

The Impact of Working Environment, Salary, and Job Security on Job Satisfaction among Workers in Sarawak's Government Linked Company: The Case of Sarawak Digital Economy Corporation

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Abstract

In contemporary society, work occupies a significant portion of people's lives due to the financial and economic imperatives of modern living. However, research has demonstrated that job satisfaction cannot be achieved solely through financial incentives. Therefore, it is crucial to comprehend the diverse factors that motivate individuals to work and to contribute to overall job satisfaction. This study aims to examine the relationship between working environment, salary, and job security in relation to job satisfaction, aiming to provide deeper insight into the critical factors that influence employees' satisfaction and consequently impact their overall performance. In the scope of this research, the population to be investigated encompasses the staff of Sarawak Digital Economy Corporation, positioned as a government-linked enterprises in Sarawak region. The sample size comprises 107 participants among employees of Sarawak GLC (Government-Linked Companies). The research instrument utilized for data collection was a questionnaire and the results were

analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The study reveals a substantial influence of three pivotal factors- namely, the working environment, salary, and job security significantly- on job satisfaction. These findings hold significant implications, potentially serving as a valuable reference for understanding and insight into job satisfaction within the broader context of Sarawak 's business ecosystem. Such insights are valuable for academic research and business studies across the region.

Keywords: Salary, Job Security, Working Environment, Job Satisfaction

1. Introduction

Effectively managing personnel within today's organizations is both a formidable challenge and an essential imperative. The workforce, as the cornerstone of a company's prosperity, plays a pivotal role in shaping its success. Regardless of a company's size, geographical location, sector, or primary industry, it wields substantial influence over the job satisfaction of its employees. Satisfied employees exhibit a heightened commitment, enthusiasm, and a natural inclination towards demonstrating loyalty, whether directly or indirectly, to their employers. Such dedication and engagement among employees make a substantial contribution to the company's overall productivity and long-term sustainability. Evidently, job satisfaction may be defined as an individual's inclination to engage actively in their assigned tasks, considering their relevance to their role and various job-specific attributes. The duration an individual chooses to spend on their tasks and other related attributes can also be indicative of satisfaction. Job satisfaction is contingent upon the extent to which a job fulfills the needs and nurtures the sense of contentment essential for one's commitment and enthusiasm towards their role. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the various factors that motivate individuals to work and what contributes to job satisfaction. This research will provide general overview of the study, as well as the idea that researchers have pursued, and will help readers in comprehending the overall research background. In the year 2018, Sarawak Government embarked on Digital Economy Initiative and created an agency, Sarawak Digital Economy Corporation (SDEC) to spearhead the initiative. As a government-linked company (GLC), SDEC is totally funded by the state government to run all the projects and programs that are mandated by the Premier Office. The breadth of the scope is from capacity building to all the way to telecommunication infrastructure management. The most important information to have regarding an employee in an organization is a validated measure of his/her level of job satisfaction. The study aims to explore the connection between Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, specifically focusing on the hygiene factors encompassing working environment, salary, and job security, and their impact on job satisfaction within the context of SDEC. By examining these factors, the research endeavors to shed light on the dynamics of job satisfaction among employees in Sarawak. Given the significant geographical and demographic distinctions of Sarawak, findings from studies conducted on other factors in Peninsular Malaysia may not be directly applicable (Liang et al.,2022; Zainuddin et al., 2021; Andrew et al., 2016; DOSM, 2010), particularly within government-linked companies (GLCs), with the ultimate goal of enhancing the overall job experience for this specific workforce.

1.1 Research Problem

The challenge of job satisfaction persists as a significant concern for companies, regardless of their size, location, or industry. A company's success is no longer exclusively gauged by profitability but also by its capacity to appreciate and motivate employees, thereby maximizing job satisfaction and ultimately benefiting the company's performance (Mahadi et al., 2021). Notably, the Randstad Employer Brand Research (2018) indicated that 22 percent of Malaysian employees switched employers in 2017, with an additional 37 percent planning to do so in the following year. When employees' expectations go unfulfilled, their motivation to attain high levels of productivity and excel in their roles may dwindle. A particularly striking finding comes from Singh et al. (2019), who observed that 75.3 percent of healthcare workers have been dissatisfied with their working environment, salary, promotion prospects, and benefits since 2017. This dissatisfaction can result in decreased motivation and commitment to assigned tasks, thereby indirectly or directly impacting a company's overall productivity. Conversely, Singh et al. (2019) also emphasized that factors like career advancement, growth, recognition, responsibility, and positive relationships with leaders and co-workers have a significant influence on job satisfaction.

The investigation conducted by Lim Son Huat (2019) reveals a robust positive correlation between job satisfaction and employee performance. Conversely, the working environment does not exhibit a significant relationship with employee performance. Despite numerous efforts to gauge job satisfaction among employees, there remains a noticeable research gap in empirically assessing Herzberg's hygiene factors and their influence on employees' job satisfaction. This gap highlights a critical aspect of the problem that warrants further exploration in the research domain. Moreover, Government Linked Companies' (GLCs) employees are often considered the "backbone" of state governments, playing a crucial role in the effective implementation of government policies and state initiatives. Therefore, understanding the levels of employee satisfaction and the underlying factors is of paramount importance. It could greatly assist state governments in optimizing their practices to enhance job satisfaction among GLCs employees, leading to improved job performance (Liu et al. 2019).

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses

In today's social reality, it is quite common and expected that a significant portion of people's lives and time are dedicated to work (Liu, 2022). This is largely driven by economic and financial needs, but these factors alone do not appear to fully satisfy individuals. Therefore, there has been considerable interest in understanding why people choose to work and what level of job satisfaction they attain. Over the year numerous definitions of job satisfaction have been proposed. According to Raziq & Mulabakhsh (2015) job satisfaction can be characterized as a comprehensive combination of psychological, physiological, and environmental factors that motivate employees to acknowledge their contentment or happiness with work. Furthermore, job satisfaction is a measure of how content, comfortable, or fulfilled an individual feels about their job as highlighted by Ali (2016). It pertains to experiencing a state of pleasure or positive emotions resulting from the evaluation of one's

job or job-related experiences (Top & Ali, 2021). Clearly, the desire to undertake tasks that are regarded as relevant to their work and to the many aspects of the job itself can be interpreted as job satisfaction. The amount of time someone prefers to spend performing their duties, among other things, can be referred to as satisfaction. As per Subagja & Safrianto (2020), employees who experience job satisfaction tend to exhibit loyalty towards the company and show active involvement in their work. This positive attitude fosters an environment where they are motivated to continuously enhance their performance. The exploration of job satisfaction holds significant appeal for both individuals employed within organizations and researchers who delve into organizational studies; hence, it is imperative to thoroughly examine this subject and pinpoint the subject that can effect on job satisfaction.

2.1 Relationship of Salary towards Employees' Job Satisfaction

Salary stands as a pivotal determinant of work happiness and discontent, widely recognized as the single most important factor for employees to boost productivity, attract new talent, and reduce turnover rates. Job satisfaction is notably influenced by three key factors: the potential for competitive pay and career advancement, a well-organized hierarchy, and the overall working conditions. In a study conducted within the Malaysian insurance sector, Yee (2015) highlighted the paramount importance of salary as a primary motivator for employee satisfaction. This research involved 102 respondents from diverse insurance companies in Alor Setar, Kedah, revealing that salary exerted the most substantial influence on job satisfaction among employees. Additionally, Shah et al. (2017) identified a noteworthy association between job satisfaction, income, and turnover intention among private secondary school teachers in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. In a parallel context observed in Jakarta, Indonesia, similar findings were evident, and Ramli (2019) specifically addressed this phenomenon, unraveling the intricate interplay among compensation, job satisfaction, and ensuing employee performance.

Furthermore, companies wield significant influence over their employees, and this influence is reflected in how individuals perceive their work. Notably, Shah et al. (2015) found a substantial link between job satisfaction, income, and the intention to leave among private secondary school teachers in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Masea (2016) emphasized the positive impact of salary on job satisfaction among academic staff in South African higher education institutions. Effective pay practices are pivotal for companies seeking to attract and retain top-tier employees right from the job application stage. Conversely, employees must consistently deliver high-performance levels to safeguard their employment. The interplay between pay practices and job satisfaction is notable. Hsiao and Lin (2018) underscore the crucial role of pay as a robust determinant of job satisfaction. Nuraya and Pratiwi (2017) further emphasize the substantial impact of salary and motivation in fostering job satisfaction. A myriad of other studies, including those by Uddin et al. (2016), Liyana (2017), Jean et al. (2017), Darma et al. (2017), Pepra (2018), Ramli (2018), and Khudhair et al. (2020), further validate the critical role of compensation and salary in shaping job satisfaction and enhancing employee performance across diverse industries and regions. Based on this understanding, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: There is a significant relationship between salary and employees' job satisfaction.

2.2 Relationship Between Job Security and Employees' Job Satisfaction

Job security plays a crucial role in employee productivity and job satisfaction. As highlighted by Imam et al. (2019) when employees enjoy a sense of career stability, they can channel their efforts into achieving their best performance. Job security pertains to an employee's anticipations regarding the stability and durability of their position within an organization. Jandaghi et al. (2011) defined job security as the sense of having a secure job, with the assurance of its continuity in the future, coupled with the absence of threatening factors. In the perspective of Hur (2022), when employees perceive that organizations and employers prioritize and ensure job security, they respond with positive attitudes towards both their job and the organization. He argued that organizational type serves as a crucial subgroup variable, given the institutional differences between public and private organizations. Consequently, the relationship between job security and work attitudes and behaviors may vary, depending on whether the organization is public or private. In the same vein, in a study conducted in Indonesia, Yulita et al. (2022) uncovered a direct link between job security and employee job satisfaction. The establishment of positive superior-subordinate relationships, along with ensuring job security, can foster a comfortable and satisfying work environment for employees.

Abuhashesh et al. (2019) underscored the critical importance of analyzing job security for the retention of talented personnel and the reduction of turnover rates within the Jordanian industrial sector. Employees who feel assured about their job security are more inclined to stay with the organization, set long-term career goals, and experience heightened job satisfaction. Nemteanu et al. (2021) contended that job security is a crucial determinant of job satisfaction, applicable not only to highly trained employees who theoretically could secure alternative positions in case of job loss but also to those who do not fall into this category. Conversely, those who perceive their job as precarious often contemplate seeking alternative employment. Londa & Permatasari (2021) conducted a study in Indonesia, unveiling a direct connection between job security and employee job satisfaction. Establishing robust superior-subordinate relationships and ensuring job security can engender a comfortable and satisfying work environment for employees, further enhancing their well-being and performance.

Job security also acts as a motivator when employees can see a clear link between their achievements and their future within the organization. Organizations that fail to provide job security may face challenges such as high turnover, absenteeism, low morale, and reduced employee engagement. Based on the discussion, it can be concluded that there is a strong link between job security and employees' job satisfaction. Hence, it is hypothesized that:

H2: There is a significant relationship between job security and employees' job satisfaction.

2.3 Relationship between the Working Environment and Employees' Job Satisfaction

The environment has a major impact on employee satisfaction. Establishing a conducive working environment is a paramount concern for organizational functioning. Unfortunately,

numerous organizations overlook the significance of this aspect, resulting in challenges in maintaining a consistently growing production. Such organizations are deemed internally weak. Recognizing that employees play a pivotal role in the success of an organization; it becomes imperative to ensure a proper working environment that meets their needs and fosters optimal performance (Taheri et al.2020). Firms cannot function efficiently until improved facilities are provided, but the employee's major priority is the working environment. most believe that the working environment is critical in influencing job satisfaction, which leads to the attainment of goals by the company. A non-conducive working environment will lead to dissatisfaction which leads to demotivation.

Numerous studies have sought to understand the importance of the work environment. As time progresses, it has become increasingly crucial to investigate the influence of various aspects of the work environment on job satisfaction. Job satisfaction, as defined by Anser et al., (2020), refers to the degree of individual happiness derived from various characteristics of the work environment within the organizations they are employed in. Consequently, job satisfaction encompasses the psychological well-being of individuals within businesses, shaped by their perceptions of the surroundings and their positive viewpoint towards the elements encountered in their work environment (Amjad et al., 2021). Moreover, the research conducted by Taheri et al. (2021) suggests that organizational productivity is significantly influenced by the physical conditions of the work environment. Additionally, a study by Raziq and Maulabaksh (2015) across diverse sectors such as banking, university, and telecommunications has demonstrated a positive relationship between the working environment and job satisfaction. Employees in all three sectors unanimously agree that the working environment plays a vital role in achieving job satisfaction.

Recent studies indicate that the work environment significantly shapes employees' job satisfaction (Agbozo et al., 2017; Abualrub et al., 2016; Suifan, 2019). The recognized impact of working conditions on job satisfaction within organizational settings is underscored by various researchers (Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015; Bojadjev et al., 2015; Ayamolowo, 2013; Suifan, 2019). Despite this acknowledgement, there remains a scarcity of comprehensive studies that have both modeled and empirically explored the intricate relationship between working environmental factors and employees' job satisfaction (Arsalani et al., 2011; Bjorner and Pejtersen, 2010; Suifan, 2019). In similar vein, Ashraf (2019) conducted a study on the private higher education industry in Bangladesh, examining the impact of working conditions on teacher retention and the quality of education. The study involved 516 faculty members and utilized structural equation modeling for data analysis. The results highlighted a significant and direct influence of working conditions on private higher education institutions in Bangladesh. In a similar vein, Benn et al. (2015) explored the relationship between the working environment and employee satisfaction in Sydney, Australia, through their study "Employee Participation and Engagement in Working for the Environment." Their research, which involved surveys and interviews with 675 workers across two organizations, revealed that employee participation and engagement in environmental initiatives positively contribute to job satisfaction. Based on these findings, we propose the hypothesis that:

H3: There is a significant relationship between the working environment and employees' job

satisfaction.

3. Research Framework

This study is dedicated to investigating the potential influence and interrelationships between three key aspects and their connection to job satisfaction, with the aim of establishing a relationship between independent and dependent variables. The three aspects under scrutiny, namely working environment, salary, and job security, are treated as independent variables, while job satisfaction serves as the dependent variable. These independent variables are interrelated and collectively exert an impact on the dependent variable. The conceptual framework is presented in Table 3.1 below.

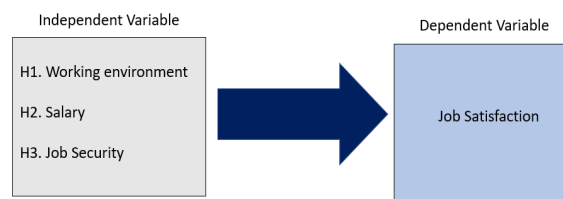


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

4. Research Method

4.1 Research Design

The study adopted a quantitative data collection method, namely a structured survey questionnaire distributed to the employees of Digital Economy Corporation (SDEC) located in Sarawak, Malaysia. The Digital sector was targeted because of the speed of development in IT and its dispersion across modern industries. Bagchi and Mandal, (2016). Convenience sampling is employed as the sampling technique in this paper, where in participants are chosen for their ease of accessibility and availability. The questionnaire was divided into three distinct sections. Section A covered the demographic profile of respondents, while Section B explored independent variables, including the working environment, salary, and job security. Each of these variables was evenly distributed, with five questions allocated to each. All the items were answered on a five-point Likert-type (anchored on 1 – “strongly disagree” through 5 – “strongly agree”) The questionnaire items relating to the working environment were adopted from Heimerl et al. (2017) and Kasvi (2017), salary from Spector (1997), Sheeba (2015), and Heimerl et al. (2017). Section C addressed our dependent variable, namely job satisfaction, with the questionnaire items adapted from Kanapathipilla et al. (2020).

4.2 Data Collection

This study adopts a quantitative data analysis approach, specifically designed as a descriptive study. The total population under scrutiny comprises 132 individuals, all of whom are employees of the Sarawak Digital Economy Corporation (SDEC) located in Sarawak, Malaysia. Within the organization, the workforce is categorized into three distinct sections: Contract Staff, Executive Level, and Non-Executive Level. To provide a detailed breakdown,

there are 52 contract staff, 77 individuals at the executive level, and 3 employees classified as non-executive level staff within SDEC. The data collection method involves distributing self-administered online questionnaires to the respondents using Google Forms. To ensure the validity of the measurement items, a pilot study was conducted by administering questionnaires to a randomly selected group of employees. Data analysis for this research was performed using SPSS version 27 software.

5. Result

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 27, is used to handle and analyse the data as part of the data analysis matrix. This study employed correlation-type statistics since it was interesting in evaluating the relationship between working environment, salary and job security and their influence on employees' job satisfaction. Out of the 132 questionnaires distributed to our intended participants, we received a total of 107 complete questionnaires. Interestingly, this study observed a higher level of engagement among male participants in comparison to their female counterparts. Among the 107 respondents, the age group between 26 to 34 was the most prominent, with 49 individuals, constituting approximately 45.79 percent of the total sample. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents consisting of respondents were degree holders. The reliability analysis was conducted to assess the consistency of independent and dependent variables. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the independent variables to be 0.952. Regarding the reliability analysis of the dependent variable, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients were determined to 0.913 which were deemed to be excellent. The correlation analysis examines the strength of the relationship between independent variables for working environment, salary, and job security toward dependent variables of job satisfaction. The result of correlation analysis show that salary is significantly correlated with job satisfaction as the reading is (0.675**, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that salary has a strong linear relationship with job satisfaction. A strong relationship was also detected between the working environment and job satisfaction because the result was (0.712**, $p < 0.001$). This has proven that working environment is an important determinant to job satisfaction and suggested that job satisfaction influences the job satisfaction in employees of GLC in Sarawak, Malaysia. Besides that, job security is an important determinate to job satisfaction by looking at the result of (0.8797**, $p < 0.01$). This shows that job satisfaction has the strongest relationship with sales performance compared to other variables conducted in this study.

Based on the three results presented, it is evident that Salary, Working Environment, and Job Security demonstrate a significant correlation with job satisfaction among employees in GLCs in Sarawak, Malaysia, as depicted in Table 4.1.

Table 1. The correlation results among variables

		Salary	Job Satisfaction	Working Environment	Job Security
Salary	Pearson Correlation	1	.675**	.519**	.727**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	<.001	<.001
	n	107	107	107	107
Job Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.675**	1	.712**	.797**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		<.001	<.001
	N	107	107	107	107
Working Environment	Pearson Correlation	.519**	.712**	1	.680**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001		<.001
	N	107	107	107	107
Job Security	Pearson Correlation	.727**	.797**	.680**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	
	N	107	107	107	107

5.1 Regression Analysis

To confirm whether the developed hypotheses are true, the most suitable technique to use is regression analysis by measuring the linear association between a dependent and independent variable.

The standardized coefficient beta for job security (.452) is statistically significant because the p-value is less than 0.05. The standardized coefficient beta for the working environment (.308) is statistically significant because p-value is less than 0.05. The standardized coefficient beta for Salary (.196) is not statistically significantly different from 0 because p-value is larger than 0.05.

Table 2. Parameter estimates

		Coefficients			
		Unstandardized Coefficients	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients	t
Model		B		Beta	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.676	.226		2.992 .003
	Working Environment	.306	.068	.308	4.230 <.001
	Salary	.140	.059	.186	2.384 .019
	Job Security	.411	.083	.452	4.979 <.001

Note. a. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction.

5.2 Hypothesis Testing Result

To determine whether the hypothesis is accepted or rejected, p value from table 4 above will be referred. The conclusion of the acceptance for those hypotheses are shown in above table 7. H1, H2 and H3 are accepted. Results for all hypotheses are shown in table 7.

Table 3. Hypothesis results summary

Number	Research Questions	Findings
RQ1	Is there a significant relationship of the working environment towards employees' job satisfaction?	$r = 0.712$, $p < 0.01$ There is a significant strong positive relationship between working environment and job satisfaction where $r = 0.712$, $p < 0.01$
RQ2	Is there a significant relationship of salary toward employees' job satisfaction?	$r = 0.675$, $p < 0.01$ There is a significant strong positive relationship between salary and job satisfaction where $r = 0.675$, $p < 0.01$
RQ3	Is there a significant relationship of job security towards employees' job satisfaction?	$r = 0.797$, $p < 0.01$ There is a significant strong positive relationship between job security and job satisfaction where $r = 0.797$, $p < 0.01$

6. Discussion

The results highlight a positive correlation between the Hygiene Factors, which encompass the Working Environment, Salary, and Job Security, and Job Satisfaction. These findings align with previous research, such as Raziq's study in 2015, which also emphasized the strong positive correlation between the working environment and job satisfaction.

It is evident that employees place a high value on job security, as indicated by an impressive correlation ($r = .797$) with a significant level (0.01). This aligns with the conclusions drawn by Sri Wahyuni in 2020, emphasizing the positive and robust relationship between job security and job satisfaction. Our study reaffirms this relationship among employees of SDEC. In the context of Sarawak, job security exerts a particularly profound effect on job satisfaction. This could be attributed to the limited job opportunities in Sarawak compared to Peninsular Malaysia, evident in the disparity in GDP growth (Yeo & Park 2023) and the region's high poverty rate. Consequently, job security is prioritized by Sarawakian employees. Similar trends are observed in Peninsular Malaysia, as illustrated by Badrolhisam et al. 2019 study on employee career decision-making among government workers. Among the three factors considered (salary and benefits, working environment, and job security), job security emerges as the most influential factor in career decision-making. Therefore, job security not only contributes to job satisfaction but also plays a pivotal role in shaping career decisions.

7. Conclusion

This study has offered updated research in factors affecting job satisfaction in Malaysia. The finding of this study managed to prove that working environment, salary and job security impacted on job satisfaction amongst the employees of GLCs in Sarawak Malaysia. Therefore, enhancing job satisfaction among employees in government-linked companies (GLCs), such as the Sarawak Digital Economy Corporation (SDEC), is crucial for fostering a more committed and motivated workforce. By prioritizing these factors, organizations can create a positive work environment that encourages employees to be more dedicated, productive, and aligned with the company's objectives. Consequently, this heightened job satisfaction can lead to increased profitability and a stronger competitive position within the market. As other companies take notice of the success achieved by GLCs like SDEC, they may adopt similar strategies to enhance their own business operations, ultimately benefiting both employees and employers in the long term.

The primary objective of this research is to gain a deeper understanding of the factors influencing job satisfaction within the context of Government-Linked Companies (GLCs) in Sarawak, Malaysia. This study examines three independent factors: working environment, salary, and job security, in relation to the dependent variable, which is job satisfaction. The insights and information collected from this study are intended to be considered not only by the organization under examination but also by other companies interested in enhancing employee morale and job satisfaction. The study's overarching goal is to assist GLCs in enhancing employee satisfaction, with the expectation that this will lead to increased productivity and overall performance. Additionally, this improvement can translate to a more

favorable return on investment for the taxpayers who have contributed to the establishment of these agencies in Sarawak. Moreover, this research makes a valuable contribution to the existing body of knowledge on job satisfaction, with a particular focus on the unique dynamics and factors influencing job satisfaction within Sarawak Digital Economy Berhad and, more broadly, government-linked companies. The findings of this study can serve as a point of reference for future research endeavors and provide a solid foundation for further exploration of job satisfaction within the context of GLCs.

This research is not without limitations. Firstly, subsequent studies should prioritize a larger sample size across diverse industry sectors. Secondly, future researchers may consider hypothesizing about the impact of various factors, such as company culture, teamwork, and employee training, to understand their differential effects. Thirdly, given that this research was conducted in Sarawak, Malaysia, caution must be exercised in generalizing the results to other countries. Fourthly, forthcoming research could delve into investigating moderator or mediator variables and examining their roles in the relationship between hygiene factors and job satisfaction. Therefore, this topic holds promise for future research endeavors.

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