

Unraveling the Impact of Job Stress, Work-Life Balance and Work Environment on Job Satisfaction: A Study on Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission Investigation Officers

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Abstract: The study examines the challenges faced by Investigation Officers (IOs) at the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission, with an increasing number of cases impacting their job satisfaction. Despite this, there have been limited studies looking into how job stress, work-life balance, and work environment impact IOs' job satisfaction. Thus, a study takes place to investigate the impact of job stress, work-life balance, and work environment on their satisfaction. Questionnaires were distributed to 164 respondents from MACC Headquarters in Putrajaya and MACC's states' offices and analyzed using SPSS V23. Multiple regression analyses were conducted and results showed a positive relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction, and negative relationships between job stress and job satisfaction, as well as work environment and job satisfaction. The study recommends the MACC's management team consider improvements in career paths, fair compensation, and rewards to enhance job satisfaction among IOs. It also suggests promoting better communication between IOs and the agency to address their needs and maintain a healthy work-life balance.

Keywords: *Job Satisfaction, job stress, work-life balance, work environment, Investigation Officer.*

1. Introduction and Background

Investigation Officers (IOs) at the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission face numerous challenges in their work, to combat corruption cases in Malaysia. The significant volume of investigation papers opened for pertinent inquiries raises concerns about their level of job satisfaction. Surprisingly, there are a minimum number of studies investigating how factors like job stress, work-life balance, and work environment impact the job satisfaction of IOs. Although some research has been conducted on the antecedents of job satisfaction (Qian, Song & Wang, 2018), there are still clear gaps that require further exploration, considering the crucial role of job satisfaction in daily working life.

One way to measure job satisfaction is through the Organizational Happiness Index (OHI), which revealed that nearly 60% of Malaysian workers were content with their jobs (Bernama, 2018). Malaysia ranked fourth among seven countries in the region concerning workplace happiness, with civil service employees voicing higher levels of contentment. However, studies like the one conducted by Omar et al. (2018) in the same area indicated that employers should focus on improving employees' pay and benefits, as these factors contributed the least to the OHI score.

Despite the rather small number of public-interest cases assigned to each IO annually (MACC Webmaster, 2022), the stress experienced by IOs is profound and unique to their role. Unfortunately, little research has explored how variations in workplace happiness may be influenced by other factors such as employment status, income, social support, and work conditions. Consequently, there remains a gap between IOs and government servants in general, with regards to achieving job satisfaction in their respective careers. To address these issues, further investigation is necessary to better comprehend the complex connection between job satisfaction and the various factors that impact the well-being of IOs.

2. Literature Review

Job Satisfaction: Job satisfaction is an individual subjective psychological state that reflects on a person's total positive or negative evaluation of their job and work experience. The definitions of job satisfaction have varied across different research studies and it draws upon various conceptualizations provided in numerous research articles. It comprises an individual's feelings, attitudes, and perceptions towards various factors of their job, such as the tasks they perform, their work environment, relationships with colleagues and

superiors, opportunities for growth and development, and overall fulfillment and happiness resulting from the work (Locke, 1969; Spector, 1997; Judge and Church, 2000). Job satisfaction is important as it is linked to employee motivation, engagement, productivity, and overall well-being. One common factor towards job satisfaction and dissatisfaction is the bond with superiors and colleagues. Many studies have shown the importance of having supportive and positive interactions in the workplace. An old and important study in the area of job satisfaction by Wright and Cropanzano (1998) highlighted the impact of colleague support on job satisfaction. Another study by Judge, Thoresen, Bono, and Patton (2001) found that the quality of the relationship with one's supervisor significantly influences job satisfaction. Thus, positive social interactions, communication, and collaboration with supervisors and colleagues contribute to a sense of belonging, psychological well-being, and building trust which leads to overall job satisfaction. Inversely, negative interactions, conflicts, and lack of cooperation are the root causes of stress, frustration, and job dissatisfaction. Therefore, the quality of relationships with supervisors and colleagues plays a crucial role in determining job satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Many modern empirical researches support the impact of a relationship with one's supervisor on job satisfaction. Qian, Song & Wang's (2017) research shed light on abusive supervision as a significant antecedent of job dissatisfaction, particularly in northern China. Sharp (2016) presented a different view on the antecedents of job satisfaction, focusing on the generational cohort factor as an important factor. The study revealed that law enforcement officers from the Millennial cohort exhibited lower organizational commitment due to dissatisfaction but those from the Generation X cohort have better commitment although they work in the same environment and context. This gap in findings suggested that in future research, investigating this distinctive independent variable could provide valuable insights for understanding job satisfaction among IOs and other law enforcement officers.

Job Stress: Queiró et al. (2020) examined burnout and stress management as variables of the study, focusing on the stress and mental health issues prevalent among dissatisfied police officers. In the same study, it was found that suicidal rates among police officers are high and this is alarming. Another study by Stogner, Miller & McLean (2020) explored officer stress, mental health, resiliency, and misconduct, with COVID-19's impact as the independent variable. Their research revealed how the pandemic affected police officers' overall health, including both mental and physical aspects. Supporting evidence from Hartley et al. (2011) underscored the stressful nature of policing as an occupation, citing long and rotating shifts, exposure to threats and violence, heightened need for hypervigilance, and a lack of public support. El Sayed, Sanford & Kerley (2018) conducted a study on unique and high-volume stressors as independent variables, and workplace stress as the dependent variable, further highlighting the ongoing concern about stress in the policing profession in the United States. However, Chikwem (2017) offered an opposing view, arguing that stress may not be a direct antecedent to job satisfaction among police officers in the United States. His research emphasized the significance of physical exercises and positive leadership within police departments to improve job satisfaction and public safety outcomes. Promoting positivity to police officers can enhance their performance and contribute to the well-being of the community. Considering the insights from these studies, the hypothesis can be formulated as follows:

H1: There is a relationship between job stress and job satisfaction among Investigation Officers at the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission.

Further research in this area is essential to understand the complex dynamics between job stress and job satisfaction among the targeted audience.

Work-Life Balance: Kumarasamy, Pangil & Mohd Isa (2018) conducted a study focusing on work-life balance among police officers and emphasized the importance of enhancing emotional intelligence and implementing organizational support policies to achieve this balance. Their research also highlighted the potential conflicts that work-life imbalance may cause in the policing field in Malaysia. Similarly, Omar, Mohd & Ariffin (2015) explored the impact of workload and role conflict on work-life balance among employees of an enforcement agency in Malaysia. They found that higher workload and role conflict were associated with reduced work-life balance and led to job dissatisfaction, providing valuable insights applicable to the current study's setting.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, Gigauri (2020) brought attention to the effects on human resource

management worldwide. This article's significance lies in its focus on how the pandemic impacted work-life balance trends, particularly with the increased adoption of remote work or working from home. It shed light on the challenges employees faced in maintaining work-life balance during these unprecedented times and how it impacted job satisfaction. Employees who can maintain a balance between work and personal life tend to be satisfied with work. Drawing from the insights of these studies, the formulated hypothesis is as follows: **H2:** There is a relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction among Investigation Officers at the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission.

To better understand and address work-life balance issues among the targeted audience, further exploration and research are essential.

Work Environment: Barasa (2017) conducted a study to examine the influence of the work environment on police performance in Nairobi, Kenya. The author noted a decline in performance and an increase in criminal activities among police officers which portrays an unhealthy work environment. The study aimed to explore if there was a relationship between the work environment and performance, proposing that a conducive work environment could mitigate the negative influences on the Nairobi Kenya police force and then increase job performance.

Zakarani & Mohd Noor (2021) explored the work environment and job performance of Malaysian police officers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Unlike other reference articles, this study delved into the variations in the work environment during the pandemic and its impact on job performance. The research revealed that the physical environment, supervisory-related matters, and performance feedback significantly influenced job performance among police officers during the pandemic, with supervisory roles playing a crucial contributing factor.

Another study by Donley (2021) focused on nurses during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research investigated antecedents such as burnout, disengagement, and extreme career climates, which affected nurses' job satisfaction. The article discussed both healthy and unhealthy working environments and highlighted ways to improve the work environment for nurses. It was found that a poor work environment led to dissatisfaction.

Given the similarities in work responsibilities of uniform bodies such as police officers, nurses and Investigation Officers (IOs) at MACC, it is reasonable to extend the findings to the IOs at MACC. Therefore, the hypothesis formulated is as follows:

H3: There is a relationship between the work environment and job satisfaction among Investigation Officers at the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission.

Additional research is necessary to further explore and understand the complexities of the work environment's impact on job satisfaction among the targeted audience.

Underpinning Theory: Biopsychosocial Model of Stress: The Biopsychosocial Model of Stress is a comprehensive theoretical framework that considers the interplay of biological, psychological, and social factors in understanding stress and its impact on job satisfaction in various work settings (Taylor, 2017). This model proposes that stress arises from the interaction between physiological responses, psychological perceptions, and social contexts, which collectively influence an individual's well-being and job satisfaction.

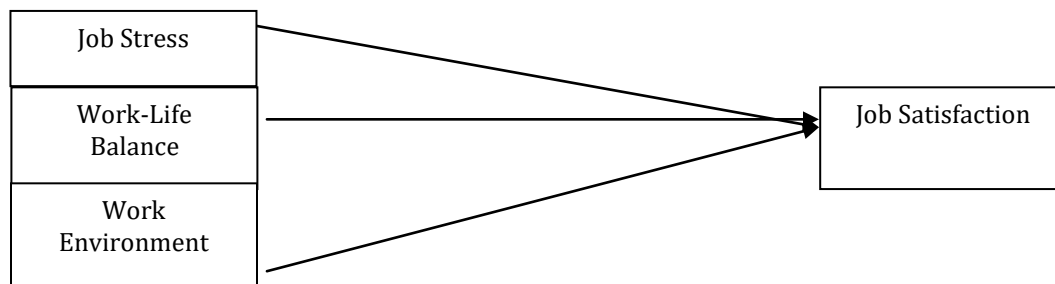
Research by Luo, Wang, and Han (2020) examined the applicability of the Biopsychosocial Model in the context of job satisfaction among healthcare professionals. They found that the model provided valuable insights into understanding the complex relationships between stressors, individual coping mechanisms, and workplace support, all of which influenced job satisfaction. In another study by Johnson, Smith, and Brown (2019), the Biopsychosocial Model was explored in the context of job satisfaction among employees in a corporate setting. Their findings highlighted the importance of considering both biological factors (e.g., physical health) and psychosocial factors (e.g., work-related stress, social support) when examining job satisfaction in this environment.

Furthermore, the Biopsychosocial Model was applied to the study of job satisfaction among teachers in an educational setting by Hernandez, Martinez, and Ramirez (2018). Their research revealed the significant role

of individual psychological factors (e.g., coping strategies, emotional regulation) and social factors (e.g., teacher-student relationships, support from colleagues) in determining job satisfaction levels. Another relevant study by Devadass, Chan, and Memon (2020) investigated the association between job stress, psychological distress, and job satisfaction among nurses in Malaysia, employing the Biopsychosocial Model as the theoretical foundation. The findings provided valuable insights into how the interactions between biological, psychological, and social factors impact job satisfaction in the nursing profession. These recent studies collectively emphasize the relevance and versatility of the Biopsychosocial Model in understanding the complexities of stress and its impact on job satisfaction across different work settings.

Conceptual Framework: Based on the literature review and understanding of the factors leading towards job satisfaction, the conceptual framework (Figure 1) was developed. The conceptual framework proposed a direct relationship between the independent variable (job stress, work-life balance, and work environment) and the dependent variable (job satisfaction).

Figure 1: The Independent Variables and Dependent Variables of the Conceptual Framework



3. Research Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research approach, utilizing primary data collected through a questionnaire distributed among the Investigation Officers (IOs) at the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) Headquarters in Putrajaya and MACC's state offices. The research design was cross-sectional, allowing data collection at a specific time to address all research objectives (Sekaran & Bougie, 2020). The unit of analysis focused on individual IOs, and a total of 164 surveys were distributed, surpassing the required sample size. The convenience sampling method was used, ensuring equal chances of selection for each individual in the population (Sekaran & Bougie, 2020). To measure the variables of interest, a Five-Point Likert scale was adapted from previous studies. The job stress scale consisted of nine items, adapted from Adams & Mastracci (2018), including statements like "This department values my contribution" and "I feel 'used up' at the end of the workday."

The work-life balance scale contained eight items, adopted from Omar, Mohd & Ariffin (2015), with sample items such as "I feel there are too many deadlines in my work that are difficult to meet" and "I am having uncertainties on what is expected to be achieved from my work." The work environment scale, comprising eight items, was adapted from Kristensen et al. (2005), with statements like "I am given the chance to learn new things through my work" and "There is a good working atmosphere between my colleagues and me." Lastly, the job satisfaction scale included eight items adopted from Tepper (2007), such as "My superiors (Senior Investigation Officers and above) belittle my ability to work" and "My superiors (Senior Investigation Officers and above) tell me I am incompetent." Data collection took place in January 2023, and the analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 26 software program, enabling the performance of multiple regression analysis to examine the relationships between the variables of interest.

4. Results

Table 1 illustrates that the majority of respondents were male, accounting for 66.5% of the total, while female respondents constituted 33.5%. The largest group of respondents was married individuals, comprising 75.6% of the sample, followed by single individuals at 18.9%, and those who were divorced or widowed at 5.5%. The

age distribution of respondents showed that the highest number of participants, 64.6%, fell within the age range of 26 to 35 years old, while respondents aged 25 years old and below constituted 1.8%. About the category of profession in the department, 53.7% of respondents were from the Support Group II (Grade P29-P38), and 46.3% were from the Professional and Management Group (Grade P41 and above). Looking into years of service, the largest proportion of respondents, 57.9%, had been in service for 1 to 6 years, while those with 7 to 12 years of service accounted for 18.9%. Respondents with service periods of 13 to 18 years, 19 to 24 years, and more than 25 years constituted 11.6%, 6.1%, and 5.5%, respectively. In terms of academic qualifications, the majority of respondents, 52.4%, possessed a Bachelor's Degree, while those with a Diploma accounted for 36% of the sample. Respondents with a Master's Degree made up 8.5%, and respondents with SPM and STPM qualifications were minimal, at 2.4% and 6%, respectively. Regarding monthly income, the largest group of respondents, 40.2%, had a monthly income ranging from RM2,000.00 to RM3,999.00. Those with a monthly income of RM4,000.00 to RM4,999.00 accounted for 34.1%, while those with a monthly income exceeding RM5,000.00 represented 25.6% of the sample. These findings indicate that the majority of respondents in the study had a monthly income within the range of RM2,000.00 to RM3,999.00.

Table 1: Demographic Information About Investigation Officers (IOs) at Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission Headquarters and State Offices

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	109	66.5
	Female	55	33.5
Marital Status	Single	31	18.9
	Married	124	75.6
	Divorced/Widowed	9	5.5
Age	25 years old and under	3	1.8
	26 to 35 years old	106	64.6
	36 to 45 years old	39	23.8
	45 years old and above	16	9.8
Category of Profession in The Department	Support Group II (Grade P29-P38)	88	53.7
	Management & Professional Group (Grade P41 and above)	76	46.3
Years of Service	1 to 6 years	95	57.9
	7 to 12 years	31	18.9
	13 to 18 years	19	11.6
	19 to 24 years	10	6.1
	More than 25 years	9	5.5
Academic Qualification	SPM	4	2.4
	STPM	1	6
	Diploma	59	36.0
	Bachelor's Degree	86	52.4
Monthly Income	Master's Degree	14	8.5
	RM2,000.00 to RM3,999.00	66	40.2
	RM4,000.00 to RM4,999.00	56	34.1
	More than RM5,000.00	42	25.6

According to the findings from Table 2, the dependent variable, job satisfaction, demonstrated excellent internal consistency reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha Value of 0.953. The first independent variable, job stress, also showed good internal consistency reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha Value of 0.850, based on the seven items in the survey. Similarly, the second independent variable, work-life balance, exhibited good internal consistency reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha Value of 0.863, considering the eight items in the survey. Lastly, the third independent variable, job environment, also displayed good internal consistency reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha Value of 0.898, based on the eight survey items.

Table 2: Descriptive and Reliability Analysis for all Variables

Variables	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Cronbach's Alpha
Dependent Variable			
Job Satisfaction	2.2117	.94780	0.953
Independent Variables			
Job Stress	3.2622	.56554	0.850
Work-Life Balance	3.1448	.83629	0.863
Work Environment	3.9047	.75228	0.898

Table 3 presents the results from the multiple regression analysis, indicating the percentage variance in the dependent variable (job satisfaction) explained by the variation in the independent variables (job stress, work-life balance, and work environment). In this study, there was no collinearity problem due to the values of the variance inflation factor (VIF) that was less than 10 and the tolerance was below 1.0. The R Square value of 0.514 shows that 51.4% of the variance in job satisfaction among IOs at MACC can be attributed to the three independent variables considered in the study. However, 48.6% of the variance in job satisfaction remains unexplained and may be influenced by other factors. As specified in Table 3, the result from multiple regression analysis revealed significant relationships between job stress ($\beta=-0.272$, $p<0.05$), work-life balance ($\beta=0.238$, $p<0.05$) and work environment ($\beta=-0.398$, $p<0.05$). Based on the findings, all three hypotheses were supported.

Table 3: Multiple Regression Analysis

Independent Variables	Standard Coefficients Beta	T	Sig	Collinearity Statistics	
				Tolerance	VIF
Job Stress	-.272	-2.950	.004	.357	2.798
Work-Life Balance	.238	3.161	.002	.686	1.457
Work Environment	-.398	-4.914	.000	.462	2.165
R Square	.514				
Adjusted R Square	.505				
F	56.444				
Sig. of F Value	.000				

Discussion: The primary aim of this study was to fulfill the set objectives established at the beginning of the research. Based on the structured research questions, it was observed that the study's purpose was successfully achieved. The first research objective focused on examining the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction among the Investigation Officers (IOs) at the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC).

H1: There is a relationship between job stress and job satisfaction among Investigation Officers at the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission.

The findings revealed a significant negative relationship between job stress and job satisfaction, and this supports the hypothesis. This implies that when the IOs experienced high levels of job stress, their job satisfaction decreased, and vice versa. This finding aligns with previous research by Steiner and Wooldredge (2015), who emphasized that individual factors such as victimization and increased job demands were associated with higher stress levels. Consequently, tasks exceeding the IOs' capabilities and limits could contribute to a decline in their job satisfaction.

H2: There is a relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction among Investigation Officers at the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission.

The second research objective aimed to explore the relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction among the IOs at MACC. The results also supported the hypothesis, indicating a significant positive relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction. This indicates that work-life balance had a substantial impact on the IOs' job satisfaction, enabling them to attain higher levels of satisfaction in their career.

This is consistent with the findings of Clark (2000) and Ungerson and Yeandle (2005), who highlighted that achieving work-life balance involves effectively managing various domains, such as family care, personal time, and job, with minimal conflict. A successful work-life balance allowed the IOs to attain job satisfaction, as they could allocate sufficient time for their families and personal matters while fulfilling their professional responsibilities.

H3: There is a relationship between the work environment and job satisfaction among Investigation Officers at the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission.

The third research objective investigated the relationship between the working environment and job satisfaction among the IOs at MACC. The findings supported the hypothesis, indicating an inverse relationship between the work environment and job satisfaction. The inverse relationship between these variables indicated that the IOs who had a healthy and harmonious working environment did not positively contribute to an increase in job satisfaction. This contradicts the study by Zakarani & Mohd Noor (2021), which found that a healthy workplace environment, encompassing physical aspects, supervisory matters, and performance feedback, significantly led to job satisfaction.

In this case, one consideration to explain the possible reason for the gap in funding is by looking into the demographic of respondents. More than half of the IOs fall within the 'support group' which means this could contribute to lower job satisfaction although they might have a positive environment as there could be other crucial factors that influence their satisfaction at work. Another justification could be due to their length of service in MACC being less than six years, they are too young in MACC thus their engagement with colleagues and superiors and their ability to adjust to extreme career climates is not in place. In conclusion, this study successfully explored the significant antecedents of job satisfaction among the IOs at MACC. The relationships between job stress, work-life balance, work environment, and job satisfaction were thoroughly examined, demonstrating their significance in influencing the IOs' overall job satisfaction. The findings have implications for management teams at MACC to consider strategies that promote work-life balance and a positive work environment, ultimately enhancing the IOs' job satisfaction and well-being.

5. Managerial Implications and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is evident that work-life balance plays a critical role in achieving job satisfaction among the IOs at MACC. The significant relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction, indicated by the highest Beta value, highlights the importance of addressing work-life balance issues within the organization. Therefore, it is recommended that the management team of MACC prioritize work-life balance initiatives to ensure the IOs' well-being and job satisfaction. To enhance job satisfaction among the IOs, the management can consider implementing better career development opportunities, fair compensation, and rewards. Providing clear paths for career advancement and recognizing employees' efforts through fair compensation and rewards can boost their motivation and job satisfaction. This, in turn, will contribute to a more engaged and productive workforce at MACC. Furthermore, effective communication between the IOs and the organization is crucial in maintaining work-life balance and fostering job satisfaction.

The IOs should be encouraged to express their perspectives and needs related to work-life balance openly. To facilitate this, the management can organize town hall sessions or regular feedback mechanisms to ensure a two-way communication flow. Understanding the IOs' concerns and actively addressing them will create a supportive work environment that promotes job satisfaction. In conclusion, prioritizing work-life balance, providing career development opportunities, fair compensation, and rewards, and fostering open communication will contribute to enhancing job satisfaction among the IOs at MACC. By implementing these recommendations, the organization can create a positive and fulfilling work environment that supports the well-being and job satisfaction of its employees. Additionally, future research can explore other factors that may influence job satisfaction among the IOs and further contribute to improving their overall job satisfaction.

Conclusion: In summary, this study has established the significant influence of job stress, work-life balance, and work environment as antecedents to the job satisfaction of Investigation Officers (IOs) at MACC. The

findings emphasize the importance of addressing these factors to ensure that IOs can attain maximum job satisfaction in their roles. To improve job satisfaction levels, the management team of MACC should take a broader view and implement measures such as creating better career paths, offering fair compensation and recognizing exemplary performance with appropriate rewards. Moreover, promoting open communication between IOs and the agency is vital to understanding and addressing their perspectives, particularly concerning work-life balance, creating a conducive work environment. Future studies can explore additional antecedents that may account for the remaining 48.6% of the variance in IOs' job satisfaction. Broadening the research to include other enforcement agencies in Malaysia could yield valuable insights, as these agencies share similarities in their nature of work and organizational culture. By considering multiple enforcement agencies, the scope of the study would be enriched, enhancing its reliability and relevance. A comprehensive investigation of job satisfaction factors across various agencies would contribute to a more inclusive and well-rounded understanding of the factors influencing IOs' job satisfaction in the Malaysian context.

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