (2024) study further confirms the important roles played by intrinsic rewards such as personal growth and appreciation in the promotion of job satisfaction among employees and advises that managers ought to implement intrinsic and extrinsic rewards as primary drivers of job satisfaction.

Employee Empowerment

Employee empowerment involves the delegation of control and decision authority to employees. This enhances their sense of pride and satisfaction (Jalal, 2016). Empowerment is, by research such as that of Idris, Othman and Yusof (2018), also identified as a crucial impetus in creating a healthy working environment in Malaysia. Castrillon (2024) highlights how employee empowerment, through autonomy, trust, and participation in decision-making, boosts engagement, innovation, and productivity. She is convinced that organizations embracing this tactic enjoy job satisfaction, staff retention, and overall performance.

Perceived Organizational Support

Perceived organizational support (POS) is the employees' perception of how much their organization cares for their well-being and contributions. Empirical evidence has documented that POS establishes trust, which generates feelings of belongingness, enhancing job satisfaction (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison & Sowa, 1986). POS has been revealed to be highly correlated with job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behaviors in Malaysian studies, e.g., Ghazali, Salleh and Omar (2018).

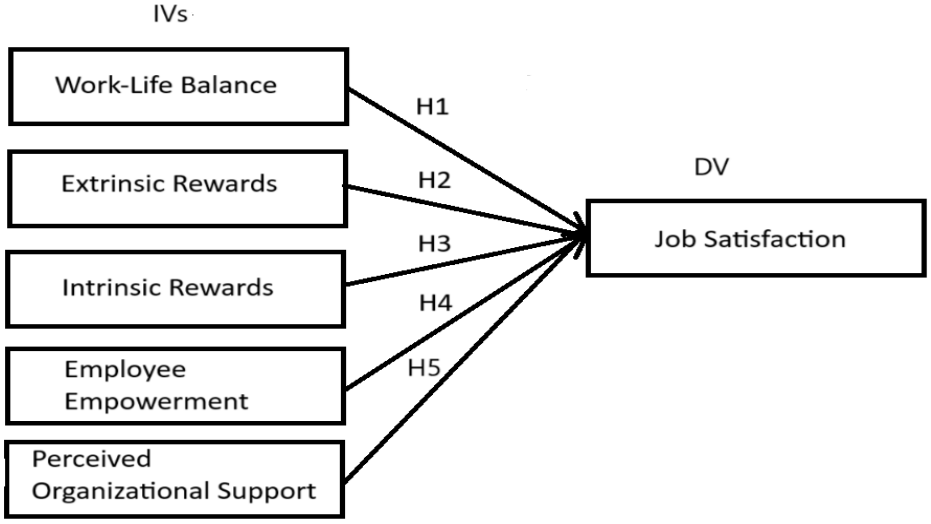
Relationships Between Variables and Job Satisfaction

In-depth research has established principal correlations between the variables and work satisfaction. POS and intrinsic rewards are always better predictors (Maan, Noor & Ahmad, 2020; Pancasila, Purba & Setiawan, 2020). The power of extrinsic rewards and empowerment sometimes varies depending on organizational contexts, but with little or no influence in some cases (Noor & Zainordin, 2018).

Theoretical Framework

This study framework (Figure 1) is based on Herzberg's theory and previous empirical findings, with emphasis placed on work-life balance, extrinsic rewards, intrinsic rewards, employee empowerment, perceived organizational support, and job satisfaction.

Figure 1: Research framework



3. Methodology

The quantitative approach was followed by this study in exploring factors of employees' job satisfaction at Credit Counselling and Debt Management Agency (AKPK), Headquarters, Kuala Lumpur. The research process entails research design, population and sampling, data collection, and data analysis. The research design is descriptive, cross-sectional and aims to examine cause-and-effect relations between job satisfaction and independent variables. Correlational research is appropriate for the determination of patterns and associations among variables, while the cross-sectional design allows data to be collected at a single point in time (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). The sample in this study consists of 180 AKPK Headquarters Kuala Lumpur staff members. From the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sampling table, the sample was 123. Simple random sampling was applied to provide an equal chance for each and every participant to have a chance (Pace, 2021). There were 127 valid responses in the data, a number higher than the intended sample size, which made the result more reliable.

Data Collection

Data collection was through a guided online questionnaire using Google Forms. There were seven sections in the online survey: Demographics, Job Satisfaction, Work-Life Balance, Extrinsic Rewards, Intrinsic Rewards, Employee Empowerment, and Perceived Organizational Support. The Likert scale used a five-point measure to ensure consistency and easy analysis (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

Questionnaire Design and Pre-Test

A pre-test among six AKPK staff members revealed Cronbach's alpha coefficients of above 0.75 for all variables, excluding work-life balance, reflecting high reliability in total (Perry, Brook & Harrison, 2004).

Data Analysis
Data analysis was carried out using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 28.0. Analysis comprised:

Descriptive Statistics: To summarize demographic data and variables.
Reliability Analysis: Using Cronbach's alpha to assess internal consistency.
Correlation Analysis: Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to evaluate the strength and direction of relationships between variables (Senthilnathan, 2019).
Multiple Regression Analysis: This technique revealed the best predictors of job satisfaction out of the independent variables. A significance threshold of $p < 0.05$ was utilized to test hypotheses (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2014).

Ethical Considerations and Limitations of Methodology
The study adhered to ethical research practices. Participation was voluntary, and anonymity was ensured to protect respondents' identities. The research received approval from the Ethics Approval Committee. The study's focus on AKPK Headquarters in Kuala Lumpur limits generalizability to other branches or sectors. Additionally, reliance on self-reported data may introduce bias.

4. Results

Demographic Analysis
The study achieved a response rate of 70.5%, with 127 valid responses collected from 180 employees at the Credit Counselling and Debt Management Agency (AKPK) Headquarters, Kuala Lumpur. The demographic profile revealed; Gender: 63.8% female and 36.2% male, Age: 44.9% of respondents were below 30 years old, 26% aged 31–40, Education: 52% held a bachelor's degree, with 24.4% holding a diploma and Position: Executives formed the largest group (42.5%), followed by clerical staff (31.5%).

Reliability Analysis
Cronbach's alpha values showed high reliability for most variables, except work-life balance ($\alpha = 0.52$), which led to its exclusion. The remaining variables, including intrinsic rewards ($\alpha = 0.871$) and perceived organizational support ($\alpha = 0.932$), demonstrated strong internal consistency.

Descriptive Analysis
Intrinsic rewards had the highest mean score ($M = 4.2113$, $SD = 0.66284$), indicating their prominence in influencing job satisfaction. Job satisfaction had a mean of 3.937 ($SD = 0.73731$), reflecting an overall positive sentiment among employees.

Correlation and Regression Analysis
The regression model explained 64% of the variance in job satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.640$). Intrinsic rewards ($\beta = 0.482$, $p < 0.01$) and POS ($\beta = 0.290$, $p = 0.002$) were the strongest predictors, as in Table 1.

Table 1: Regression analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.276	0.304		0.907	0.366
IV2: Extrinsic rewards	0.09	0.056	0.111	1.599	0.113
IV3: Intrinsic rewards	0.482	0.103	0.412	4.701	0.050
IV4: Employee empowerment	0.105	0.099	0.082	1.063	0.290
IV5: Perceived organizational support	0.290	0.090	0.300	3.215	0.002

$R = 0.800$, $R^2 = 0.640$
Adjusted $R^2 = 0.628$
F-statistic = 54.199
df = (4,122), Sig. = 0.000

Summary of Hypotheses

Intrinsic Rewards and Perceived Organizational Support were significant predictors of job satisfaction, supporting the hypotheses. Extrinsic Rewards and Employee Empowerment showed moderate correlations but were not significant predictors. Work-life Balance was excluded due to reliability issues. These results highlight the importance of intrinsic motivators and organizational support in fostering job satisfaction. Extrinsic rewards and empowerment, while relevant, had no significant power in this context.

5. Conclusion

This study explores the factors influencing job satisfaction among employees at the Credit Counselling and Debt Management Agency (AKPK), Kuala Lumpur, focusing on five key variables: work-life balance, extrinsic rewards, intrinsic rewards, employee empowerment, and perceived organizational support. The findings reveal that intrinsic rewards and perceived organizational support are the most significant predictors of job satisfaction. Intrinsic motivators, such as appreciation, a feeling of meaningful work, and prospects of promotion for personal growth, were most strongly positively related to job satisfaction ($r = 0.751$, $p < 0.01$; $\beta = 0.482$, $p < 0.01$), which highlights their key role in initiating employee engagement and satisfaction. Similarly, perceived organizational support was the most strongly positive relationship ($r = 0.734$, $p < 0.01$; $\beta = 0.290$, $p = 0.002$), emphasizing the critical importance of trust and organizational care in enhancing employee morale and commitment.

On the other hand, extrinsic rewards and employee empowerment maintained moderate positive correlations with job satisfaction ($r = 0.550$, $p < 0.01$; $r = 0.603$, $p < 0.01$) but were insignificant predictors when placed in regression models, suggesting that their effect may be limited or controlled by situational factors such as leadership and communication. Work-life balance was not examined because of inadequate measurement, and future studies can take advantage of more accurate measures or contextual control. The findings indicate the need for organizations to emphasize non-monetary rewards, such as intrinsic rewards, and cultivate a supportive workplace to sustain worker satisfaction. Enhancing recognition, meaningful work opportunities, and perceived care by the organization can lead to enhanced employee engagement, greater retention, and organizational performance. Future research would need to expand the range of variables and settings across different organizations and utilize larger samples to further our knowledge of job satisfaction processes across industries. It will provide more insight into factors underlying employee happiness and well-being.

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