

# The Impact of Emotional Intelligence, Depression, Anxiety and Stress on Work-Life Balance

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**Abstract--***The increasing issues relating to emotional intelligence, depression, anxiety and stress have made work-life balance a problem in society. This article focuses on understanding the impact of emotional intelligence, depression, anxiety and stress on the work-life balance. This article also presents empirical evidence based on previous studies which investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence, depression, anxiety and stress and work-life balance. The results of previous studies found that there is a significant relationship between these elements. As such, an organization's desire to address issues related to emotional intelligence, depression, anxiety and stress could help improve the balance between work and family life resulting in the enhanced well-being of workers.*

**Keywords--***Emotional Intelligence; Depression; Anxiety; Stress; Work-life Balance*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The Malaysian Armed Forces (ATM) is an organization that is highly disciplined and highly respected in the community. The Malaysian Army (TDM) is one of the largest branches of ATMs along with the Royal Malaysian Air Force (TUDM) and Royal Malaysian Navy (TLDM). The principle of a balance between man, machine and method focused on by the Supreme Commander of the TDM, (with an emphasis on combat capability and the quality of life of its members), is an ongoing matter of concern. Responsibilities borne by a member of the army can have a significant impact on family life. Therefore, the balance between work and life among soldiers is an aspect that cannot be taken lightly. This study will focus on individual psychological elements involving self-emotional factors that are closely related to the work-life balance because emotional aspects are often associated with behavior within an organization.

Emotional intelligence is the ability to manage and use emotions in an appropriate and balanced way. According to, cognitive integration in emotional intelligence is an important element in an individual's soft skills development. Emotional intelligence refers to the individual's ability to control their emotions more effectively and can positively affect their relationship with others. Emotional intelligence is an element that needs to be seriously addressed in the military profession, as military personnel have a crucial role and responsibility to defend the country against any enemy threats. Military personnel need to undergo rigorous training and always be prepared for any possible occurrence. This demands strong emotional strength to ensure that decisions made are

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the correct ones in terms of the best outcomes for the military personnel and the country. A career involving the security and defense of the country is a very challenging one and requires high emotional resilience. However, the task of balancing military duties and family life also needs to be emphasized to ensure that troops are not stressed and in a state of mind that can disrupt the well-being of their lives. There is a vital role involving national security and defense which is very challenging and requires a high level of consistency and mental and emotional stability

Individuals who are depressed will be more likely to be alone and avoid others and be less likely to show interest in recreational activities. It was found that there are six (6) symptoms within anxiety and depression and can include sleeping disorders, irritability, anxiety, crying, and an anticipation or expectation of something negative and unpredictable. Individuals who cannot face high levels of stress often fail to control their emotions. Stress occurs as a result of an imbalance between work needs and resources and the capabilities and the needs of the employees, resulting in psychological and physiological effects manifested in cognitive and physical behavior

Work-life balance is defined as the ability of individuals to fulfill their commitments to both their work duties and their families, and additional responsibilities and activities other than work. According to , work-life balance also involves health and well-being with a reduction in stress resulting in greater satisfaction. Employees who are always involved in work face the risk of family-work conflict because they cannot spend time with family for extended periods of time. The study of the relationship between emotional intelligence, depression, anxiety and stress and work-life balance is an important issue to be investigated because the emotional elements relating to organisational behaviour have been neglected in previous studies.

### **Problem Statement**

Statistics show that there has been an increase in misconduct among ATM members reflecting internal problems and a negative behavioral crisis among military personnel. The study conducted by involving members of the Malaysian Army found that 65.97% of respondents acknowledged a lack of peace of mind and 17.6% were not faring well in terms of psychological well-being. The findings also found that emotional intelligence has a positive relationship with psychological well-being among military personnel. Based on a review by Star Blue Families (2017), the main issue of concern amongst military personnel today is their quality of life, time with family, stability and the impact of work on family members. In fact, nearly 60% of respondents did not recommend that their children take up a military career and 50% of women considered family responsibilities as a major obstacle to their careers. This situation illustrates the imbalance between career and family among military personnel. It also found that military members facing work and family conflicts are vulnerable to physical and/or emotional domestic violence

The World Health Organization (WHO) has confirmed that depression is ranked as the highest mental disorder in the world and is a critical issue today. Based on a study by the 1:5 population ratio in Malaysia experienced some degree of depression, 1:5 experienced anxiety and 1:10 had experienced stress. This study is in line with the World Health Organization (WHO) statement that women have the highest prevalence of mental disorders - 5.1% higher than males at 3.6% . According to depression symptoms are found to have a significant relationship with suicide or suicidal attempts. Furthermore, the study by found that individuals with severe depression disorders tend to experience suicidal ideation.

A study conducted by the National Population and Family Development Board (LPPKN) found that 18.7% of respondents reported that they had problems with their family-work balance due to various factors, including lack of time with family (51.9%) and child care problems (13%). A study by found that 67% of Malaysian workers preferred a career and life balance over the offer of higher salaries when seeking a job. The latest report released by Global Kelly Malaysia in the Salary Guide Survey 2016/2017, found that Malaysian workers believed that factors that have a positive impact on work-life balance are flexible work schedules (74%), health programs (50%), job assignments (49%), colleagues (37%), vacation leave (33%) and paid leave facilities (24%). This report is supported by the latest study conducted by expedia.com.my which reports that Malaysians are ranked second in the Asia Pacific and third in the world in terms of having the least vacation time. Almost two-thirds of Malaysians are less likely to go on vacation due to the difficulty in getting leave and the inability to avoid job demands and financial difficulties.

Therefore, if an organization fails to emphasize the work-life balance among workers, it will indirectly (or even directly) negatively affect discipline, job dissatisfaction, job commitment and job retention. The ability to balance work demands and the need for a life outside of work is a great challenge for employees and if they are able to balance both work and family life, it will have a positive impact on their work-life

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theory and Concept**

Thorndike's Intelligence Theory, introduced the Multiple Intelligence Theory by dividing intelligence into two categories: intrapersonal and interpersonal. Intrapersonal intelligence is one's ability to self-care and maintain self-esteem, while interpersonal intelligence is the ability to manage others, including feelings. This combination of intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence makes affects work-life balance developed a simple and psychometric emotional intelligence model that can be used in management and leadership. According to , emotional intelligence has an impact on performance and job satisfaction, organizational commitment and employee support. <sup>33</sup>also divided emotional intelligence into four components:

#### ***Self-Emotional Appraisal (SEA)***

SEA is related to the individual's ability to comprehend emotions and express them naturally. Individuals with this ability can detect and understand their emotions.

#### ***Others' Emotional Appraisal (OEA)***

OEA is also an individual's ability to see and understand the emotions of others. Individuals with a high score in this dimension will be more sensitive to the feelings and emotions of others; they can "read" other people's minds.

#### ***Use of Emotions (UOE)***

UOE is related to the individual's ability to use their own emotions by directing themselves to build and improve self-esteem.

### ***Regulation of Emotions (ROE)***

ROE refers to the individual's ability to control their own emotions and recover quickly when faced with psychological stress.

Individuals with high levels of emotional intelligence can balance work and home life as well as play a balanced role in controlling and resolving work and family issues. According to, emotional intelligence can influence and improve the social relationships between work and family. Apart from the Social Intelligence Theory, has proven that the Spillover Theory can be attributed to the specific reason that individuals with high emotional intelligence should have a balance between work and family. In fact, according to, Spillover's Theory explains that there is clear link and evidence that the domains in the workplace influence the domains of home life. The level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction experienced by a worker in the workplace will directly affect their life at home. This opinion is supported by the findings of who found that work experience influences the attitudes and behaviors of employees outside the workplace while, simultaneously, home experience influences their attitudes and roles in the workplace. has suggested that individuals who experience an emotional change and positive feelings at work or home will impact the quality of their work and have a better life. Therefore, if an employee with high emotional intelligence meets the expectations of the domain in relation to work and family it enables them to achieve a better work-life balance. has also created a theory to explain the factors that affect one's emotions. The theory is known as the Theory of Emotional Intelligence. This theory describes the factors of failure and success of a person in their personal life, career and relationships in relation to the emotional intelligence possessed by an employee. He stated that intellectual intelligence or IQ contributed only 20% to determining the success of one's life, while 80% of success is determined by the emotional intelligence factor .

introduced Beck's Cognitive Depression Theory addressing the basic concepts of psychological depression. There are three basic concepts of psychology that describe the causes of depression i.e. self-perception, experience and a negative and unrealistic understanding of the future. According to, individuals who suffer from depression will often blame themselves resulting in emotional disturbances that lead to self-anxiety. In addition, interpersonal relationships, the burden of duty, stress in managing time, the environment, financial position and sense of security can all affect stress, anxiety and depression. According to the literature, the main factors that cause depression and anxiety are physical and cognitive impairment, restrictions in daily life, failure to fulfill prior roles in the family and society or work.

Work-life balance refers to the extent to which an individual is involved and satisfied with their role at work and within their home life also introduced the Work-Family Border Theory in which people cross the boundaries between work and family during the day. This theory discusses the interaction between the working environment and the family and the maintaining of an equilibrium between the two. The main concepts emphasized in this theory are work domains and home, the boundaries between work and family, Border Crossers and Border Keepers. Family domains are easier environments in which to absorb pressure than the work domains because individuals in the family domain allow family domains to work. Work domains and home domains are two different domains and can be merged or segregated . Border Crossers are described as an entry point to both domains or conflicts determined by the level of involvement in the domain. Border Keepers refers to employees who move from one domain to another continuously every day. Therefore, the individual's ability to manage the boundaries between work and family is of paramount importance in the process of balancing both.

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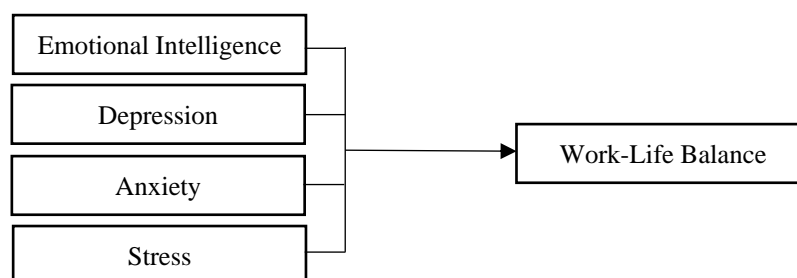
Emotional intelligence, depression, anxiety, stress and work-life balance are issues that are gaining attention in today's work environment. This is because psychological elements are very important factors for soldiers who are often faced with challenging tasks and need support for their welfare and social needs in order to balance their home lives and work.

Most organizations believe that emotional intelligence plays an important role in the quality of work and the life of an employee. According to, individuals with high levels of emotional intelligence are able to face environmental challenges as opposed to those who have low levels of emotional intelligence. Empirical studies have also proven that emotional intelligence can have a positive impact on a person's well-being by reducing emotional stress..

Several recent studies have found that there is a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and work-life balance. This proves that emotional intelligence can affect the work environment and the life of an individual. In fact, the higher the level of emotional intelligence, the higher the ability of the worker to control his life and work tasks.

Previous studies have found that stress has a significant negative relationship with work and life balance. Depression, anxiety and stress are found to have a significant negative relationship with the quality of life, conversely, individuals who experience lower levels of depression and anxiety have a better quality of life found that high levels of stress and depression result in the poorest quality of life. revealed that individuals who fail to manage the environment at work and home, experience an increased risk of depression and anxiety. Some studies have found that sociodemographic factors such as religion, race, gender and family relationships can also influence the prevalence of stress and depression.

**Figure-1.** Impact of Emotional Intelligence, Depression, Anxiety and Stress on Work-Life Balance



### III.CONCLUSION

The balance between work and life has long been discussed and the focus of academicians in organizational management. Improvement in the quality of life of military personnel is one of the action plans in the ATM's strategic management system. TDM's organizational strength is more geared towards material factors, but the human capability factor of the individual is being considered. Therefore, the factors relating to the need for equality of work tasks has to be given priority in order to avoid a negative impact on military personnel resource capability. Work-life balance factors are a significant factor in an organization and can affect the level of work performance and work place and home life harmony.

Recent studies have proven that a work-life balance plays an important role and has a positive impact on job satisfaction, commitment to the organization, reduces work pressure and conflict, improves interpersonal relationships, and improves stability, harmony and trust. Conversely, poor work-life balance was found to have a negative impact on personnel retention rates. The lower the level of conflict between work and family, the more positive and proactive behaviors are in evidence among workers.

Individuals with high levels of emotional intelligence are those who are able to control levels of self-esteem, self-improvement, conflict management capabilities and organizational issues, good health levels, excellent levels of work performance and production. These individuals can control their emotions and identify their stress levels and self-esteem. Workers with high emotional intelligence can overcome the consequences that may occur when faced with stress, while those with low emotional intelligence are unable to cope with the pressures they face in the work place and at home.

Based on the empirical study which is the basis of this paper, there is an importance to be highlighted regarding the role of emotional intelligence in work-life balance amongst employees generally and military personnel in particular. Studies related to depression, anxiety and stress and their relationship to work-life balance are still underestimated by scholars. In fact, such studies are limited in relation to general occupations in Malaysia and military organizations specifically. In the past, studies of depression, anxiety and stress have been from the perspective of medical bodies and education. Therefore, the findings of this study are needed to be implemented to reduce the gaps in the literature and knowledge as they relate to the Malaysian military.

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