

The Role of Job Satisfaction as Mediator Between Work-life Balance and Organizational Commitment among Lecturers

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Abstract

Lecturer profession is regarded as high-pressured in which lecturers find it difficult to divert their attention from working life to personal life outside working hours. This balance of personal-work life is found to influence employee attitudes, perceptions, and performance. The aim of this study is to find the effect of the work-life balance on lecturers' organizational commitment with job satisfaction as a mediator. The subjects in this study were 110 permanent lecturers from five universities in Padang City, Indonesia, who were selected based on purposive sampling and required to complete a questionnaire consisting of Work-life Balance Scale, Job Satisfaction Survey, and Organizational Commitment Scale. A simple mediation analysis was conducted using PROCESS macro. The results show that there was a positive significant effect of work-life balance on job satisfaction, job satisfaction on organizational commitment, and work-life balance on organizational commitment. In addition, job satisfaction was found as a partial mediator in the relationship between work-life balance and organizational commitment. This study provides important implications for higher education institutions to consider the work-life balance among lecturers to improve their job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Keywords: job satisfaction; organizational commitment; higher-educational; work-life balance

Introduction

Universities as a higher education institution in Indonesia are obliged to educate, to research, and to carry out community services, known as the *Tridharma* of Higher Education. These obligations are borne by each lecturer in universities, as mandated in the Act number 14 of 2015 concerning Teacher and Lecture and in the Government Regulation number 37 of 2009 concerning Lecturer. These regulations state that lecturers as professional educator and scientist bear a main duty of transforming, developing, and disseminating science, technology, and arts through education, research, and community outreach (Act No. 14 of 2005, Government Regulation No. 37 of 2009). It implies that lecturer is basically an essential component of an education system in universities. The role, duties, and responsibilities of lecturers are crucial in the attempt of actualizing national goal of education (National Education Department, 2010).

In addition to the *Tridharma* of Higher Education, lecturers also bear other duties, such as assuming structural position or acting as a committee or taskforce member who organize events for the faculty or university (Seniati, 2006). In carrying out their duties, lecturers often need to work overtime, continuing their tasks at home. This makes being lecturer a profession with a fairly high pressure because of the vulnerability of physical and psychological fatigue and most lecturers actually reported difficulties to divert attention from work to family or personal life, even when they are at home. Works seem to always be the main attention of their mind.

A previous study revealed a fairly high level of anxiety and worry in faculties pertaining to lecturers' work-life imbalance (Philipsen & Bostic, 2010). There are number of factors which prevent lecturers to achieve work-life balance, including lack of personal time, self-imposed high expectations, committee work, research and publishing demands, institutional procedures/red tape, and relation among colleagues

(Yordy, 2018). Currently, academicians in universities are expected to help the economical regeneration by disseminating their knowledge and skill through affiliation with industries (Hagen, 2002). This puts another pressure on lecturers, in addition to the community pressure that requires them to contribute in solving community problems using their expertise through community outreach programs. This high workload becomes a significant trigger which affect lecturers' satisfaction of their work-life balance, which in turn will influence their attitudes, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intention (Mukhtar, 2012). Moreover, being a professional lecturer will be certainly followed by receiving big responsibilities, which might put high pressure on them (Philipsen & Bostic, 2010). Staffs might not realize the importance of work-life balance to begin with, until it grows into a serious issue which is too late for treatment (Deery & Jago, 2015). Therefore, lecturers' work-life balance is a topic of concern for higher education institutions. It is only logical for organizations to regularly monitor their staff's perception on their work-life balance.

Work-life balance is defined as a state in which individuals perceive that they can meet their work demands without interfering with the fulfilment of their needs beyond their job, and vice versa, they can meet their needs outside their job without interfering with their work demand (Fisher, Bulger, & Smith, 2009). Personal life-work balance has been among the key variables in handling issues pertaining to managing and sustaining employees. A research by Soomro, Breitenacker, and Shah (2018), involving 280 lecturers in Pakistan, shows that work-life balance has a significantly positive influence on performance. It means that improvements on lecturers' work-life balance will be followed with increases in their job performance. A literature review by Deery (2008), focusing on the role of work-life balance, finds that personal life-work balance can influence employee's work attitude, for instance improving their job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Further, work-

life balance is also related to employee's decision to stay or quit their workplace. However, studies by Jha and Sharma (2016), and Azeez and Jayeoba (2017) provide contradicting evidence that there is no noticeable correlation between work-life balance and employee's organizational commitment. It implies that, despite perceiving a sense of balance between personal and working life, it does not necessarily influence employee's commitment to organization. Organization commitment was defined by Meyer and Allen (1991) as a psychological construct which is a characteristic of relationship between an organization and its members, and it has implication on their decision whether to stay in the organization or not.

The contradicting findings of previous studies interested the researcher to reinvestigate the relationship between lecturer's work-life balance and their organizational commitment and add job satisfaction as a mediating variable in the relationship. The researcher assumed a notable role of another variable as the mediator of the relation between lecturer's work-life balance and their organizational commitment and in this case the mediating variable is job satisfaction. As reported by a previous research by Thakur and Bhatnagar (2017) which found that job embeddedness acted as a full mediator of the relationship between practiced work-life balance and employee's intention to stay in the organization, work-life balance did not necessarily affect employee's intention to remain in the organization. Instead, it took another variable to mediate their relationship, which was job embeddedness.

Researcher presumes that there is another variable which might also mediate the relation between lecturer's personal life-work balance and their organizational commitment, namely job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is defined by Spector (1997) as an attitude reflecting how an individual feel about their job, both in general or in term of various aspects or facets of their job. The presumption of a mediating variable in the relationship of work-life balance and organization commitment was based on the finding of previous research by Mas-Machuca, Berbegal-Mirabent, and Alegre (2016). The research found that employee's work-life balance was positively correlated with their job satisfaction, so organizations should pay attention to their employee's work-life balance in order to improve employee's job satisfaction. The imbalance of personal and working life could drain employee's energy because they experience stress and it can disrupt their comfort in working and reduce their resting time which will affect their physical health (Mas-Machuca, et al., 2016). In addition, a study in a higher education organization by Gunawan, Barasa, and Tua (2018) found that work-life balance perceived by lecturers could lead to personal satisfaction in doing their job or role as educators. Therefore, the first hypothesis was made:

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant positive influence of lecturer's work-life balance on their job satisfaction.

A research by Malik, Nawab, Naeem, and Danish (2010) found that job satisfaction could improve lecturer's organizational commitment. According to Tett and Meyer (1993), individuals who are satisfied with their job will be more likely to be committed to their organization. In contrast, individuals who are not satisfied with their job will have low level of commitment to their organization, will be absent at workplace more often, and will even more likely to think about leaving the organization. This opinion is in line with a finding by Khan et al. (2014) which reported that lecturers who were satisfied with their job, working condition, incentive, their relation with superordinate, and promotion would have higher level of organization commitment and lower tendency to quit from the university. Hence, the second hypothesis was formulized:

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant positive influence of lecturers' job satisfaction on their organizational commitment.

If employees perceive that their expectancy and needs are met and there is a balance between their working and personal life, there will also be a sense of loyalty and an increase in organizational commitment (Casper et al., 2011). This is in line with the finding of Deery and Jago (2005) which reported a significant relationship between employee's work-life balance and their organizational commitment. However, a conflicting evidence was reported by Jha and Sharma (2016) where they found no remarkable correlation between employee's work-life balance and organizational commitment. Therefore, researcher add job satisfaction as a mediator in the relationship. Hence, the third and fourth hypothesis are as follow:

Hypothesis 3: There is a significant positive influence of lecturers' work-life balance on their organization commitment.

Hypothesis 4: There is the role of job satisfaction as a mediator in the relationship between lecturers' work-life balance and their organizational commitment.

Method

This research is a quantitative study with a questionnaire as the data collection. The questionnaire consisted of three scales, namely Work-Life Balance Scale (Fishcer, Bulfer, & Smith, 2009), Job Satisfaction Survey (Spector, 1997), and Organizational Commitment Scale (Meyer & Allen, 1997) which was adapted by Seniato and Yulianto (2010). Work-Life Balance Scale comprises four dimensions: Work Interference with Personal Life (WIPL), Personal Life Interference with Work (PLIW), Personal Life Enhancement of Work (PLEW), and Work Enhancement of Personal Life (WEPL). WIPL is individual's perception about the degree to which their work can hamper or interfere with their personal life, while PLIW is one's perception about how much their personal life can interfere their work. On the other hand, PLEW refers to individual's perception on how much their personal life can improve their performance at work, and WEPL refers to one's perception about how much their work can improve the quality of their personal life. This scale is a Likert scale comprising 17 items with four options, ranging from 1 (never) to 4 (almost every time). The reliability coefficient of the scale was .80.

The second measure in this research is the Job Satisfaction Survey used to assess individual's job satisfaction based on seven facets, namely job, superordinate, colleagues, work facilities, reward, promotion, and communication. It is a Likert scale with 21 items and the response options on each item range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). The reliability coefficient of this scale was .91. Lastly, to measure individual's level of organizational commitment, this research used the Organizational Commitment Scale which consists of three components: affective, continuance, and normative. The affective component measures one's emotional interest toward organization, individual identification with organization, and individual's involvement in organization. The continuance component assesses the calculation of perceived gain and loss that an individual will receive as a consequence of losing their membership of an organization. The last component, normative commitment measures one's perceived sense of obligation to stay in an organization. This scale is a Likert scale comprising 21 items distributed into the three components. Each item has response options ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Its reliability coefficient was .86.

Respondents of this research were 110 lecturers from five universities in Padang City, Indonesia, involving both public universities and private

universities. The public universities involved in this research were under the coordination of either the Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education, the Ministry of Health, or the Ministry of Religious Affairs. This research involved lecturers with both civil servant and non-civil servant status, with a minimum employment duration of one year in their current university. The respondent sampling utilized the purposive sampling technique in which respondents were recruited based on the predetermined respondent characteristic and their consent to participate in the research. Subsequent to the data collection, data was then analyzed using SPSS with the PROCESS macro add-on software by Hayes (2008) to enable simple mediation test in order to answer the research question. In addition, descriptive statistical analysis was also carried out to examine the demographic characteristics of the research respondents.

Results

Respondents of this research consisted of 40.90% males and 59.10% females. Based on the education level, 77.27 % of respondents had master's degree and the other 22.73% had doctoral degree. In term their academic rank, 20% of respondents was lecturers, 40% was senior lecturers, 32.73% was associate professors, while the other 3.63% was professors. Based on employment status, 73.64% of participants were permanent lecturers with civil servant status and the rest 26.36% were permanent lecturers without civil servant status. Respondents with one to two year of employment duration made up 9.09% of the total sample, those with three to ten year of employment duration made up 22.72%, while the rest 88.18% respondent had worked more than 10 years in their institution. In term of marriage status, 6.36% of respondents were single, while the other 93.64% were married.

Simple Mediation Model Test was carried out using the PROCESS software which was introduced by Hayes (2008). The tested model was the effect of lecturer's work-life balance on organization commitment, mediated by job satisfaction. The result of the analysis was as follow:

Table 1 shows that Path "a", depicting the effect of independent variable on the mediator variable was significant ($\beta = .48$; $p < .01$). It means that there was a significant influence of work-life balance on job satisfaction, where work-life balance accounted for 48% of the variance of lecturers' job satisfaction. It indicates that Hypothesis 1 is accepted. Subsequently, the Path "b", describing the effect of the mediating variable (i.e. job satisfaction) on the dependent variable (i.e. organization commitment), was also found to be significant ($\beta = .57$; $p < .01$). It implies a notable impact of job satisfaction of organizational commitment; hence Hypothesis 2 is accepted. In other words, lecturer's job satisfaction contributed to 57% of the organizational commitment scores. Next, the Path "c" which depicts the direct effect of independent variable (i.e. work-life balance) on the dependent variable (i.e. organizational commitment), was significant as well ($\beta = .22$; $p < .05$). This indicates a remarkable direct effect of lecturer's work-life balance on their organizational commitment where personal life-work balance accounted for 22% variance of organizational commitment. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 is accepted.

Further, in order to investigate the mediation effect of job satisfaction on the link between work-life balance and organizational commitment, the total effect, direct effect, and indirect effect coefficients, resulting from the output of PROCESS software by Hayes (2008), were examined. It is important to consider the coefficients of total effect, direct effect, and indirect effect, the p-value, and for the lower and upper confidence interval not to go through the value of 0. Table 2 below summarizes the result:

Table 1. Result of Simple Mediation Test

	Path	β	SE	95% Confidence Interval		p
				Lower	Upper	
X → M	A	.48**	.15	.19	.78	.00
M → Y	B	.57**	.07	.43	.71	.00
X → Y	C	.22*	.11	.00	.44	.04

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

X: work-life balance; M: job satisfaction; Y: organizational commitment

Table 2. Total Effect, Direct Effect, and Indirect Effect

	Effect	SE	95% Confidence Interval		p
			Lower	Upper	
Total Effect	.49	.13	.23	.76	.00
Direct Effect	.22	.11	.00	.44	.04
Indirect Effect	.28	.11	.06	.49	.00

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Based on Table 2 above, there was a mediation effect of job satisfaction in the relation between lecturer's work-life balance and organizational commitment. It is shown by the significant p-value ($p < .05$) of the indirect effect. It provides evidence that job satisfaction acted as a mediator in the link between work-life balance and organizational commitment. Hence, Hypothesis 4 of this research, which stated that there was a notable role of job satisfaction as a mediator in the relationship between lecturer's work-life balance and organizational commitment. However, the p-value of the direct effect was also significant ($p < .05$). This indicates a direct effect of work-life balance on organization commitment without going through job satisfaction. Simply put, without the mediation effect of job satisfaction, lecturer's work-life balance can still influence their organizational commitment. Therefore, despite the acceptance of Hypothesis 4, the role of job satisfaction as a mediator in the relationship between lecturer's personal life-work balance and organizational commitment was found to be partial; hence job satisfaction is a partial mediator.

Discussion

The result of this research indicates a significant positive influence of lecturer's work-life balance on job satisfaction. This is in line with a study by Mas-Machuca, Berbegal-Mirabent, and Alegre (2016) which reported a remarkable association between employee's work-life balance and their working attitudes, including job satisfaction and organization commitment. To be more specific, a research in education organizations by Rothbard and Dumas (2013) also reported similar findings that educator's perceived balance between personal and working life had a significant positive correlation with their perceived job satisfaction. In other research conducted by Varias and Seniati (2018) which involving Indonesian's lecturers found that there was a positive effect from work-life balance to organizational commitment.

Therefore, the management of higher education needs to focus on strategies to improve lecturer's work-life balance in order to improve their job satisfaction and performance (Johari, Tan, & Zulkarnain, 2018). Aside from being a strategy useful for higher education managements to recruit and sustain high-talent employees, work-life balance is also applicable to manage employee stress (Friedman & Westring, 2015).

This research also found notable positive influence of lecturer's job satisfaction on their organizational commitment. It is similar to a finding reported by Teng, Shyu, and Chang (2007) which showed that an individual's job satisfaction would determine their decision to

stay in or leave their organization. When a lecturer feels that their job experience has met their expectation and basic needs, or in other words they are satisfied with their job, they will be more likely to have strong organizational commitment or be loyal to their home university.

The third hypothesis of this research, that there is a significant positive effect of lecturer's work-life balance on their organizational commitment, was supported. This finding contradicts with a previous study which reported no significant link between employee's work-life balance and their organizational commitment (Jha & Sharma, 2016). However, similar evidence to the result of current research was reported by Deery and Jago (2015) who found a notable association between employee personal life-work balance and organization commitment. Thus, Human Resource Management (HRM) ought to introduce work-life balance practice to employees in attempt to cultivate employee intention to keep working in the organization (Thakur & Bhatnagar, 2017).

Some recommendations for the managements of higher education institution in order to achieve work-life balance include the need for regulations governing a minimum working hour for employees, flexible working hour, transparent recruitment process and opportunities for self-development, and family-friendly work policies in the university (Deery, 2008). By practicing work-life balance, employees will benefit from better physical and mental health condition and greater sense of security at work (Lazar, Osoian, & Ratiu, 2010). Additionally, according to Lazar et al., (2010), organizations will also reap benefits from the practice of work-life practice, including employee's positive attitudes and perception such as improved job satisfaction and organization commitment, as well as reduction of work stress and turnover intention. Further, it will also affect employee's performance and reduce direct or indirect costs related with employee absenteeism, employee recruitment or replacement, and organization productivity (Lazar, Osoian, & Ratiu, 2010).

Current research also found evidence of the role of job satisfaction as mediator in the relation between lecturer's work-life balance and their organizational commitment. A similar study was carried out by Thakur and Bhatnagar (2017) who demonstrated that job embeddedness played role as a full mediator in the relationship between work-life balance practice and employee's intention to stay in organization. In their research, they found that work-life balance did not necessarily affect employee's intention to stay in organization, but instead needed another variable as a mediator between the two. Another previous research by Soomro, Breitenecker, and Shah (2018) also found that job satisfaction had a mediating role in the association between work-life balance and employee performance.

Future studies might consider other variables as mediators or moderators in the relationship between work-life balance and organizational commitment. Some possible variables include organizational support, organizational climate, and demographic variables such as marriage status or cohort. Also, similar research can also be carried out in organizations outside education sector, for instance in health or information technology sectors in which work-life balance is also an issue of concern. Current research involved a fairly small sample and are limited to lecturers in Padang city, hence the limitation of its generalizability. Data was collected through a survey and from a single party, namely the lecturers. For future directions, multi-method and multi-rater studies, involving a bigger sample that represents the overall population of Indonesian lecturers, will also be beneficial.

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