



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**OVERALL JOB SATISFACTION AMONG MANAGERIAL
EMPLOYEES IN THE PUBLIC SERVICES
DEPARTMENT, MALAYSIA**

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By

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**Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
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"The path to scientific progress in most instances is not the short-cut. It is instead, the path of a lot of hard work. But it is work that leads to great satisfaction."

(Porter, L 1969).

(God) grants wisdom unto whom He wills, and whosoever is granted wisdom has been granted wealth abundant. But none bears this in mind save those who are endowed with insight.

(AL-BAQARAH: 269)



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The major concern of this study was to determine whether overall job satisfaction can be better determined when placed within the context of the individual's total life situation. The main objective of the study was to examine factors that contribute toward job satisfaction among managerial employees. Specifically, it undertook to determine whether selected individual attributes, selected job-related variables, and selected non-job related variables are potential determinants of overall job satisfaction.

The sample size of 160 respondents was derived from 215 accessible managerial-employees of the Public Services Department (PSD), Malaysia.



A self-administered questionnaire was selected as a mode of data collection. All instruments used in the hypotheses testing were adaptations of previously developed instruments. Correlational and multiple regression analysis were utilized to analyze the data.

Overall job satisfaction among the managerial employees was found to be high in this study. Sex-role orientation, work-family conflict, family satisfaction, overall life satisfaction, job characteristics and career salience were found to be significantly related to overall job satisfaction.

Job characteristics, career salience, work-family conflict and overall life satisfaction were identified as significant determinants of overall job satisfaction. The significant contribution of work-family conflict and overall life satisfaction to overall job satisfaction are clear evidence that overall job satisfaction should be examined within the context of the individual's total life situation.

The study provided a significant insight into explaining the complexities associated with overall job satisfaction. As a whole, most of the theoretical rationales used in explaining these relationships were supported. The importance of seeking maximum compatibility between the individual and the environment as proposed in the theoretical model was generally supported. Hence, part of the adapted theory of work adjustment can serve as a relevant functional model in examining overall job satisfaction among managerial employees in the Malaysian context.

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**KEPUASAN KERJA MENYELURUH DI KALANGAN
KAKITANGAN PENGURUSAN JABATAN PERKHIDMATAN
AWAM, MALAYSIA**

Oleh

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Tumpuan utama kajian ini ialah untuk menentupasti sama ada kepuasan kerja menyeluruh adalah lebih baik ditentukan apabila berada dalam konteks situasi kehidupan seseorang individu secara total. Objektif utama kajian adalah untuk mengkaji faktor-faktor yang menyumbang-pengaruh terhadap kepuasan kerja menyeluruh di kalangan kakitangan pengurusan. Secara khususnya, objektif kajian adalah untuk menentupasti sama ada ciri-ciri individu terpilih, angkubah-angkubah terpilih yang berkaitan dengan kerja dan angkubah-angkubah terpilih yang tidak berkaitan dengan kerja adalah faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi kepuasan kerja menyeluruh.



Saiz sampel seramai 160 responden dipilih daripada 215 orang kakitangan pengurusan, Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam, Malaysia telah dihubungi. Soalselidik secara urus-sendiri telah dipilih sebagai kaedah pengumpulan data. Kesemua instrumen yang digunakan dalam pengujian hipotesis merupakan adaptasi daripada instrumen yang telah dibentuk sebelumnya. Analisis korelasi dan regresi berganda telah digunakan untuk menganalisis data.

Kepuasan kerja menyeluruh di kalangan kakitangan pengurusan didapati tinggi melalui kajian ini. Orientasi peranan mengikut jantung, konflik pekerjaan-keluarga, kepuasan keluarga, kepuasan hidup menyeluruh, ciri-ciri kerja dan penentu kepentingan kerjaya didapati mempunyai perkaitan yang signifikan dengan kepuasan kerja menyeluruh.

Ciri-ciri kerja, penentu kepentingan kerjaya, konflik pekerjaan-keluarga dan kepuasan hidup menyeluruh telah dikenalpasti sebagai penentupasti-penentupasti yang signifikan terhadap kepuasan kerja menyeluruh. Konflik pekerjaan-keluarga dan kepuasan hidup menyeluruh menjadi penyumbang- pengaruh yang signifikan terhadap kepuasan kerja menyeluruh.

Ini menjadi bukti jelas bahawa kepuasan kerja menyeluruh sewajarnya dinilai teliti dalam konteks situasi kehidupan seseorang individu secara total. Kajian tersebut telah dapat menyediakan suatu kefahaman yang signifikan terhadap penghuraian mengenai kompleksiti yang dikaitkan dengan kepuasan kerja menyeluruh. Secara keseluruhannya, kebanyakan rasional teoritikal yang digunakan dalam menghuraikan perkaitan-perkaitan tersebut adalah terbukti.

Kepentingan untuk mendapatkan kompatibiliti maksimum di antara individu dengan persekitaran seperti yang dicadangkan dalam model teoritikal secara umumnya adalah juga terbukti. Oleh itu, ternyata bahawa sebahagian daripada adaptasi "theory of work adjustment" boleh dijadikan sebagai model yang relevan dalam menilaiteliti kepuasan kerja menyeluruh di kalangan kakitangan pengurusan dalam konteks Malaysia.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Problem and Its Context

The public sector in the Malaysian government services is experiencing formidable tasks in the context of the New Development Policy which aims to transform Malaysia into a fully developed nation by the year 2020. The goal of "Vision 2020" is the creation of a fully developed and industrialized Malaysia by the year 2020 in all dimensions: economically, politically, spiritually, psychologically, and culturally (Malaysia: The Way Forward).

Indeed, the launching of Vision 2020, the Second Outline Perspective Plan (OPP2), the National Development Policy, and the Sixth Malaysia Plan (6MP) signify key policy documents in the New Development Policy which the Malaysian government has formulated in order to face the rigorous and changing economic environment.

One particular occupational group in the public sector - the managerial employees - is considered to be the "backbone" of the Malaysian government services. This key group will be directly responsible to ensure the successful implementation of various development policies and programmes. In fact, the managerial employees' effectiveness and efficiency, and their role as caring public officials are core dimensions of "Vision 2020". To be sure this new era of National development would undoubtedly require that the public service be well managed by these employees who are the advisors to the government and managers of the public service (Government of Malaysia, 1991).



Hopkins (1983) in his study of "Work and Job Satisfaction in the Public Sector" has found that a rapidly changing economic environment can and has produced a stressful environment for the employees. Hence, it can be inferred that the economic challenges confronting Malaysia may create a rather stressful work life.

The Government of Malaysia (1990, 1991) in its effort to adapt to the constantly changing demands of the economic environment has introduced various adjustments to the size, structure and processes in the public sector. One such adjustment is the continued upholding of the policy of reducing the size of the public service as a plan for improving its efficiency. This reduction in the size of the public service was further reinforced in the Proceedings of a recent National seminar where it was determined that the size of the public service will be progressively reduced in order to meet the needs of the present times (Socio-Economic Research Unit, 1991). According to Hopkins (1983), the trimmings in government employees at all levels have raised the important issue about the quality of work life of the employee.

The quality of work life of employees in organizations has been the concern among scholars because it affects the psychological well-being of employees (Hackman and Suttle, 1977). The psychological well-being of employees is perceived as a subjective phenomenon which is an attribute of human experience that originates from people's perceptions of their contemporary situation. A sense of well-being is always dependent on the subjective characteristics of the person and the objective characteristics of the situation (Campbell, 1981). Moreover, an individual's general sense of

well-being is also determined to a large extent by that person's satisfaction with his or her experience of the various domains of life (Campbell, 1981; Andrews and Withey, 1976).

One important domain is job satisfaction. It has been suggested by Seashore (1975) that the contemporary paradigm with regards to quality of work life in recent research and theory is based upon the assumption that the individual's own experience of satisfaction or dissatisfaction defines the quality of work life.

One of the major concerns about the quality of work life among the managerial employees in the government service is job satisfaction. Bullock (1984) perceived that quality of work life and job satisfaction can be used interchangeably since both refer to the affective orientation of the individual towards the workrole. As the "backbone" and as role models in the government services, it is especially important for the managerial employees to experience a better quality of worklife.

The government has given considerable consideration towards improving overall job satisfaction. This is being manifested in the growing concern on the importance of the welfare of employees in the public sector (Government of Malaysia, 1990 and 1991). Some of the steps taken by the government are the proposal to set up a welfare foundation for employees in the public sector; and a policy statement that the welfare of public sector employees be included in the Sixth Malaysia Plan. Indeed, the employee's perception and evaluation of his or her work situation is an essential factor in relating working conditions to welfare.

Generally, policy makers in the public service tend to equate job satisfaction of their employees with the provision of monetary benefits (Government of Malaysia, 1990). Little attention is given to non-monetary benefits such as the provision of various support services and special benefits which may improve job satisfaction. Lawler (1977) and Campbell *et al.* (1976) have established that material possessions and economic growth do not necessarily result in a high quality of life. However, with the launching of the New Remuneration System in 1992, the government has introduced several new benefits such as special leave in the event of child-birth for both husband and wife, loans for the purchase of personal computers, memberships in Recreation Clubs and medical benefits extended to parents. These manifestations may symbolize the efforts of the government to improve employee overall job satisfaction.

Policy makers in the public service tend to neglect the importance of job satisfaction because of the difficulties of understanding and providing job satisfaction (Government of Malaysia, 1990). In fact, it was reported that there is a lack of a clear and specific approach towards the management of job satisfaction of employees in the public sector (Government of Malaysia, 1990). The difficulties may be due to the assumption that the conditions of the work place control most of the attitudes and behaviours while at work. This is highly questionable because attitudes and behaviours do not originate purely from the happenings in the work place. As a result, recent studies of job satisfaction among employees in the public service have found that overall job satisfaction has been unsatisfactory (Abu Bakar, 1985; Tam Weng Wah, 1986; and Hanifudin, 1986). These studies may well support the contention that attitudes and behaviours cannot be explained completely from conditions in the work place.

Research studies that have attempted to explore the thesis that attitudes and behaviours originate purely from the conditions in the work place have been inconclusive. It has been established that the relationship between job characteristics and employee attitudes has been ambiguous at best (White, 1978). It was discovered by White (1978) that the impact of situational variables such as organizational climate and work group norms may have an influence on employee attitudes.

Specifically, Seashore and Taber (1975) has determined that the association between working conditions and job satisfaction is not constant, but is moderated by attributes of the individual that pertains to abilities, values and expectations. Significant non-job related variables such as family-related variables, cultural variables including personality, sex-role orientation and life satisfaction have been reported to affect job attitudes such as motivation and job satisfaction (Festinger, 1957; Lawler, 1971; Orpen 1978; Wiley, 1987; Rain *et al.* 1991; and Parasuraman *et al.* 1992).

Job satisfaction comprises a series of complex emotional reactions to the job. Identifying and understanding the underlying sources of job satisfaction has been an elusive effort. Despite considerable research on this topic there is still confusion over whether the factors that determine job satisfaction are derived from the job itself, the worker's mind, or the consequence of an interaction between the worker and his work environment (Locke, 1969).

Even in the 1980s, a major concern among researchers is whether job satisfaction should be viewed in isolation from the total life space of the individual (Kopelman *et al.* 1983). A study by Tait *et al.* (1989) on the relationship between job and life satisfaction conclusively established through

a meta-analysis study that there was substantial overlap between work and non-work experiences. The above study was also supported by Rain *et al.* (1991) and Judge and Watanabe (in press) on the existence of an association between job and life satisfaction. Rice *et al.* (1979) have even found through preliminary research that objective and subjective non-job related factors such as sex, race, marital status, life satisfaction and ratings of neighbourhood seem to have a higher explained variance in job satisfaction than objective work-related variables. The explained variance ranged from 20 to 23 percent depending on which regression procedures were adopted. The objective work-related variables identified in the above study were job tenure and occupational prestige.

These findings suggest that job satisfaction should not be analyzed without considering the importance of non-job related factors. Scarpello and Campbell (1983a) have also revealed a reasonable amount of empirical research where job satisfaction is related to off-the-job satisfaction, off-the-job activities, and off-the-job responsibilities. The true significance in examining the nature and causes of job satisfaction may be determined more comprehensively when the individual is placed within the context of the individual total life situation.

In order for the public services department to address the overall job satisfaction of the employees, an attempt must be made to gather information that may help policy makers formulate strategies to improve the quality of worklife by increasing job satisfaction. Research on job satisfaction in Malaysia has somewhat concentrated on the effect of job-related factors and demographic factors on job satisfaction focused mainly on the industrial and private sector (Ghazali, 1979; Abu Bakar, 1985; and Nor Azizah, 1988).

Statement of Problem

The Government of Malaysia has inadequate empirical information that might guide its efforts in enhancing overall job satisfaction among Government employees particularly, the Managerial group. This group is believed to be the "backbone" of the Malaysian government services with the vital role of ensuring that government policies and programmes in the new era of National development are implemented effectively and efficiently.

Nevertheless, recent studies of job satisfaction have established that overall job satisfaction has declined among employees in the Managerial group. It was reported that there is a lack of a clear and comprehensive approach towards the management of overall job satisfaction of employees in the public sector.

The decline in job satisfaction and the lack of a comprehensive approach to improve it may be the result of the limiting assumption that the conditions of the work place control most of the attitudes and behaviours while at work. This may have caused policy makers in the public service to neglect the importance of job satisfaction due to the complexities of understanding and providing overall job satisfaction.

It has been shown that attitudes and behaviours are not influenced by conditions in the work place alone. Significant non-job related variables such as family-related variables and cultural variables such as sex-role orientation and life satisfaction have been identified to be associated with job satisfaction.

The introduction of several new benefits under the New Remuneration System for government employees may also signal a recognition by the government that factors associated with non-job related variables could contribute to overall job satisfaction.

While considerable research on the origins of job satisfaction has been undertaken especially in the Western cultures (mainly North America), the findings are inconclusive. On the other hand, there is very little research on job satisfaction in developing countries. Thus, the need for this study to determine whether job satisfaction can be better predicted when placed within the context of the individual's total life space or total life situation.

The research questions to be addressed are:

1. What is the level of overall job satisfaction among managerial employees in the Malaysian public sector?
2. What are the factors that affect overall job satisfaction among managerial employees in the Malaysian public sector?
3. What is the contribution of non-job related factors in relation to other factors in predicting overall job satisfaction?

Specifically, the study seeks to determine whether selected individual attributes, selected job-related variables and selected non-job related factors are potential predictors of overall job satisfaction.

Objective

General Objective

The objective of the study is to examine factors that contribute toward overall job satisfaction among managerial employees in the Malaysian public sector specifically, the Public Services Department, Malaysia.

Specific Objectives

The specific objectives are as follows:

1. To examine the relationships between selected individual attributes and overall job satisfaction;
2. To examine the associations between selected non-job related variables and overall job satisfaction;
3. To examine the relationships between selected job-related variables and overall job satisfaction; and
4. To determine the contribution of selected non-job related variables in relation to the selected job-related variables and selected individual attributes in predicting overall job satisfaction.