

Job Satisfaction, Job Involvement and Life Satisfaction Among Nurses in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

The nursing profession can be stressful as nurses have to deal with an extensive number of patients daily. As life satisfaction is essential in determining psychological health and well-being, nurses who lead a joyful life may relate their life experience to their work, specifically in dealing with patients. Both job satisfaction and job involvement, on the other hand, reflect one's work outcome and personal life. Thus, this study proposed that job satisfaction and job involvement as the factors that determine life satisfaction among nurses. The present study utilized a quantitative approach using a questionnaire survey to collect data. The data were collected from 180 staff nurses Grade U29 in a general hospital in Klang Valley, Malaysia using a purposive sampling method. IBM SPSS Statistic version 23 was used to analyze the data. The findings of the study indicate that there are significant positive relationships between job satisfaction and job involvement with life satisfaction. Specifically, job satisfaction was found to have the highest relationship with life satisfaction, followed by job involvement. This study is significant to the healthcare industry in identifying factors at work that would lead to better life satisfaction among the nurses.

INTRODUCTION

People spend a large amount of time in their workplace daily. They tend to work for so many reasons. Among the most common reasons to work are to earn a living, to provide support for

family members as well as to provide security for retirement. This situation indicates that a job is an important part of an individual's life. Thus, individual satisfaction with his or her job may influence their satisfaction towards life (Mirfarhadi, Moosavi, & Tabari, 2013; Moser & Schuler, 2004). Every human activity is commonly intended to drive into a more meaningful life and the desire for happiness (Onyishi, Okongwu, & Ugwu, 2012). In fact, in the context of work, life satisfaction plays an important role to boost worker's motivation in achieving their targeted goals (Billing & Steverson, 2013; Mirfarhadi et al., 2013).

Life satisfaction simply refers to the way an individual evaluates his or her life as a whole (Temitope, 2015). There are emerging studies on life satisfaction which varies across sectors including education (Kumar, Shaheen, Rasool, & Shafi, 2016; Mafini, 2014), banking (Bozkurt, Demirhan, & Bal, 2016), healthcare (Bozkurt et al., 2016; Ghazwin et al., 2016) and manufacturing (Bozkurt et al., 2016; Yoo, Yang, & Park, 2015). A few factors have been identified to influence individual's life satisfaction namely workload (Upadyaya, Vartiainen, & Salmela-Aro, 2016), burnout (Bozkurt et al., 2016), depression, anxiety, satisfaction with the work environment, interpersonal relationship and financial (Ghazwin et al., 2016) and also extrinsic motivation (Mafini & Dlodlo, 2014). Life satisfaction was also found to be positively related to job performance (Jones, 2006) and lower turnover intentions (Rode, Rehg, Near, & Underhill, 2007). As a result, life satisfaction is a desirable goal for both an individual and the organization.

In the healthcare sector, the literature indicates that the nursing profession suffering from stress in the workplace due to excessive workload (Mirfarhadi et al., 2013) which will subsequently lead to work-family conflict (Sabil, Abu, Kasuma, & Lizzan, 2016). As nursing is

generally known as a service profession within the healthcare sector, they play a significant role in satisfying the patients in coping with illness by providing high-quality service (Sabil et al., 2016). However, the shortage of nurses (Ministry of Health Malaysia, 2016) and a large number of patients who seek treatment at general hospitals have resulted in a greater work burden for nurses which may influence their life satisfaction. The importance of life satisfaction among nurses has been reflected in a few empirical research (e.g., Ghazwin et al., 2016; Mirfarhadi et al., 2013; Rashid, Nordin, Omar, & Ismail, 2011a, 2011b).

Since individuals spend a lot of time at work, the element in one's job an important role in their life. Examining related job variables such as job satisfaction and job involvement and life satisfaction is crucial due to several reasons. Firstly, the limited study on life satisfaction in the field of management is deemed critical and this has been highlighted by Erdogan, Bauer, Truxillo, and Mansfield (2012). Thus, "given that life satisfaction is a broad concept, its predictors will likely need to be broad" (Erdogan et al., 2012). Secondly, there is an increasing demand for the top management and the managers to promote the well-being of the employees, and the fact that life satisfaction is the key component to employees' psychological well-being makes the study more imperative (Pavot & Diener, 2008). Finally, the previous study such as Lee, Hwang, Kim, and Daly (2004) questions the level of life satisfaction of the nurses as they suffer from high stress at work. Thus, it is interesting to explore the link between job satisfaction and job involvement with life satisfaction among nurses. Therefore, this study attempts to determine: (i) the relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction and (ii) the relationship between job involvement and life satisfaction among staff nurses in Malaysia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction is a measure of well-being (Danna & Griffin, 1999; Diener, 1984). Specifically, it is one of the three components of subjective well-being which include life satisfaction, the positive and negative effects (Diener, 1984). Life satisfaction generally refers to the cognitive-judgmental aspects of life (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). Diener et al. (1985) defined life satisfaction as the evaluation of an individual's life as a whole, from an individual perspective. The definition indicates that the judgement of an individual towards life is depending on their judgement that set by him or herself (Alghamdi, 2015). Specifically, life satisfaction denotes an evaluative judgment and is usually premised on a person's self-imposed standards and the extent to which such standards are satisfied (Pavot & Diener, 2008). Thus, the greater the gap between the level of individual wishes and the present state of the person, the lower the satisfaction an individual perceived. Other researchers view life-satisfaction as the degree to which a person positively evaluates the overall quality of his/her life as a whole. In other words, it is referred to as how much the person likes the life he/she leads (Pavot & Diener, 2008). Some relate life satisfaction to happiness.

Life satisfaction is being explained through top-down and bottom-up perspectives (Diener, 1984). A top-down perspective is being explained through stable characteristics such as personality traits. As a result, some people tend to feel more satisfied with their lives, compared to the others. The bottom-up perspective, on the other hand, perceived life satisfaction as being explained through multiple areas such as work, family, health and leisure. People differ in how they prioritize each area. For example, those who value achievement will emphasize work and family satisfaction differently compared to those who value relationships (Erdogan et al., 2012).

Researchers trying to evaluate the strength of the relationship between the work domain and life satisfaction often look at the relationship between the job and life satisfaction (Erdogan et al., 2012). As such, the top-down perspective treats life satisfaction as a function of the person, whereas the bottom-up perspective views life satisfaction as a function of areas involved in life. Thus, this study utilizes the bottom-up approach in explaining job satisfaction and job involvement on life satisfaction.

Job Satisfaction and Life Satisfaction

The concept of job satisfaction has been always a central research subject in the field of organizational behaviour, and it is broadly defined as the attitude of an employee toward his/her job. Indeed, job satisfaction has been defined in various ways. Locke (1976) for example refers to job satisfaction as a pleasurable emotional state. Spector (1997) on the other hand, defines it as the balance between likes and dislikes of employees about their jobs in work settings. Thus, job satisfaction is often defined as the state of one's thoughts and feelings towards his or her job (Alghamdi, 2015; Bowling & Hammond, 2008).

Job satisfaction was found to have a positive relationship with life satisfaction (Erdogan et al., 2012). Some of the researchers coined that the relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction is reciprocal (e.g., Judge, Boudreau, & Bretz, 1994). However, in the majority of studies, job satisfaction was treated as an antecedent of life satisfaction (Erdogan et al., 2012). Specifically, here are a few studies that related job satisfaction with life satisfaction (e.g.; Alghamdi, 2015; Hsieh & Huang, 2017; Mafini & Dlodlo, 2014). Employees who have a high level of job and life satisfaction tend to have a high level of motivation to achieve goals in life (Alghamdi, 2015). A few studies found links between job satisfaction and life satisfaction. A recent study by De Coning, Rothmann and Stander (2019) for example found the interaction

between job satisfaction and life satisfaction among employees in South Africa in which 76 per cent of participants who reported low job satisfaction also reported dissatisfaction towards their lives. Unanue, Gómez, Cortez, Oyanedel, and Mendiburo-Seguel (2017) found that job satisfaction had a positively significant with life satisfaction among employees in Chile. Similarly, empirical studies by Zhao, Ghiselli, Law and Ma (2016) discovered that job satisfaction had a positively significant with life satisfaction among frontline employees in China. Alghamdi (2015) found a link between job satisfaction and life satisfaction among employees in Saudi Arabia. Additionally, a study by Hsieh and Huang (2017) also found the relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction among employees of service firms in Taiwan. Finally, Erdamar and Demirel (2016) and Mafini and Dlodlo (2014) examined the relationship, teachers in Ankara and employees of public organizations in South Africa, respectively. The results revealed that job satisfaction is positively correlated with life satisfaction. Thus, it is proposed that:

H1: Job satisfaction has a positive significant relationship with life satisfaction.

Job Involvement and Life Satisfaction

Job involvement is often described as a state of psychological identification with the individual's job (Kanungo, 1982). Paullay, Alliger, and Stone-Romero (1994) conceptualized job involvement as "the degree to which one is cognitively preoccupied with, engaged in, and concerned with one's present job". In other words, job involvement is key importance for a person to attach in a particular issue which requires them to invest a certain amount of time and energy in the work (Kondratt & Garbers, 2016). Indeed, employee job involvement has been predicted to have a significant impact not only on individual outcomes but also on various organizational outcomes such as organizational performance and organizational success. Additionally, employees who are involved in their job

has been described as one whose job is an integral part of his/her self-definition. As such, employees who are involved in their job would normally attach and connect themselves to the job by putting cognitive, physical and emotional efforts (Khan, 1992) and put substantial effort towards the achievement of organizational objectives (Kondratt & Garbers, 2016). These types of employees can be recognized by their psychological presence, paying special attention, conscientious, sentimental, associated, integrated, and focused on their job. Involved employees are open to themselves, with other employees and as well as with the organization to put their complete selves to work (Kahn, 1992).

Despite the importance of linking job involvement and life satisfaction, only a handful of studies examine the link between job involvement and life satisfaction. For example, a recent study by Kondratt and Garbers (2016) found that a high level of job involvement indicated higher initial scores in the latent job and family life satisfaction. The relationship between job involvement and life satisfaction was found to be correlated among professional engineers in German (Moser & Schuler, 2004). Additionally, Adams, King, and King (1996) found that job involvement had a positive association with work interfering with family among full-time employees who were living together with at least one family member. Thus, it is interesting to explore the relationship between job involvement and life satisfaction. It is therefore hypothesized that:

H2: There is a positive significant relationship between job involvement and life satisfaction.

The proposed framework of this study is shown in Figure 1. The two independent variables of the study are job satisfaction and job involvement. While the dependent variable used in the study is life satisfaction. The hypothesized relationships proposed in the study is also displayed in the research framework.

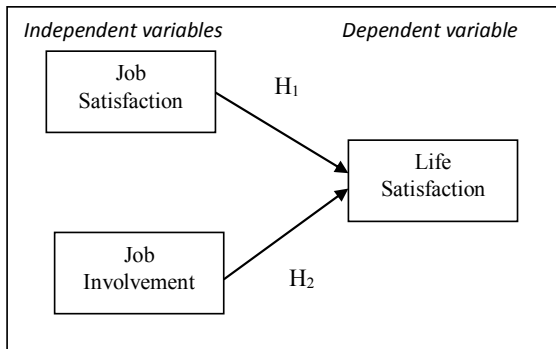


Figure 1 Proposed framework

METHODOLOGY

The study was first registered through the National Medical Research Registration (NMRR) website to obtain ethical approval from the Medical Research and Ethics Committee (MREC). The ethical approval from MREC is important since the respondents of the study involved nurses who work in a general hospital, which is under the Ministry of Health Malaysia. Staff nurse was selected as the respondents for this study because there is considerable evidence that the staff nurses have been facing increasing work demands. Thus, data were collected from staff nurses of Grade U29 with at least one year of experience at a general hospital in the heart of the city in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. In determining the relationship between job satisfaction and job involvement on life satisfaction, the present study utilized a quantitative design approach to test and verify the possibility of relationships.

Data was collected using a questionnaire survey. Purposive sampling method was utilized as the sampling technique of the study. A purposive sample is a non-probability sample that is selected based on the characteristics of a population and the objective of the study. Purposive sampling is also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling. The survey questionnaires were then distributed to a general hospital upon obtaining ethical approval from MREC. Data were collected using the 'drop off and method' where the respective person in charge of the hospital was contacted to assist in the

distribution of the survey questionnaires. A brief meeting was conducted to ensure that the person in charge is clear on the data collection process. The survey questionnaires were then collected a few days after the distribution process.

Instruments used in the study were adopted from reliable and valid sources from the literature. Previous literature also shows acceptable reliability values. The instruments used in the study were sent to three academic experts in the field and two healthcare industry experts to ensure its validity. Brislin's (1970) back-to-back translation method was utilized in preparing the instruments in dual language – English and Malay. To measure life satisfaction, the study adopted instruments from Diener et al. (1985) Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) which consisted of five items. Job satisfaction, on the other hand, was measured using three items of Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire Job Satisfaction Subscale (MOAQ-JSS) which was adopted from Bowling and Hammond (2008). Finally, job involvement was measured using ten items, adopted from Kanungo (1982). All items in the questionnaire were presented using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree. The survey questionnaires were comprised of a few sections – mainly covering the variables and one section on demographics items. Among the demographics items used in the study were gender, age, marital status, highest academic qualification, years of service and types of work schedule. IBM SPSS Statistic version 23 was used for statistical analysis. Reliability analysis, descriptive analysis, correlation, and regression analysis were used to analyse the data in achieving the objectives of the study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

As life satisfaction is a desired goal for individuals and the fact that life satisfaction has a number of positive outcomes in the field of work and organizations, the study aimed at

determining: (i) the relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction and (ii) the relationship between job involvement and life satisfaction among staff nurses in Malaysia. Previous cross-sectional studies suggested that job satisfaction and life satisfaction are positively related, while very few studies were found to have a link between job involvement and life satisfaction.

Based on the data collected from 180 staff nurses, the findings revealed that the respondents were the majority of women (93%), with seven per cent of male respondents. This is not surprising as the nursing job is dominated by women. More than half of the respondents (51.1%) were aged between 26 to 35 years old. This is followed by those 25 and below years of age with 35 per cent and age ranging from 36 to 45 years old at 11 per cent. The results also indicate that 56.7 per cent ($n = 102$) of the respondents are married and 42.2 per cent ($n = 76$) are still single at the point of data collection being held. The majority of

the respondents (93%) have a diploma as their highest academic qualification. Additionally, more than half of the respondents (58%) have been working for five years and less. This is followed by employees with six to ten years of service (25%), 11 to 15 years of service (12%), 16 to 20 years (3%) and 21 years and more (2%). The majority of the respondents worked in shifts schedule (97%) and only three per cent ($n = 5$) of the respondents worked in the non-shift schedule.

Table 1 presents the summary of descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha values and inter-correlation of the variables studied. Among the variables, job satisfaction showed the highest mean of 4.74 ($SD = 1.02$). This is followed by life satisfaction with the mean of 4.54, ($SD = 0.95$) and job involvement with the mean of 4.37 ($SD = 0.85$). Cronbach's alpha reliability of the variables studied ranged from 0.78 (job involvement) to 0.83 (job satisfaction). Thus, all of the research constructs were found to have acceptable reliability values exceeding 0.7.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha, and zero-order correlation of all study variables

Variables	1	2	3
1. Life satisfaction	0.79	0.52**	0.34**
2. Job satisfaction		0.83	0.38**
3. Job involvement			0.78
Mean	4.54	4.74	4.37
SD	0.95	1.02	0.85
Number of items	5	3	10

Note: ($N = 180$) Diagonal entries indicate Cronbach's Alpha values.
 **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed)

Correlational analysis was utilized to determine the inter-relations between the variables. Thus, in examining the correlation between job satisfaction and job involvement (independent variables) with life satisfaction (dependent variable), the Pearson correlation was carried out. As shown in Table 2, there were statistically significant positive associations between job satisfaction and life satisfaction ($r = 0.52, p < 0.01$). The strength of the relationship was considered moderate since the correlation is in the range between 0.4 to 0.7 (Ahmad, Halim, Aleng, & Ghazali,

2015). Similarly, there was a statistically significant positive relationship between job involvement and life satisfaction ($r = 0.34, p < 0.01$). However, the strength of the relationship between job involvement and life satisfaction is considered low as the correlation value is in the range between 0.2 to 0.4 (Ahmad et al., 2015). Based on the results, it is indicated that the variables used in the study were interrelated, and there were positive associations between job satisfaction and job involvement on life satisfaction.

To further investigate the relationships between the variables, multiple regression analyses between independent variables (job satisfaction and job involvement) and dependent variable (life satisfaction) were conducted. As shown in Table 2, the model which consisted of job satisfaction and job involvement explained 29 per cent of the variance ($R^2 = 0.29$) in life satisfaction. Thus, job satisfaction and job involvement were found to be the predictors for life satisfaction. Specifically, the findings indicate that job satisfaction was found to have the highest relationship with life satisfaction ($B = 0.46, p < 0.01$). Thus, there was a significant positive relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction. In particular, employees who have high job satisfaction would be perceived to have better life satisfaction. The findings also indicate that job involvement has a positive significant relationship with life satisfaction ($B = 0.17, p < 0.05$). In other words, the higher the job involvement perceived by the employees, the higher the life satisfaction they achieved. As a conclusion, both Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 were thus supported in the study.

Table 2 Multiple regression of all study variables

Variables	Criterion Life satisfaction Std B
<i>Predictor</i>	
Job satisfaction	0.46**
Job involvement	0.17*
R ²	0.29
F	36.84

= 180 * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that both job satisfaction and job involvement were found to be important in determining life satisfaction among nurses. In other words, the higher job satisfaction and job involvement they perceived, the more they perceived as having better life satisfaction. The findings that linked job satisfaction and life satisfaction were found to be similar to previous studies (e.g., De Coning et al., 2019; Unanue et al., 2017; Zhao et al., 2016 & Alghamdi, 2015).

This is maybe since individuals spend a lot of time at work, and some even perceived their job as the centre of their lives. As a result, how individuals feel at work influences how they perceived life. Since job satisfaction is being described as a high positive effect on a total work situation, it may influence the quality of life beyond the workplace, which is life satisfaction. Additionally, previous studies also support the link between job involvement and life satisfaction (e.g., Kondradt & Garbers, 2016; Moser & Schuler, 2004). Job involvement constitutes a key to motivation, performance, and satisfaction in the workplace. Employees become involved in their jobs when they fulfill salient psychological needs such as growth, achievement, meaning, and recognition. Since job involvement may require a certain amount of time and energy at work, it influences how individuals perceived their lives as well.

Since individuals spend most of their time at work and make their job the center of their lives, their job satisfaction influences their life satisfaction. The study is significant to the healthcare industry, particularly to the nursing profession. Firstly, the study provides empirical evidence on job-related factors such as job satisfaction and job involvement that would lead to better life satisfaction among the nurses. Since life satisfaction reflected a stable feeling about life and how they perceived their life is going, achieving a high level of life satisfaction is imperative for individual health and well-being. Secondly, the healthcare industry employees need to achieve a high level of life satisfaction as they are dealing directly with patients and handling quite some patients daily. Nurses with a high level of life satisfaction would normally have better well being and able to provide better service to their patients and society as a whole. Thirdly, the results of the study provide new insights to the top management and administrators of the hospital on appropriate policies, practices, and programmes in promoting quality of work-life and improving productivity (Mirfarhadi et al., 2013) among the nurses working in

general hospitals. Besides, the present study is used to fill the literature gap on the limited evidence on job-related factors such as job satisfaction and job involvement that lead to life satisfaction specifically among nurses of general hospitals in Malaysia. The findings of the study can add to the existing literature on the determinants of life satisfaction in the context of the healthcare industry in Malaysia.

In a nutshell, the findings of the study revealed that job satisfaction is important in ensuring life satisfaction among nurses. One of the suggestions to ensure nurses are satisfied with their job is that the nurses' job needs to be more fulfilling and satisfying. This can be done by redesigning the job to ensure that tasks involved in the job are challenging and the goals of the job are achievable. Thus, the segregation of tasks must be efficiently and effectively. In this context, the work environment for the nurses should also be conducive as it would contribute to better fulfilment of the job. Additionally, nurses should also be more involved in the job when they are attached to it. This is especially true when an employee is attached to the job, they would have a higher sense of belonging that would eventually lead to better life satisfaction.

The main limitation of this study is that the respondents of the study were confined to one general hospital only. Thus, future research should include staff nurses from different general hospitals in Malaysia for the findings to be generalized. Another weakness of our study is the fact that the study utilized non-probability sampling. Therefore, it is suggested that future studies should utilize a probability sampling approach to reflect the entire staff nurse population in Malaysia. These limitations aside, the results of this study highlight the important and complex role of understanding job-related factors such as job satisfaction and job involvement on life satisfaction among the nurses in the Malaysian scenario. We also envision several other avenues for future research. The most obvious avenue is to add

moderating or/ and mediating variables to the research framework. It is believed that the pursuit of this line of research will greatly benefit our understanding of the reciprocity that functions in relationships.

In conclusion, the results of the study suggest that job-related factors such as job satisfaction and job involvement influence life satisfaction. Specifically, job satisfaction has the highest influence on life satisfaction. This can be explained by the fact that individuals who have high job satisfaction are self-motivated and content with their job, thus it influences how they perceive their life satisfaction. The results also reveal that job involvement influences life satisfaction. Job involvement signifies an attachment and connection an individual has with their job. The higher they are connected with their job, the more efforts are being put to the job in terms of cognitive, physical and emotional. Therefore, individuals with higher job involvement would perceive better life satisfaction compared to those who are not.

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