

The Role of Socio-Demographics Profile and Work-Life Conflict on Life Satisfaction Among Working-Class Women in Sabah, Malaysia

Elpidia Juli, Md Sayed Uddin, Trixie Marjorie Tangit

Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universiti Malaysia Sabah

Email: elpidiajuli93@gmail.com

Corresponding Author Email: sayed@ums.edu.my

To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v14-i5/21639>

DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v14-i5/21639

Published Date: 28 May 2024

Abstract

Background: Life satisfaction among working-class women in Malaysia are influenced by several factors includes their socio-demographics such as marital status, age, religiosity, ethnicity and their education background. This is also not limited to other external influential factors such as work-life conflict. Only little amount of research focuses on life satisfaction among working-class women in the state of Sabah, Malaysia, in relation with their socio-demographics and work-life conflict. **Objectives:** Firstly, this research aims to investigate the relationship between socio-demographics and life satisfaction among working-class women in Sabah, Malaysia. Next, will also to examine the relationship between work-life conflict and life satisfaction among working-class women in Sabah, Malaysia. **Methodology:** A total of 348 female government servants in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia participated in the study by using snowball sampling method. An online questionnaire and physical questionnaires distributed to the respondents at government sectors. **Results:** It was shown that marital status among working-class women in government sectors partially mediated the relationship between dimensions in work-life conflict and dimensions in life satisfaction. Moreover, there was a correlation between all dimensions in work-life conflict and cognitive life satisfaction ($p < 0.01$) among working-class women in government sectors. Based on results, female government servants in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia's level of life satisfaction are partially influenced by their marital status, especially married individuals. Further research is needed to investigate whether the role of female government servants' grade position in their work organizations influence their level of life satisfaction.

Keywords: Marital Status, Life Satisfaction, Sabah, Socio-Demographics, Work-Life Conflict, Working Women

Introduction

Working women in this modern era, globally, are individuals who have their own ways to achieve their desired level of life satisfaction. This also includes for working women in Sabah, Malaysia. Ways to achieve better life satisfaction for every working women are subjective, because of their socio-demographics. When considering socio-demographics among working women in Sabah play crucial roles for their life satisfaction, it is expected to apply common socio-demographic elements such as age, marital status, religiosity, ethnicity, education background and so on. In Sabah, it is well-known that Sabah has extremely rich with diverse ethnicities, cultural beliefs and religious beliefs, where attracts people from all over the world to visit Sabah (Pugh-Kitingan, 2017). Despite this, current issues such as health issues and equality issues still existed among working women in Sabah, Malaysia Peng et al (2022) which that includes female government servants. One of the external factors identified regarding to health issues and equality issues among working women in Sabah, Malaysia are work-life conflict. Equality issues that still exist among working women in Malaysia such as income gap and holding decision-maker roles in work organizations that still occurring in Sabah (Peng et al., 2022).

For health issues, due to work-life conflict, working women in Malaysia suffers from mental illness such as stress and depression (Arham et al., 2019). Work-life conflict is an inter-role conflict. In other words, it is interchangeable (R Ibrahim, 2014), where negative emotions and thoughts experienced at workplace, will trigger an individual to express aggressions and frustrations in one's home life (Greenhaus et al., 1985; Hartman, 2016). This dynamic can be vice versa (Kossek et al., 2017). In most cases, work-life conflict occur specifically among working women that are married Ahmad et al (2011) (work-life conflict also applicable to non-married women), as married women with career are individuals who are multitaskers and have such complex work and home schedule. Moreover, married women with career and at the same time having children under their care in the households, makes their schedule becomes more and more chaotic and tedious (Salleh et al., 2022).

Literature Review**Women and Work-Life Conflict in Malaysia**

Kossek et al (2017) stated that work-life conflict and work-family conflict are both inter-roles conflicts when conflicts involve time, energy and behavior in the households and workplace. Work-life conflict and work-family conflict are closely related and affected the most among working women that are married with children. Kossek et al (2017) added on that work-family conflict is a focused form of work-life conflict. In work-life conflict, there are three main dimensions that covered individuals' work life and family life which are time-based, behavior-based, and strain-based (Greenhaus et al., 1985).

Arham et al (2019) studied work-life conflict among married and divorced working women in Malaysia. Arham et al (2019) stated that married women with career in Malaysia experienced higher level of stress compared to housewives, which similar to finding by (Julka et al., 2017). Arham et al (2019)'s study aimed to investigate the work-life conflicts among career women in Malaysia. From here, Arham et al (2019) selected financial gain/needs as one of the variables related to work-life conflicts among working women. In addition, Arham et al (2019) also included household responsibilities as one of the variables in the study based on previous study by Julka et al (2017) that supported where roles and responsibilities contributed to

working women's work-life conflicts. Work environments as well selected as variable in the study (contributing factor) according to findings done by (Okulicz-Kozaryn et al., 2018; Başlevent et al., 2017). Based on Arham et al (2019)'s findings, there are positive relationships between financial needs and work-life conflicts and positive associations between household responsibilities and work-life conflicts among married, working women. There is, however, no relationship between workplace environment and work-life conflicts among working women. Arham et al (2019) stated that there was no association between workplace environment and work-life conflict found in their study, because of the influence of their socio-demographics where majority of the respondents have more than 8 years' work experiences in their sectors. From this, majority of the respondents able to handle pressures at work environment and at the same time handling pressure at their households.

A study by Noor et al (2019) focused on comparative analysis between work-to-family conflict (WFC) and family-to-work conflict (FWC) among Malaysian career women that work in academic institution. In the context the differences between work-to-family conflict (WFC) and family-to-work conflict (FWC), Hartman (2016) stated that work-to-family conflict (WFC) was when an individual experienced amount of stress and pressure at the workplace which lead to conflicts towards the individuals' family domain, while family-to-work conflict (FWC) was when an individual experience amount of stress and pressure at the family household domain, which lead to conflicts towards the individuals' workplace. Based on Noor et al (2019)'s findings, they stated that working women in academic institution are majority among married women and few are single mothers. In addition, there are majority among the respondents who taking care of non-biological children in their households. Majority of working women experience greater work-to-family conflict compared to family-to-work conflict. In other words, majority working women in Noor et al (2019)'s study experienced more stress in workplace which affects in their households. From this, it could be one of the factors majority married women decided to leave workforce earlier and focused on managing their household responsibilities which stated on studies by (Salleh et al., 2022).

Aazami et al (2016) studied based on 325 Malaysian working and married women in relation with their work-family conflict and sleep disturbance. Based on their findings, Malaysian working, and married women in their 20's are the most affected with sleep problems due to work-family conflicts which associated with a dimension which is time-based. For time-based, working, and married women in their 20's in majority, commonly just entered in workforce and need lots of time to build and solidify their first career that led to sleep problems. In addition, Malaysian working, and married women in their 30's are the most affected with strain-based dimension, one of dimensions in work-family conflict. Aazami et al (2016) stated, women in 30's at this point have established their career and get used to their job scopes. However, they struggled to juggle with family responsibilities as this age group desires to maintain their career establishment. This also led to sleep difficulties. Work-family conflict led to negative well-being such as sleep difficulties as what similar finding by (Panatik et al., 2011).

Life Satisfaction in Malaysia

Howell et al (2012)'s study was focused on determinants or factors that contributed life satisfaction in Malaysia. Malaysia is rich with various cultures especially in Borneo (Sabah and Sarawak) Pugh-Kitingan (2017), ethnicities Soomro et al (2014), languages, religious beliefs Khalli et al (2022); Yusof et al (2003), especially in Sabah and Sarawak (Jones, 2011; King, 2017;

Peng et al., 2022; Pugh-Kitingan, 2017). Howell et al (2012) stated that socio-demographics in Malaysia are very unique and diverse, so life satisfaction preferences among Malaysians also varies, either assessed their life satisfaction in micro level or macro level. Micro level can be either assessed based on either age, religiosity, marital status, and etc., and vice versa towards macro level. In Malaysia, Howell et al (2012) identified few significant determinants for life satisfaction in Malaysia. According to the result, income is one of the main determinants for life satisfaction, by using a measurement scale which is Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS). They stated that achieving income assisted to support their basic needs such as clean food, clean water, good shelter, and any needs for survival. Howell et al (2012) added on where better income leads to several positive outcomes such as longer life expectancies, higher level of fertility rates and reduced malnutrition. They added on their study where there was limited research implemented to investigate life satisfaction in non-western countries.

There are also few later studies conducted in Malaysia that are similar to Howell et al (2012)'s research, where income as a determinant that influence life satisfaction. Swami et al (2007)'s study on which focused on towards medical students in Malaysia's in relation with their general well-being (depression and loneliness) and life satisfaction. These two negatively correlated towards each other based on their finding. In other words, medical students' life satisfaction is not depended on their depression and their loneliness. Swami et al (2007) stated that there are cultures for each ethnicity in Malaysia that should be taken into consideration. Ethnicities such as Chinese and Malays that resided in urban areas have specific cultures, where they are more exposed to western culture. The most obvious culture was where Malaysians' that are exposed to western culture, have the desires to gain better reputations, such as moving abroad to further education and also to secure better career that comes with better income. This culture trend affected to create policies by allowing equal job opportunities to both genders in Malaysia (Noor, 2006).

Other later study that are similar to study by Howell et al (2012); Swami et al (2007) on which income influenced life satisfaction in Malaysia are study done by (Ng et al., 2009). According to Ng et al (2009), Chinese and married men are more highly satisfied in life compared to Chinese and married women. They also found that the relationship between marital satisfaction and life satisfaction are much stronger among married women compared to married men. In Chinese culture, married and working women in Malaysia are engineered to be expected to perform maternal responsibilities and work their career just for gaining income to cover and pay expenses in households and other commitments. This contributed to married women to feel dissatisfied in marriage and influence their dissatisfaction in life.

Socio-Demographics in Theoretical Framework

This study was based on Hierarchy of Needs theory, created by Abraham Maslow in the early 1940's (Healy, 2018; Mathes, 1981; Taormina et al., 2013). In Hierarchy of Needs theory, there are five stages that every individual will experience and created in the pyramid form proposed by Abraham Maslow McLeod (2020) as shown below:

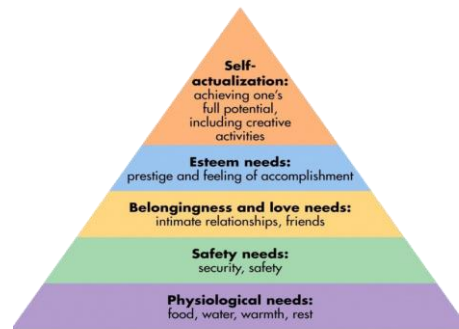


Figure 1: Hierarchy of Needs Theory By Abraham Maslow

According to Maslow (1943), physiological needs are the basic needs that every person must obtain for survival before a person being able to move to the next stage of needs. Example of physiological needs such as food, water and shelter. Maslow (1943) added that without physiological needs, human being will not be able to function properly. Physiological needs are the baseline where every human being need to achieve and sustain before they able to move up to the second stage. After human beings' physiological needs are sufficient and able to sustain enough of their needs for periods of time, individuals will eventually move to the next stage which was safety needs.

Maslow (1943) stated that for safety needs, are where every individuals seek to feel safe from every aspects of their lives. Feeling safe is obtained when individuals achieve securities and free from feeling fear and anxieties (Hayre-Kwan et al., 2021; McLeod, 2020; Taormina et al., 2013; Waltemire et al., 2020). In this world today, when related to working women, they desire to gain good and stable income in career they pursue in, which contributes to high level of life satisfaction (Marziah et al., 2018). In addition, educational attainment among working women also have increased Salleh et al (2022) to reduce income gaps (Parvazian et al., 2017). In Malaysia, MGGI (Malaysia Gender Gap Index) of educational attainment is 1.067 which means the equality of receiving education between men and women have achieved (DOSM, 2023). This shows that Malaysia emphasizes the importance of attain education for better economic stability. From here, having good income and good education background provide securities to achieve better life satisfaction faced by working women (Marziah et al., 2018; Marziah et al., 2017). There is also the influence of marital status, especially married status, that contribute to safety especially among females that live in rural areas (Kohno et al., 2020). According to Kohno et al (2020), marriage helps to reduce family poverty. In conclusion, for safety needs in Hierarchy of Needs theory, Maslow (1943) stated that individuals have their ways to achieve their safety needs and sustain them.

Maslow (1943) stated that for belongingness and love needs on the other hand, are where individuals seek connections that bring positive emotions to them such as happiness. Individuals are usually go this stage when they felt they are secured enough in most areas of their lives. Happiness is equivalent to life satisfaction and subjective well-being (Veenhoven, 2012). Middle-aged women specifically, seek meaningful connections and good social networks (Borzumato-Gainey et al., 2009; Degges-White et al., 2020). Regarding to marital status, especially among married women, are happier and have higher level of life satisfaction (Marziah et al., 2018). Marriage is a good practice for every human being especially in terms of emotional fulfillment (Isa et al., 2020). For working, married women, these groups are

multitaskers and most affected with work-life conflict (Ahmad et al., 2011; Arham et al., 2019; Kossek et al., 2017). In short, women seek the sense of belonging and love by experiencing emotional connections with people that have similar personalities and life experiences. Apart from marital status, religiosity also plays crucial role in instilling sense of belonging and love towards the higher power and increase marital commitment (Aman et al., 2019).

Maslow (1943) stated that for esteem needs are where individuals seek recognition, reputation and status. Job promoted to a higher level in work organization, recognition awards and increment salary are examples that increase working individuals' level of self-esteem (Taormina et al., 2013). Higher income or salary leads to higher level of life satisfaction (Marziah et al., 2018). When esteem needs are met, it goes to self-actualization needs where individuals desire to seek personal growth development (McLeod, 2020). Few of characteristics that individuals have reach to self-actualization are when the individuals become highly creative and have passion and concerned about humanities' welfares (McLeod, 2020).

Conceptual Framework

In this study, variables that are tested which are work-life conflict as the independent variable, socio-demographics as the mediator variable and life satisfaction as the dependent variable, are conceptualized in the form of framework which are shown below:

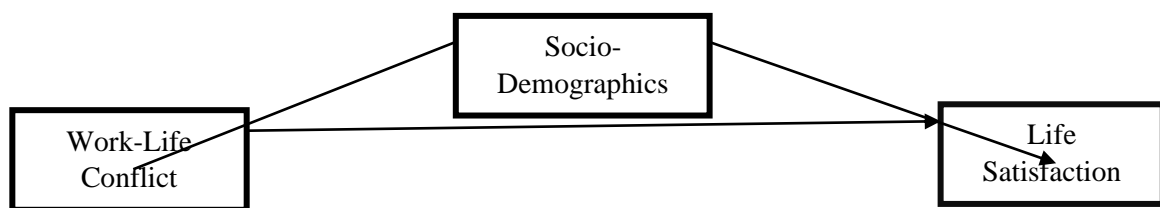


Figure 1: Based On Literature Reviews And Theoretical Framework

Methodology

This study is a quantitative study and conducted in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia. A pilot study is conducted by selecting among 50 female government sectors based in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia to identify if there're any problems detected during data collection for pilot study. After pilot study conducted, actual data collection is executed among 348 female government servants with marital status of married, single, divorced, and widowed. Other socio-demographics data also collected such as education level, age, grade position, number of years working in government sectors. A snowball sampling method implemented to perform data collection. Researcher contacted officer-in-charge/administrator(s) from selected government sectors based in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. Each government sector has their own procedure that a researcher needs to comply, for a researcher able to conduct research activities in their departments. Below are the government sectors based in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah that provided consent to the researcher to conduct research activities:

- Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri Sabah, Kota Kinabalu (Sabah State Education Department, Kota Kinabalu).
- Jabatan Pendaftaran Negara, Kota Kinabalu (Sabah State Registration Department, Kota Kinabalu).

- Jabatan Meteorologi Sabah, Kota Kinabalu (Sabah Meteorological Department, Kota Kinabalu).

Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri Sabah, Kota Kinabalu (Sabah State Education Department, Kota Kinabalu)

Researcher contacted an officer-in-charge in the department via WhatsApp and E-mail to enquire process for gaining approval to conduct research activities such as data collection. Officer-in-charge provided a set of instruction and informed the researcher to apply via ERAS 2.0 (Educational Research Application Research 2.0) system and submit documents such as the researcher's student status (must be active)'s verification letter provided the university, researcher's approved research proposal by the university and questionnaire (can be either Bahasa Melayu version and English version). The waiting approval took around 5 working days. Researcher received official approval letter from Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia (Ministry of Education Malaysia) to conduct research activities at Sabah State Education Department, Kota Kinabalu. The validity of the approval letter is seven months. The researcher used both physical questionnaires (pilot study) and online questionnaires using online google form (actual study) to distribute to female government servants in the department. Researcher handed over the physical questionnaires to the officer-in-charge to distribute to the female government servants in the department. Researcher received back questionnaires within one month.

Jabatan Pendaftaran Negara, Kota Kinabalu (Sabah State Registration Department, Kota Kinabalu)

Researcher contacted officer-in-charge via E-mail to enquire process for gaining approval to conduct research activities such as data collection. Officer-in-charge approved and signed consent form provided by the researcher. The researcher used physical questionnaires and handed them over to the officer-in-charge to distribute to female government servants in the department. Researcher received back questionnaires within one month.

Jabatan Meteorologi Sabah, Kota Kinabalu (Sabah State Meteorological Department, Kota Kinabalu)

Researcher contacted officer-in-charge via WhatsApp to enquire process for gaining approval to conduct research activities such as data collection. Officer-in-charge approved and signed consent form provided by the researcher. The researcher used physical questionnaires and handed them over to the officer-in-charge to distribute to female government servants in the department. Researcher received back questionnaires within one month.

Results

Socio-Demographics

Descriptive statistics implemented to summarize female government servants' socio-demographics. In terms of marital status, 68.7% are married, 23.6% are single, 3.2% are widowed and 4.6% are divorced. In terms of female governments' religiosity in relation with their ethnicity, 28.7% is the highest percentage for female government servants' that have other ethnicities and practiced Islam, followed by 16.9 %, second highest percentage for female government servants' that are Bajau ethnicity and practiced Islam and 16.7 %, third highest percentage for female government servants' that are Kadazan-Dusun ethnicity and practiced Islam. In terms of age range in relation with number of children the female

government servants have, 9.8% is the highest percentage where majority aged between 34 and 41 years old that have between 1 and 2 children.

Table 1
Female government servants' marital status

		No. of respondents	Percentage
MARITAL STATUS	MARRIED	239	68.7%
	SINGLE	82	23.6%
	WIDOWED	11	3.2%
	DIVORCED	16	4.6%

Table 2
Female Government Servants' Ethnicity And Religiosity

		RELIGION									
		ISLAM		CHRISTIAN		BUDDHIST		HINDU		OTHERS	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
ETHNICITY	KADAZAN-DUSUN	58	16.7%	44	12.6%	3	0.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	BAJAU	59	16.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	MURUT	2	0.6%	3	0.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	OTHERS	100	28.7%	16	4.6%	3	0.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	MALAY	33	9.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	CHINESE	14	4.0%	6	1.7%	5	1.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	INDIAN	0	0.0%	2	0.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

*N = No. of respondents

Table 3
Female government servants' age range and no. of children

		NO. OF CHILDREN							
		NONE		1 - 2 CHILDREN		3 - 4 CHILDREN		MORE THAN 4 CHILDREN	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
AGE	18 - 25 YEARS OLD	1	0.3%	5	1.4%	1	0.3%	1	0.3%
	26 - 33 YEARS OLD	18	5.2%	18	5.2%	17	4.9%	8	2.3%
	34 - 41 YEARS OLD	28	8.0%	34	9.8%	33	9.5%	12	3.4%
	42 - 49 YEARS OLD	27	7.8%	32	9.2%	25	7.2%	14	4.0%
	50 YEARS OLD AND ABOVE	23	6.6%	22	6.3%	19	5.5%	10	2.9%

Marital Status Mediates Work-Life Conflict and Life Satisfaction

In this study, in Table 4, marital status partially mediates the relationship between time-based and cognitive life satisfaction, which one of dimensions in life satisfaction, on where the LLCI is -0.0063 and ULCI is 0.0033, which satisfied the condition of (p < 0.05). According to Greenhaus et al (1985), time-based in work-life conflict occurred when an individual with career struggled to juggle time to fulfil responsibilities between two different domains: home

and workplace. Time-based or also in other word, time-based conflict contributes individual to experience mental illness especially working women that are married with children. However, since marital status partially mediates the relationship between time-based conflict and cognitive life satisfaction on where, time-based also has a relationship with cognitive life satisfaction, which carried total affect of p-value of 0.0086, which satisfied the condition of ($p < 0.05$) and direct affect of p-value of 0.0091, which satisfied the condition of ($p < 0.05$). There is no relationship exist between marital status and cognitive life satisfaction, since its p-value is 0.7222, that did not satisfy the condition of ($p < 0.05$). In addition to this, there is also no relationship exist between time-based conflict and marital status, since its p-value is 0.5015, that also did not satisfy the condition of ($p < 0.05$).

Table 4
Hayes Process Macro (Model 4) – Mediation Analysis

Effect	B	SE(B)	β	t	p
TB -> MS	-0.0253	0.0376	-0.0362	-0.6729	0.5015
MS -> CLS	0.0186	0.0522	0.0190	0.3558	0.7222
(total)TB -> CLS	-0.0964	0.0365	-0.1406	-2.6416	0.0086
(direct)TB-> CLS	-.0959	.0366	-.1399	-2.6237	0.0091
				LLCI	ULCI
(indirect) TB -> MS -> CLS	-0.0005	0.0522	-0.0007	-0.0063	0.0033

*TB = Time-Based, MS = Marital Status, CLS = Cognitive Life Satisfaction

Note: $p < 0.05$

Work-Life Conflict and Life Satisfaction

Regarding on the relationship dynamic between work-life conflict and life satisfaction, all dimensions in work-life conflict which are time-based, behaviour-based, and strain-based, each of them has a high correlation with ($p < 0.01$) towards one dimension in life satisfaction which is cognitive life satisfaction. Marziah et al (2018) stated that marital status is one of the influential roles that contributed working women’s work-life conflict in association with their life satisfaction. Even so, without the involvement of marital status, working women in government sectors’ work-life conflict is highly correlated with their life satisfaction. In this study, average means of working women in government sectors are between 2 and 3 which 2 stands for “Not sure” and 3 stands for “Neutral”.

Table 5
Time-Based In Relation With Cognitive Life Satisfaction

Correlations		COGNITIVE_LIFE_SATISFACTION	TIME_BASED_WLC
COGNITIVE_LIFE_SATISFACTION	Pearson Correlation	1	-.141**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.009
	N	348	348
TIME_BASED_WLC	Pearson Correlation	-.141**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	
	N	348	348

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 6

Behavior-based in relation with cognitive life satisfaction

Correlations		COGNITIVE_LIFE_SATISFACTION	BEHAVIOR_BASED_WLC
COGNITIVE_LIFE_SATISFACTION	Pearson Correlation	1	-.252**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	348	348
BEHAVIOR_BASED_WLC	Pearson Correlation	-.252**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	348	348

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 7

Strain-based in relation with cognitive life satisfaction

Correlations		COGNITIVE_LIFE_SATISFACTION	STRAIN_BASED_WLC
COGNITIVE_LIFE_SATISFACTION	Pearson Correlation	1	-.374**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	348	348
STRAIN_BASED_WLC	Pearson Correlation	-.374**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	348	348

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Discussion

Based on the objectives to investigate the relationship between socio-demographics and life satisfaction, which is the marital status, and also to investigate the association between work-life conflict and life satisfaction, marital status partially mediates the relationship between time-based dimension in work-life conflict and cognitive life satisfaction dimension in life satisfaction. Based on this research, marital status is not entirely play the big picture that will influence on female government servants' time management to juggle between their work and their home life, especially with married status, since married women hold the highest

number of respondents in this research. As the female respondents are female government servants, it could be their grade position in the work organization that influence their work-life conflict towards their cognitive life satisfaction. Grade position reflects female government servants' salary, their job scopes and their reputation.

According to Greenhaus et al (1985), time-based in work-life conflict is involved when working individuals struggle to balance time they want to invest in their home life and time given by the workplace to expect working individuals to complete their tasks. It is proven that married women are the most affected in managing their time between home life and work-life (Ahmad, 1996; Hamdan et al., 2019). However, since marital status partially mediated the relationship between time-based in work-life conflict and cognitive life satisfaction in life satisfaction, there is also exist direct relationship between time-based in work-life conflict and cognitive life satisfaction in life satisfaction. Hartman (2016) stated that time-based in work-life conflict experienced by every working individuals as they have their own priorities in their personal lives, that they considered as very important as much as their career.

Apart from time-based, behavior-based and strain-based also, each of them has a direct relationship with cognitive life satisfaction. Based on this research, female government servants' level of conflict in associate with time management regardless of their marital status, overall they are indecisive if time conflict influence their cognitive life satisfaction. This is because working hours in government sectors are fixed and very less likely for government servants to work extra hours, unless government servants voluntarily to work overtime, depending their grade position. In addition, this could be female government servants' enjoy their job scopes and voluntarily to work overtime, which contribute to their positive level of cognitive life satisfaction. This is supported based on a theory by Abraham Maslow, which is Hierarchy of Needs theory, where individuals need to achieve high level of self-esteem to gain good reputation, high recognition and status in the workplace, on the stage of esteem needs (Maslow, 1943).

Regarding on the behavior-based, the level of conflict in association with female government servants' behaviors displayed in the workplaces towards their cognitive life satisfaction is low. This means that female government servants did not feel pressured or forced to act outside from their comfort zone in the workplace. In other words, female government servants are well-aware and comfortable performing based on their jobs and responsibilities in their workplaces. In this case, since majority of the respondents are married women, they did not experienced conflict in terms of behavior that they should displayed in the workplaces despite holding other roles in their personal lives such as being a mother and also a wife. This can be said that married women achieved belonging and love needs based on Maslow's Hierarchy Of Needs theory, where individuals feel emotional fulfilled (Maslow, 1943). This was supported by Isa et al (2020), where marriage is a good practice to feel emotionally satisfied. In addition, female government servants also might have good social networks and relationships with other co-workers in the workplace where contributes to feel belonged in the group. Hartman (2016) stated that working individuals display attitudes or behaviors that are accepted in the workplace. When they are overwhelmed with too much home-life responsibilities, they tend to display unaccepted behaviors or attitudes in the workplace. This case, however was an exception among female government servants in this study.

Greenhaus et al (1985) stated regarding strain-based on the other hand, it is a amount level of pressure or stress working individuals experienced in the workplace. Since female government servants's strain-based influenced by their cognitive life satisfaction, their overall level of strain-based are varied which is why their cognitive life satisfaction are average. Regarding on the strain-based, the level of conflict in association with female government servants' stress, pressures or negative emotions (anything that are not in behavior-based and time-based category) displayed in the workplaces towards their cognitive life satisfaction is low. In other words, female government servants are not sure whether their stress or pressures that they experienced at home influence their performances at work and vice versa overall. This could be due to because female government servants might have other external commitments apart from their household responsibilities, such as working part-time to gain extra income.

Female government servants' overall cognitive life satisfaction are neutral. This was because female government servants feel secure financially the most and the risk of layoffs/termination of work is extremely low. This falls under the safety needs, which referred to Hierarchy of Needs theory by Abraham Maslow (Maslow, 1943), where individuals need security and safety, because individuals need to feel safe and secure, and as well as being able to improve their physiological needs; obtained cleaner water, better shelter, better food and etc. However, it is not enough for female government servants to feel highly satisfy in life.

Conclusion

Marital status among working women in government sectors has important influential role that affects their work-life conflict towards their life satisfaction. Working women in government sectors' level of work-life conflict are varies which also due to their marital status, but is not limited to consider their age, number of children under their care and etc. In addition, female government servants's level of work-life conflict and life satisfaction also influenced by their grade position. Overall, working women in government sectors' level of life satisfaction is neutral. From this, further research need to be done to consider other socio-demographics influence on towards female government servants in Sabah, in relation with their life satisfaction. A suggestion to improve female government servants' life satisfaction are by minimizing linking social capital gap among female government servants'; since grade positions do influence and widen the gap among female employees. Ways to minimize linking social capital gap are by enhancing female government servants' level of self-esteem, which promoting the value of appreciation and gratitude towards hardworking female employees across departments, regardless of their grade positions. In addition, obtaining feedback from female employees should be exercised especially regarding their struggles with time management in the workplaces.

In theoretical contribution for this research, by using Hierarchy of Needs theory by Abraham Maslow, female government servants' ways of achieving their desired life satisfaction are relying on their needs that are need to be fulfilled. To be specific, female government servants are focusing on their safety needs, on where they need stability and security in their lives such as having stable income, career (holding job positions in government sectors did not contribute to the high risks of layoffs) and have better privileges to be eligible to purchase assets such as houses and lands. However, in this modern era, female government servants determined what kind of safety needs that they are referring to, in order to earn better life satisfaction. This is because socio-demographics, such as marital status influenced female

government servants to have better life satisfaction. Being married doesn't necessarily promising good life satisfaction, because married status contribute to have multiple responsibilities. In some ways, marriage viewed as compulsory thing to do due to the influence of a religion and culture beliefs, where falls into love and belonging needs; which being married is actually a good thing. Individuals need to feel belonged in the society. From here, safety needs in Hierarchy of Needs theory by Abraham Maslow has been naturally evolved over time depending on the societies' perceptions of what are their safety needs.

References

- Aazami, S., Mozafari, M., Shamsuddin, K., & Akmal, S. (2016). Work-family conflict and sleep disturbance: The Malaysian working women study. *Industrial Health, 54*(1), 50-57. doi:10.2486/indhealth.2015-0086
- Ahmad, A. (1996). Work-Family Conflict Among Married Professional Women in Malaysia. *The Journal of social psychology, 136*, 663-665. doi:10.1080/00224545.1996.9714054
- Ahmad, M. S., Fakhr, Z., & Ahmed, J. (2011). Working women work-life conflict. *Business Strategy Series, 12*, 289-302. doi:10.1108/17515631111185923
- Aman, J., Abbas, J., Nurunnabi, M., & Bano, S. (2019). The Relationship of Religiosity and Marital Satisfaction: The Role of Religious Commitment and Practices on Marital Satisfaction Among Pakistani Respondents. *Behavioral sciences (Basel, Switzerland), 9*(3), 30. doi:10.3390/bs9030030
- Arham, A., Norizan, N. S., Ridzuan, A. R., Alwi, S., & Arham, A. (2019). Work – Life Conflicts among Women in Malaysia: A Preliminary Study. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 9*. doi:10.6007/IJARBS/v9-i9/6337
- Başlevent, C., & Kirmanoğlu, H. (2017). Gender Inequality in Europe and the Life Satisfaction of Working and Non-working Women. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 18*(1), 107-124. doi:10.1007/s10902-016-9719-z
- Borzumato-Gainey, C., Kennedy, A., McCabe, B., & Degges-White, S. (2009). Life Satisfaction, Self-Esteem, and Subjective Age in Women Across the Life Span. *Adultspan Journal, 8*. doi:10.1002/j.2161-0029.2009.tb00055.x
- Degges-White, S., & Kepic, M. (2020). Friendships, Subjective Age, and Life Satisfaction of Women in Midlife. *Adultspan Journal, 19*(1), 39-53. doi:https://doi.org/10.1002/adsp.12086
- DOSM. (2023). STATISTICS ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN SELECTED DOMAINS, MALAYSIA [Press release]. Retrieved from <https://www.dosm.gov.my/portal-main/release-content/32b46d37-8b84-11ed-96a6-1866daa77ef9>
- Greenhaus, J. H., & Beutell, N. J. (1985). Sources of Conflict between Work and Family Roles. *The Academy of Management Review, 10*(1), 76-88. doi:10.2307/258214
- Hartman, P. (2016). *Development and Validation of a Work-Life Conflict Scale: Identifying Energy and Emotion*.
- Hayre-Kwan, S., Quinn, B., Chu, T., Orr, P., & Snoke, J. (2021). Nursing and Maslow's Hierarchy: A Health Care Pyramid Approach to Safety and Security During a Global Pandemic. *Nurse leader, 19*(6), 590-595. doi:10.1016/j.mnl.2021.08.013
- Healy, K. (2018). A Theory of Human Motivation by Abraham H. Maslow (1942). *The British Journal of Psychiatry, 208*(4), 313-313. doi:10.1192/bjp.bp.115.179622
- Howell, R., Chong, W., Howell, C., & Schwabe, K. (2012). Happiness and Life Satisfaction in Malaysia (Vol. 6, pp. 43-55).

- Jones, G. W. (2011). *The Population of Borneo: A Study of the Peoples of Sarawak, Sabah, and Brunei*. By L. W. Jones. London: The Athlone Press, 1966. 213 pp. Maps, Tables, Appendices, Bibliography, Index. 42s. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 27(1), 182-183. doi:10.2307/2051735
- Julka, T., & Mathur, U. (2017). *A Conceptual Study of Work- Life Balance among Women Employees*.
- King, V. T. (2017). Borneo and Beyond: Reflections on Borneo Studies, Anthropology and the Social Sciences. In V. T. King, Z. Ibrahim, & N. H. Hassan (Eds.), *Borneo Studies in History, Society and Culture* (pp. 79-124). Singapore: Springer Singapore.
- Kohno, A., Dahlui, M., Nik Farid, N. D., Safii, R., & Nakayama, T. (2020). Why girls get married early in Sarawak, Malaysia - an exploratory qualitative study. *BMC Women's Health*, 20(1), 46. doi:10.1186/s12905-020-00911-z
- Kossek, E. E., & Lee, K.-H. (2017). *Work-Family Conflict and Work-Life Conflict*: Oxford University Press.
- M.Hamdan, S. N. b., Lim, B., Pazim, K. H., & Nga, J. L. H. (2019). *DETERMINANTS OF FEMALE LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION IN SABAH*. Paper presented at the Proceedings of the International Conference on Economics 2019.
- Marziah, S., Abdul Kadir, N. B. y., Kadir, A., Baharuddin, K., Kelantan, M., Bachok, . . . Zakaria. (2018). Marital Status, Career and Income as Indicators of Life Satisfaction Among Middle-aged Career Women in Hulu Langat, Selangor, Malaysia. *Populasi*, 24. doi:10.22146/jp.32363
- Marziah, S., Ijon, R., Wan Shaharuddin, W. Y., & See, S. (2017). JOB SATISFACTION AS A MEDIATOR OF LIFE SATISFACTION AMONG MIDDLE-AGED CAREER WOMEN IN KELANTAN. 31.
- Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370-396.
- Mathes, E. W. (1981). Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs as a Guide for Living. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 21(4), 69-72. doi:10.1177/002216788102100406
- McLeod, D. S. (2020). Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Retrieved from <https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html>
- Isa, M. N. A., Misri, N. A., Fazlan, M. I., Rezali, N. S. N., Moktar, N. A. A., & Ku Aziz, K. A. (2020). THE PERCEPTIONS OF WOMEN IN LATE MARRIAGE. *E-JOURNAL OF MEDIA AND SOCIETY (E-JOMS)*; Vol 3 No 1 (2020): *E-JOURNAL OF MEDIA AND SOCIETY (E-JOMS)*.
- Khalli, M. N., Sintang, S., & Kamu, A. (2022). The framework of socio-religious harmony in Sabah, East Malaysia: An application of Fuzzy Delphi method. *Heliyon*, 8(8), e09976. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2022.e09976
- Ng, K.-M., Loy, J. T.-C., Gudmunson, C. G., & Cheong, W. (2009). Gender differences in marital and life satisfaction among Chinese Malaysians. *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research*, 60(1-2), 33-43. doi:10.1007/s11199-008-9503-6
- Noor, N. M. (2006). Malaysian Women's State of Well-Being: Empirical Validation of a Conceptual Model. *The Journal of social psychology*, 146(1), 95-115. doi:10.3200/SOCP.146.1.95-115
- Noor, T., Mohamad, M., & Dahri, S. (2019). Relationship between Social Support and Work-Family Conflict: A Case Study of Women Employees in a Malaysian Higher Education Institution. *Journal of Technical Education and Training*, 11. doi:10.30880/jtet.2019.11.02.009

- Okulicz-Kozaryn, A., & da Rocha Valente, R. (2018). Life Satisfaction of Career Women and Housewives. *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, 13(3), 603-632. doi:10.1007/s11482-017-9547-2
- Panatik, S. A. B., Badri, S. K. Z., Rajab, A., Rahman, H. A., & Shah, I. M. (2011). The Impact of Work Family Conflict on Psychological Well-Being among School Teachers in Malaysia. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 29, 1500-1507. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.11.390
- Parvazian, S., Gill, J., & Chiera, B. (2017). Higher Education, Women, and Sociocultural Change: A Closer Look at the Statistics. *SAGE Open*, 7(2), 2158244017700230. doi:10.1177/2158244017700230
- Peng, T. N., Li, L. S., & Lian, J. C. K. (2022). *Demographic and Socioeconomic Changes in Sabah*: Universiti Malaysia Sabah Press.
- Pugh-Kitingan, J. (2017). An Overview of Cultural Research in Sabah. In V. T. King, Z. Ibrahim, & N. H. Hassan (Eds.), *Borneo Studies in History, Society and Culture* (pp. 235-259). Singapore: Springer Singapore.
- Ibrahim, R. Z. A. (2014). Malaysian Work Family Conflict and Wellbeing: The Moderating Role of Job Control and Social Support. *International Journal of Social Science and Human Behavior Study*, 1, 55-60.
- Salleh, S. N. S., & Mansor, N. (2022). Women and Labour Force Participation in Malaysia. *Malaysian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (MJSSH)*, 7(7). doi:https://doi.org/10.47405/mjssh.v7i7.1641
- Soomro, N., & Memon, A. (2014). ETHNIC RELATIONS IN MULTI-ETHNIC MALAYSIA. *Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 53, 1-11. doi:10.46568/jssh.v53i2.78
- Swami, V., Chamorro-Premuzic, T., Sinniah, D., Maniam, T., Kannan, K., Stanistreet, D., & Furnham, A. (2007). General health mediates the relationship between loneliness, life satisfaction and depression. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, 42, 161-166.
- Taormina, R., & Gao, J. (2013). Maslow and the Motivation Hierarchy: Measuring Satisfaction of the Needs. *The American journal of psychology*, 126, 155-177. doi:10.5406/amerjpsyc.126.2.0155
- Veenhoven, R. (2012). Happiness: Also Known as "Life Satisfaction" and "Subjective Well-Being" (pp. 63-77).
- Waltemire, C., & Bush, K. R. (2020). Safety Needs. In V. Zeigler-Hill & T. K. Shackelford (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Personality and Individual Differences* (pp. 4541-4544). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Yusof, S., Noon, M. H., Haneef, M. A., & Amin, M. R. (2003). Religiosity and Social Problems in Malaysia. *Intellectual Discourse*, 11, 77-87.