

The Role of Social Support Between Work-To-Life Conflict and Job Stress Among Nurses at Public Hospital

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Abstract--*This study aimed to examine the relationship between work-to-life conflict and job stress as well as the role of social support as a moderator at Hospital Enche' Besar Hajjah Kalsom, Kluang Johor. The objective of this study are to identify the level of work-to-life conflict and job stress. In addition, the objective of this study are also to study relationship between work-to-life conflict and job stress and to determine whether social support moderate the relationship between work-to-life conflict and job stress among the nurses at Hospital Enche' Besar Hajjah Kalsom, Kluang, Johor. This study used data collection method by using questionnaires and simple random sampling. A total of 191 set of questionnaires received were analysed. The findings are presented in the form of percentage and mean, the analysis of correlation and hierarchical multiple regression. The study found that nurses in the hospital experience the moderate level of work-to-life conflict and job stress. The findings also found that there is significant relationship between work-to-life conflict and job stress. Furthermore, the results show that social support was unable to moderate the relationship between work-to-life conflict and job stress among the nurses. At the end of the study, several improvement proposals submitted to reduce work-to-life conflict and job stress among the nurses as well as making recommendations for future studies.*

Key words--*Work-to-life conflict, job stress, job demand, job control, social support*

I. INTRODUCTION

Employees are important assets to the organization because without them the organization will not be able to achieve its objectives. Employee wellbeing should be a major concern to the organization. Human being will get an impact either emotionally and potentially physically when there is transformation in work activity. Therefore, most of the employees will experience high pressure working environment and it will affect their work outcome or service.

World Health Organization (WHO) asserts that job stress will replace cardiovascular disease as the key factor whether employees can perform their work or not. Job stress could be considered as a common illness faced by today's employees due to numerous disturbances and pressure at workplace. More hours are spent at work mean less time spent at home, causing a condition that researchers refer to as work-life conflict. Hence, it will lead to mental illness and it will become the second largest health problem after heart disease in 2020. Furthermore, job stress is the consequences from work-life conflict face by individual.

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Work-life conflict exist when there is participation in one roles interfere with other role which work responsibility interfere with family lives and vice versa. This conflict is a matter that should be concern for every organization because it will lead to job stress to occur especially individual in public healthcare. Therefore, nurses is one of the profession which face more stress at workplace. This is because some of them have to commuting to work at a long distance, live separated with their husband or their husband are unwilling to help them in house chores. Other than that, public healthcare facing difficulty in providing their service towards community since the facilities are overcrowding. Their manpower get an impact from the situation such as burnout. Thus, the individual who work in public healthcare facing depression and stress, due to overloading of tasks.

In fact, this is more likely to occur when the employee is married especially female. The multiple roles that the employee has to play as wife, mother and worker often increases the likelihood for job stress to happen. Three dimensions of work-life conflict are always faced by working people, particularly married people, namely time-based conflict, strain-based conflict and behavioral based conflict. Therefore, if the level of work-life conflict is out of control, it will give a significant impact to the individual and organization. Consequently, work-life conflict caused damaging effects on essential individual outcomes and organizational outcomes. For example, work-life conflict is critical and often is associated with work-related consequences such as job stress.

In this research, job stress is highly likely to occur among workers whose jobs require them to be on-call or jobs that require them to spend more time at work than their normal working hours. Strenuous working conditions and jobs that require high demands of accuracy and precision are also among the contributing factors that cause employees to experience job stress. Hence, it is not surprising when a study indicates that nursing in Malaysia's is fourth most stressful job. Nurses have very demanding and strenuous working hours. On top of the high demand of accuracy and precision expected of the profession, nurses are also front liners who not only have to entertain the doctors and the patients, but also the public. Hence, at the end of their shift, they are found not only to be physically but psychologically drained as well which often affects their personal life. Hence, having nurses who have high level of job stress should be avoided because the consequences could be dire to not only to the individuals, but also the organization and the public as well.

Hence in this study, the relationship between work-life conflict and job stress is postulated. However, in order to reduce or buffer the relationship between work-life conflict and job stress; having social support is good for help. Other study propose that in order to control or reduce employees' work-to-life conflict; social support is the key and it can be a powerful source of reducing the level of work-life conflict and job stress. Social Support refers to the support system and organizations may provide to its employees. Thus, the employees need to seek for social support in order to reduce their stress or depression by share their feeling to person that they trust. It is also agree that when there is a lack of social support at work, employees tend to experience job stress. Social support is claimed to consistently have a positive relationship with job stress, such that the more social support received by the employees, the lower the level of their job stress.

II. METHODS

Sampling and Data Collection

Therefore, in this study, the probability sampling is being conducted by selecting 191 nurses from the total population of 379 nurses in Hospital Enche' Besar Hajjah Kalsom, Kluang, Johor, only 191 would be selected as respondent who have been chosen randomly. Questionnaire distributed will be monitored by Matron. Questionnaires will become an instrument for this research.

III. RESULTS

Besides that, the level of work-to-life conflict and job stress was examine in this study.

Table 1

| Items | Mean | Level |
|-----------------------|------|----------|
| Work-to-life conflict | 3.17 | Moderate |
| Job Stress | 3.21 | Moderate |

A Pearson correlation was computed to assess the relationship between work-to-life conflict and job stress. There was a positive correlation between the two variables, $r = 0.521$, $p = 0.000 < 0.01$. Overall, there was a moderate positive correlation between work-to-life conflict and job stress. Increases in work-to-life conflict were correlated with increases in job stress.

A hierarchical multiple regressions were tested to investigate whether social support can moderate the relationship between work-to-life conflict and job stress. The variables were examine, it is found that the value of R square increased from 31.7% to 32.7%. Overall, this contribution was significant enough to look at the Significant F change value which is ($p = 0.099$; $p < 0.05$). As a result, it showed that social support not moderate the relationship between work-to-life conflict and job stress.

IV. DISCUSSIONS

The first objective of this study is to collect information about level of work-to-life conflict which was found to be moderate. Since level of work-to-life conflict in the hospital is moderate, it gives a sign that the problem should be considered by the organization because if the conflict is not controlled, it can affect the productivity of the organization in the long run. In addition, the nurses might face problems spending their time with family when their schedule is not fixed. In the real world, even though nurses have work schedule such as work from eight to two o'clock, or shift work, their work time will usually drag more than it should. It is believed that nurses tend to have unstable emotions which will cause them to act irrationally such as expressing anger towards patients. This will exacerbate the situation. This is due to long working hours, holidays are not fixed, they need to do other roles that demand their attention, large number of patients, nurses need to work harder and their work requires intensive concentration because it involves the lives of patients.

The problems occurred mostly to married nurses. This is because individuals who are married have family responsibilities and career. They also have the awareness to work in order to earn money to meet the needs of family life. Since most of the nurses at this hospital is female; in this case women are not as the breadwinner of the family but just help the husband. This findings is supported which the employees in public healthcare spend more time at work. This is because modern life demands high cost of living, this situation urges individual to work and help each other. Moreover, when they become career women, they have responsibilities at home and work both of which are very important and should be emphasized. It is found that dual career workers will face more stress rather than single career.

Non-fixed work time can also lead to job stress. It is also agree that non-flexible work time make nurses stress. Even though the nurse's work in shifts, there is still has on-call time which will drag their work time. This will make them feel fatigue, affect personal health and hinder them from doing family activities. Therefore, they have potential to make mistakes during work. The conflict faced by nurses to some extent will affect their emotional state and they will tend to feel depressed. Even though work-to-life conflict is moderate, it is possible it could surge higher if not curbed and will raise the level of job stress to a very high level. Furthermore, strenuous working conditions and jobs that require high demands of accuracy and precision are also among the contributing factors that cause employees to experience job stress.

The study found that the presence of social support in the relationship between work-to-life conflict and job stress do not helped reduce some conflicts and pressures faced by nurses. Social support is supposedly an element that can help reduce job stress among nurses. Based on empirical study, social support is one of the elements that can affect the individual stress level. Thus, the presence of social support might help mitigate conflicts faced by nurses. Social support from the organization, supervisor and co-worker are necessary in an organization. When feeling stressed it is human nature to need to share our problems and seek help from people who can be trusted to help reduce the problem and hence reduce the stress. Organization, supervisor and co-worker need to be alerted about this matter. It is the only way that will help employees to solve the problem.

However, the findings from literature review indicated that most previous study had stated that social support can help reduce job stress among workers and only some findings have face some inconsistencies with the theories. In contrast to the previous study, this study has shown that social support cannot help to reduce job stress among nurses. It is inconsistent with the literature. On the other hand, this study is parallel with other empirical study finding, which social support do not moderate the relationship between work-to-life conflict and job stress. Other study stated that, there is no evidence of buffering effect between work-to-life conflict and job stress. Thus, not all social support appear to reduce the work-to-life conflict and job stress and they agree that to have flexible work arrangement can become potential solution to solve the problem Perhaps, the nurses should have social support from family in order to help in reducing the work-life conflict and job stress. This is because, this research is only focus on organization, supervisor and co-worker support. However, social support that come from family that might help to reduce work-to-life conflict and job stress

Therefore, social support is an element that should encouraged in every organization because when employees get enough social support, they will work happily. Social support also can create better working environment for employees and improve supervisor-employee relationship. Therefore, social support do not acts as a moderator in the relationship between conflict work-to-family and job stress.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

Therefore, there are several recommendation will be suggest. First, since most nurses face stress at work, a job stress workshop is therefore recommended as this workshop might help to reduce job stress. The organization should provide workshops to deal with work stress as a result of work-to-life conflict faced by nurses. The workshop is intended to provide information and guidance needed to manage stress. Second, the hospital should organize conflict management program. This is because a conflict management program will explain to workers everything about conflict, the causes of conflict, identify the types of conflict, and how to deal with conflict should it happen to them. It will help members educate employees on conflict management and information that they get during the program will be used for them. It can be concluded that work-to-life conflict and job stress have significant relationship. Overall, this study has reached the objectives and answered all questions based on the findings from the questionnaire items presented. In fact the study found that nurses at the hospital have moderate level of work-to-life conflict and moderate level of job stress. The organization cannot let nurses suffer a work-to-life conflict because even at a moderate level, it is possible it could surge higher if not curbed and increase their level of job stress. Therefore, an improvement effort should be made by all parties whether the organization, superior or employees to reduce work stress levels.

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