

Work environment problems and psychological health problems and its relationship with job satisfaction

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The objective of this study is to identify the relationship between work environment problems and psychological health problems with job satisfaction among Paramedics in a public hospital. Work environment problems can be categorized in two categories namely social-psychological relationship problems and work coping problems. On the other hand, psychological health problems can be categorized in two categories namely health and physical problems, and psychological problems. This study had involved 226 Paramedics from a public hospital as respondents using stratified random sampling based on work locations. Mooney Problem Checklist Adult Form and Job Satisfaction Survey by Specter (1994) were used for these purposes. The results of the study indicated that work environment problems, psychological health problems and jobs satisfaction among Paramedics are mutually related. The finding also proved that work environment problems and psychological health problems suffered by Paramedics employees did influence their level of job satisfaction.

Keywords: work environment problems, psychological health problems, job satisfaction, Paramedics in public hospital

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Introduction

Job satisfaction is something that every employees want (Riggio, 2008; Munchinsky, 2006). However, job satisfaction can be restricted by work environment problems such as physical condition, poor relationship among employees or work condition that is not ergonomic, till it can affect work productivity. Problems with psychological health such as stress and general health problems that are experienced by employees can be the cause of the reduction of job satisfaction. Working environment problems can be categorized as social-psychological relationship problems whereas work adaptation problems can be categorized as health and physical problems and also as psychological problems

Employees and organization are two entities that cannot be separated. Employees play a role in moving an organization (Robbins, 2000). When employees possess high level of productivity and high job satisfaction, organization management will run smoothly and will then lead the organization to gain achievements. On the other hand, if employees does

not possess high level of productivity and have low job satisfaction, the occurrence of productive work environment will not likely to happen (Najib Ahmad Marzuki, 2007).

Managers have to ensure that employees possess high working spirit and morale in working. Usually, employees that are satisfied with what they gain from the organization will give more than what the organization expected and will keep trying to improve their performance. Different with those who have low job satisfaction, they tend to see their work as something dull and tiresome causing them to do their job with obliged feelings and not doing their best. Therefore, organization need to learn about factors that make employees feel satisfied in working with the organization. According to Adam in Lui Ah Kan (1997), with the attainment of job satisfaction, productivity will increase.

Ample of organizations believe that income or salary is the main factor that affect job satisfaction. Truthfully, job satisfaction is not necessarily influenced by only salary. There are many other factors that influence job satisfaction, one of it is environment factor such as job compatibility, organization management that is good for development, harmonious working environment including good relationship between superiors and subordinates.

Besides that, good psychological health can determine whether an employee can attain high job satisfaction or not. This is because, individual with good psychological health can give optimum focus towards the job that they are doing. Problems with psychological health such as stress that often occur may affect work focus and gives negative impact towards job satisfaction. According to Coer and Roy (in Lui Ah Kan; 1997) the effect from this psychological problems may lead to insomnia, anxiety and fear, depression or moody, tendency to cry, getting quickly irritated and angry, inability to decide, inability to analysis problems and inability to solve problems.

Referring to job satisfaction issue, working environment problems and psychological health problems among Paramedics in a hospital is something that should be taken seriously. Statistics that was obtained from a particular hospital's human resource department shows the rate of turn over or plea for early retirement among Paramedics are caused by the increase of job dissatisfaction. The finding from the statistic shows that job turn over and plea for early retirement are because of job dissatisfaction that caused by variety of factors.

One of the factor that often be the reason for employee resignation or early retirement is job dissatisfaction caused by inadequate salary, inconducive working environment problems such as not harmonious relationships between colleagues, with supervisors or management department. There are also Paramedics that resign or apply early resignation because of unstable health either from physical aspects, psychological

health, emotional disorder or health problems. These factors give a picture that indeed job satisfaction is linked to working environment problems and psychological health problems. In fact, these two problems contribute to the level of job satisfaction.

Therefore, this research is conducted to analyze the relationship between working environment problems and psychological health problems and also their relationship with job satisfaction among hospital Paramedics in Malaysia.

Previous Research

Studies on the relationships of job satisfaction with working environment problems and psychological health problems by Sherill, Peter, Claire, Martin, Alex, Sarah, Jibby, Tim and Corelius (2006) among social workers in England and Wales that consist of 145 individuals as sample that has been working in social worker department. The result of this study found out that 47% from 111 samples experienced psychological health problems (high work load), emotional disorder problems and have very low job satisfaction. At the same time, the result of this study also shows that working environment also contributed to low level of job satisfaction where the effect of inconducive environment problem caused them to fail to do what is required in their everyday work tasks, disrupt their attitude in making decision when carrying out their work tasks and also surfacing comfortable feelings with current working conditions.

A study carried out by Chua Bee Seok (2004) on 140 primary and secondary schools around Kota Kinabalu proved that there is significant relationship based on chosen factors that may decrease job satisfaction caused by working environment and psychological health problems. According to Chua Bee Seok (2004), factors that are selected in psychological health problems is stress and other factors that are selected is working environment problems which is climate and organization structure such as role confusion in management, problems in relationship with others, and problems with career and achievement that may decrease job satisfaction. Individuals that experience psychological and work environment problems caused by the factors stated above will decrease their involvement in making decision process, less discussion and effective communication in organization and office politics. They also will tend to have negative feelings toward their career.

Research conducted on civil servants that were selected randomly by sending 4000 questionnaires throughout England by Cooper, Rout and Faragher (1988), from 1928 questionnaires that were received back, they found out that female who have higher job

satisfaction are those who have good psychological health and working condition. On the other hand, those who does not have good level of job satisfaction are caused by having psychological health problems and work environment problems. These factors are experienced by many male where these working condition and psychological health problems tend to put them in an unstable emotional state such as getting anxious and tend to get involve with alcohol abused.

Previous studies summarize that there are significant relationships between working environment and psychological health with job satisfaction.

Methodology

The research design involved cross-sectional study through data collection from questionnaires. Population for this research involved 548 Paramedics from a public hospital in Malaysia.

Sample were selected by using stratified random sampling based on jobs locations. The number of sample is 226 Paramedics based on Krejcie & Morgan (1970) sampling size table.

Research Tools

The instrument used for this research is a set of questionnaire consist of three parts. Part A consist of questions on demographic. Part B consist of questions on working environment and psychological health problems whereas part C measure job satisfaction. Researcher used *Mooney Problem Check Lists* that was translated in Malay language by Sidek Mohd Noah (1998) for questionnaires in part B and scoring sheets for adult category. There are 20 items included for both work environment problems and psychological health problems. In part C, the questionnaire measure job satisfaction, researcher used *Job Satisfaction Survey* questionnaire (36 items) by Spector (1994) and it was translated with *back to back translation* technique. Internal reliability test shows high value of significant level with these *Alpha Cronbach* value: work environment problems (social-psychological problem : 0.82; work adaptation problem : 0.86). psychological health problems (physical and health problem : 0.89; psychological problem : 0.85).

Data Analysis

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to process and analyze the collected data by using descriptive statistics and inference analysis. Pearson

correlation was used to analyze the degree of relationship between work environment problems and psychological health problems with job satisfaction.

Research Findings

Table 1 displays the result obtained on the relationship between the level of job satisfaction with work environment and psychological health problems after being tested by using Pearson correlation technique. Based on the table, the result of Pearson correlation test shows that there are significant relationships between the main variables and the side variables. Work environment problems (overall) show a significant negative correlation with job satisfaction. Same result occurred when it was analyzed separately, social-psychological relationship problems and work adaptation problems also show a significant negative correlation with job satisfaction. In other words, this shows that with the increase of problems that are related with work environment experienced by Paramedics, their job satisfaction will decrease. High job satisfaction can only be achieved if work environment problems (social-psychological relationship problems and work adaptation problems) can be reduced.

The same thing can be seen when the result of this study shows psychological health problems (as a whole) also significantly negatively correlated with job satisfaction. It can be seen separately that physical, health, and psychological problems also have significant negative correlations with job satisfaction. The more problems related to physical, health and psychological aspects that the Paramedics experienced, their job satisfaction will decrease. Vice versa, job satisfaction will increase if problems related to physical, health and psychological can be reduced.

Table 1: Result Analysis on the Relationship Between Job Satisfaction with Work Environment Problems and Psychological Health Problems

Dependent Variables	Independent Variables	r
Job Satisfaction	Work Environment Problems	-.369***
	Social-Psychological Relationship problems (Work Environment Problems Dimension)	-.310***
	Work Adaptation Problem (Work Environment Problems Dimension)	-.316***
Job Satisfaction	Psychological Health Problems	-.268***
	Physical and Health Problems (Psychological Health Problems Dimension)	-.283***
	Psychological Problems (Psychological Health Problems Dimension)	-.192***

*** $p < .001$

Discussion

Relationship between Work Environment Problems (General) and Job Satisfaction

The result of the analysis shows that there is a significant relationship between work environment problems and job satisfaction among Paramedics. This result shows inverse relationship where the higher the job satisfaction experienced by an employee, the less they experience work environment problems and this may occur otherwise.

This situation happened because of the level of the Paramedics' job satisfaction depends on their work environment indirectly. This is because a Paramedic will not attain maximum level of job satisfaction if they have problems and feel uncomfortable with their work environment. Work environment problems are poor relationship with colleagues, dissatisfaction with employer or manager, cannot stand the rules or disciplinary that has been set up by the organization and experiencing disturbances at work place like sexual harrasment. All these problems will give negative impact on employees job satisfaction (Chan Chee Keong, 2007).

According to Malaysia Health Ministry (2008) work environment problems especially uncoordinated work place, inconclusive environment caused by noise, poor ventilation, exposure, poor work place design and others give impact on individual capability to focus

and this may lead to work place accident. Therefore, environment factors caused employees to lose focus on their work tasks that will eventually affect job satisfaction.

A research that was conducted by Angelina Yuri (2006) found out that job satisfaction is indeed related to conducive work environment. According to the result of her research about job dissatisfaction among the employees in a cigarette factory in Indonesia, generally they voiced out they are not satisfied in working when the management of the company changed their market strategy by using external agencies that caused the decrease of incentives received by employees. The decrease of employees' incentive payment had surfaced dissatisfaction among them. This occurrence show that inconducive work environment stems from the management had caused dissatisfaction among the employees in that particular corporation.

Relationship between Social-Psychological Relationship Problems and Job Satisfaction

The finding of this study shows that there is a significant relationship between social-psychological relationship problems with job satisfaction among the Paramedics. As an employee, indeed they need to face with many problems for example the attitude of patients, attitude of fellow colleagues that does not want to compromise from the aspect of working hours for employees that work by shift hours and the attitude of the superiors such as the management for doctors and pharmacy department. If an employee cannot or does not know how to adapt, they will face problems related to social-psychological relationship problems. Therefore they will also face problems on job satisfaction. Social-psychological relationship is also a factor that can measure employees' job satisfaction. If the problems last, job satisfaction will indirectly be affected.

Hospital employees in the emergency and observation ward departments are under pressure because they are facing social-psychological problems in which they have to face patients with various attitudes. This situation is different with hospital employees in the management department such as the administration and pharmacy department because they does not have to face with patients' attitude directly like employees that work in the emergency and observation wards. Therefore, when a research on job satisfaction was conducted, the result shows that employees in the emergency and observation wards have low level of job satisfaction compared to employees that work in management and administrative departments.

Relationship between Work Adaptation Problems and Job Satisfaction

The result of this study shows that there is a significant relationship between work adaptation and job satisfaction among the Paramedics. Problems with work adaptation is something related to job satisfaction because when individuals cannot adapt, they will not achieve maximum job satisfaction. This is because, employees will not be enthusiastic to finish the tasks given to them. They will always feel down and will have thoughts to change to other job.

This match with the result of an analysis where the more problems an employee faced from the aspect of job adaptation, the lower their job satisfaction will be. Therefore, to attain maximum level of job satisfaction, an employee have to solve problems that are related with work adaptation. They have to know how to adapt with their work and responsibility.

Besides that, based on a research by Zafir and Fazilah (2006), it is found out that there is a significant relationship between job satisfaction and work adaptation problem. According to this research, when an employee does not adapt to an organization, that particular employee will have the tendency to have problems in carrying out daily tasks. This condition can affect work performance and gives impact towards the productivity of the organization and the country. Therefore, every organizations need to give serious attention towards this matter because it can cause the human resource of organizations and the country to lose competitiveness. Human resource often confront with problems in carrying everyday tasks that stems from work adaptation which affect the performance level of organizations. This is because they fail to make full use of their creativity in carrying their work tasks and only doing their tasks at minimum level. These situations will indeed produced low level of job satisfaction. Not only work adaptation problems may affect work performance but most concern when it leads to the problems of workplace accidents.

Relationship between Psychological Health Problems (General) and Job Satisfaction

This research shows a significant relationship between psychological health and job satisfaction among the Paramedics. This is because employee with psychological health problems such as severe depression or under excessive pressure mentally or emotionally, will not attain maximum job satisfaction. The more or the longer an employee experienced psychological health problems, the lower their job satisfaction level.

Besides that, experience in life will give impact on employees' mental health (psychologically) in many ways. The experience of having depression usually is related with

physical, emotion and behavior reflects. Emotion factor usually will cause individuals to feel upset, sad, angry, restless and others. Emotional imbalance among the Paramedics caused mental stress that may lower their immune system which may cause fever, flu, headache, insomnia and nausea. The effects shown may be different such as look tired when working and other employees does not show any emotions and take in prohibited substances, gamble, smoke and others. These psychological problems caused the Paramedics to fail to give optimum focus in carrying their work tasks and will eventually distort their job satisfaction.

Relationship between Physical and Health Problems with Job Satisfaction

The result of the study shows that there is a significant relationship between physical and health with job satisfaction among the Paramedics. When an employee face problems with their health, indeed their work performance will decrease. This is because the employees fail to give their full commitment on their work tasks that has been given to them. This situation also may lead to stress because they fail to complete their work tasks and responsibilities perfectly. At times, the tasks had to be take over by someone else and this may lead to dissatisfaction to the particular employee. Things like this may surface dissatisfaction at work place. They fail to attain job satisfaction in their work because the tasks are failed to be done by themselves due to health problems that they face. When the tasks is being done by other people, job satisfaction will not be the same as when the tasks is being done by themselves. However, they do not have any choices other than have to just accept the fact about the situation. Therefore, job satisfaction will decrease when employees are facing with health problems.

Besides, according to research done by Zafir and Fazilah (2006), there is a significant relationship between job satisfaction and physical and health problems. The result of the study explained that physical and health problems such as stress may affect physical health, physiology, psychology and behavior of individuals. These may give impact on health such as getting higher risk of having heart disease, musculoskeletal disease, negative behaviors at work place and sleep disorder. Therefore, these physical and health problems may indirectly caused employees to lose focus in carrying their work tasks. Losing focus in carrying work tasks will decrease job satisfaction on the tasks that were carried out. So, what need to be done are by practicing healthy lifestyle by being active in sports, exercise and practice healthy food intake.

Relationship between Psychological Problems and Job Satisfaction

The result of this study shows that there is a significant relationship between psychological problems and job satisfaction among the Paramedics. Psychological problems is also a factor that may cause the decrease of job satisfaction. This is because when individuals are facing with psychological problems, they will have problems in focusing to their work tasks. Furthermore, this may also affect their daily life.

Abdul Mui'n (2005) stated that one of the cause on why an employee failed to achieve maximum level of job satisfaction is because they experienced psychological problems and this matter is not realised by them. This matter is further proven by a research done by Chua Bee Seok (2004) on 140 primary and secondary school teachers around Kota Kinabalu that shows that there is significant relationship based on certain factors that may decrease job satisfaction due from work environment problems and psychological health problems. The factors include stress, climate and organization structure such as role confusion in management, problems with career and achievement, problems in relationship with others or with superiors. Work environment and psychological health problems like this may surface negative feeling towards work, less participation in decision making and distort effective communication at work place.

The result of this study is also supported by Sherill, Peter, Claire, Martin, Alex, Sarah, Jibby, Tim and Corelius (2006) when they prove that low job satisfaction will be felt by employee when they have high psychological health problems.

Same goes with the result of a research conducted by Cooper, Rout and Faragher (1989) that stated that female with high level of job satisfaction comes from those who have good psychological health. Therefore, male employee who have low job satisfaction tend to have serious psychological health problems.

Conclusion

Job satisfaction is a main issue among employees. Does not matter where one works, this issue is often heard. It is an important social issue where serious attention is needed. This job satisfaction issue is one of the issue that has been a favourite issue among researchers and it had been discussed widely.

To ensure that employees can adapt with work environment, the Paramedics need to have exposure about their work scope. Exposure meaning giving them informations that are related to the work tasks that they are going to carry out. For example, if a Paramedic

needs to transfer from child ward to adult ward, they need to be provided with additional knowledge that may help their daily tasks. For example, learning skills that increase communication, skills in dealing with conflicts and skills in managing emotions. These skills learning is to help them avoid shock when getting involve in new work tasks. In this context, advanced course should be given to the Paramedics.

To ensure that they are always consistent with their work, it is advised for the Paramedics to undergo frequent practical training related to treating and helping skills. It should be done periodically which is having repetition training, twice a month to ensure that the Paramedics really understand the tasks given to them. Practical training may consist modules that are modified to suit the necessities or skills needed in order to yield Paramedics that really understand the tasks that they need to carry out. After having practical training, achievement test will be given to see how far is the commitment given and the knowledge obtained from the trainings. Both of these can be done by placing the Paramedics in practical workshop handled by more experienced Paramedics.

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