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**Work-life Balance and Job Performance:  
A case of Royal Malaysian Police**

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**Abstract**

This study investigates the work-life balance and job performance among the Royal Malaysian Police (RMP). RMP faced various challenges due to the nature of their work and pressured with high perceptions among societies for them to solve security-related issues. This study used a purposive sampling of 380 RMP located in Kedah. The finding reveals a correlation between work-life balance (time balance, organisational support and workload) and job performance. All hypotheses are accepted as a positive relationship exists between independent and dependent variables. Therefore, this study reveals that work-life balance impacts job performance.

**Keywords:** Work-life balance; Job performance; Workload; Job satisfaction

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**1.0 Introduction**

In recent years, the workforce has changed from a labour-intensive market into a knowledge-based one where work-life balance is practised, retaining skilled and qualified employees. Royal Malaysian Police (RMP) is an important security force in Malaysia that ensures a peaceful, safe environment for citizens. In preserving a peaceful country, RMP cannot fully enjoy flexibility due to the nature of work and risk factors involved in the profession. Khaliq et al. (2013) undoubtedly claimed that the security force is vital in developing peace and safety for every country. Currently, RMP is facing global challenges such as incrementally high rates of crimes, technological advancement in combating intelligence of crime, and many other security-related issues. The total population of Malaysians aged 55 and above is 8.27% and will increase to 14.5% in 2040 (Department of Statistics, 2018). It shows that more senior employees in the workforce will leave the organisation rapidly due to retirement or voluntary resignations. Hence, organisations need to redefine their plans to retain good employees. However, in doing so, organisations must ensure that the quality-of-life balance exists, as a lack of it may affect employees' performance and the success of organisations. The quality of work-life balance has a very close relationship with

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the job performance of individuals. Organisations face challenges between the quality of work-life balance, their lives and how they affect their job performance. Work-life balance has a mix of different interactions. A person's life has advantages and disadvantages in determining the balance in getting a good life, which also impacts their job performance. Among the weaknesses that are closely related to work-life balance are the effects that result from this problem. This problem cannot be underestimated as it can lead to the highest number of turnovers in an organisation (Department of Trade and Industry, 2001; 2020). This study aims to assess how well Royal Malaysia Police officers in Kedah perform their duties. Firstly, we want to understand how effective officers are in their jobs. Next, we will explore whether there is a connection between how officers balance their time between work and other aspects of their lives and their job performance. We are also interested in examining the level of support officers receive from the organisation. Furthermore, we will investigate how satisfied officers are with their jobs and whether this satisfaction correlates with their job performance. Additionally, we will explore how engaged officers are in their roles and whether this engagement influences their job performance. Lastly, we will examine the relationship between the workload officers face and their performance.

### 1.1 Problem Statement

A job is a source of income for all individuals who are working in an organisation. The RMP is the body responsible for law enforcement. Their main task is to maintain public safety, promote the development of the district, and reduce the crime rate (Cheah et al., 2018). According to Viegas and Henriques (2020) and McKayDavis et al. (2020), the RMP has a staff of 137,574 senior and junior officers, and at the same time, their job is a stressful field of work. They were responsible for maintaining peace and order in the country. Their responsibility is very heavy and critical because it involves lives at stake. According to the Malaysian Public Complaints Bureau (PBC), there are many reports made by the public, and most of them are not acted upon. For example, there is no follow-up action, the police are late in reporting traffic accidents, and there are many police officers who cancel the summons in terms of giving a traffic compound when the offender has given them coffee money. (Public Bureau Complaints (PBC) Malaysia, 2021). According to the Enforcement Agency Integrity Commission Annual Report in 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020, the public has made several complaints of weak integrity against government agencies. The Royal Malaysian Police (RMP) scores the highest number of 73% incidences of weak integrity behaviour, which leads to misconduct (Enforcement Agency Integrity Commission, 2020). This situation causes the community to have a bad impression of the RMP.

According to Mc Culloch (2015), work stress is a learning process rather than a diagnosis. Work pressure indeed builds up over time. An individual may lose balance when he fails to properly organise his personal and work life. Therefore, problems that cannot be controlled well will also have a stressful effect on other workers. The superiors should be more careful in dealing with the crisis police officers face to solve the job performance problem. This is because the pressure of an increasingly competitive and fast-paced life adds more pressure to a person's work. Thus, work-life balance is necessary in everyday life to reach a consensus and harmony within the individual.

A job is a continuous process involving an individual who continually seeks ideas to grow their work journey. Every career development has its end time, especially for those working in the government sector. In the context of public service schemes for employees of the RMP, they are required to serve more than ten years. Later, this scheme also offered the option to extend service to 15 years or 18 years and above (Public Service Department 2018). This study focuses on the trend of early retirement options taken by the RMP. Former Inspector General Police Chief (IGP) Tan Sri Fuzi Harun said the initial retirement trend started over the last five years from 2014 and kept increasing. Highly challenging work pressure is the primary reason why they left the world of police. The results also state that many officers seek retirement, family health, and logistical issues. The early retirement trend definitely impacts RMP, and they have to be proactive in recruiting new employees to fill the vacancies. Early retirement has become an issue as the actual age of retirement is around 55 years and above. This trend among officers and members of the RMP is alarming, as their skills are needed to ensure national security. Table 1 below shows the statistic report among early retirement officers in RMP.

Table 1. Early Retirement Among RMP

Variables	Values	Officer	Staff	Civil Servant	Total
Early Retirement	2014	87	1360	156	1603
	2015	93	1757	166	2016
	2016	107	1904	156	2167
	2017	89	2092	135	2316
	2018	79	1993	103	2175
	2019	71	1809	80	1960
Total					12237
Age (2017-2018)	41-51	84	1045	135	
	52-61	85	3045	103	
Total		169	4090	238	

Source: Pension Department, RMP Bukit Aman

The report shows that from 2014 until 2016, the total number of police officers who applied for early retirement schemes kept increasing. There were 1603 applications in 2014, followed by 2016 applications in 2015, 2167 in 2016, and 2316 in 2017. However, in 2018, the number decreased to 2175, and 1960 applications as of September 2019. Even though the result decreased in two years, RMP is very firm that they must curb this problem as early as possible. Looking at the total number of people who applied for an early pension scheme, it becomes a problematic issue among the top management of the Royal Malaysian Police. Among the reasons highlighted were further studies, financial issues, family problems, starting a business, health problems, less salary, and exposure to

dangerous jobs. In their study, Emil et al. (2021) found that high physical work demands and poor overall psychosocial working conditions are the two important factors that can push workers from the organisation prematurely. This research measured the relationship between work-life balance factors (time balance, organisational support, workload) and job performance and indirectly may reduce the number of early retirements RMP. Identifying the main factor will help improve employees' quality and productivity in carrying out their duties.

## 2.0 Literature Review

### 2.1 Work-life balance

Work-life balance is not a common issue since it also has a huge impact on individuals and organisations. Work-life balance functions to produce productive and quality individuals. So that they can live a normal life between career and personal life, which should be balanced (Brough, 2020); this issue has gained worldwide attention. Following work-life balance rules, from the employees' point of view, they must try to balance their work and personal lifestyle to live a peaceful and harmonious life. Some of the employers think that the more tasks given, the more benefits the employees gain. This situation can also affect the relationship between employees and their families. The conflict may involve tough work tasks and then demanding pressure from their family, such as less time spent together. It will then affect the employees' work performance in the organisation, causing employees to become less productive and affecting their physical and mental health (Russell & Bowman, 2000; Jankingthong & Rurkkhum, 2012). The employer needs to look at this issue seriously to avoid any problem that may arise, such as ineffectiveness and inefficiency among staff in the organisation. When all the precautions are met, the employer will be well prepared before any negative problem arises from the staff, and technically, they can handle any possibility of circumstances. Wood et al. (2020) and Opatha and Arulrajah (2014) stated that the sustainability of an excellent organisation depends on the capabilities of its employees who are working in the organisation. In human resource management, employees are an important asset that can bring a bright future to the organisation. In this situation, this statement is indeed true because employees are assets in an organisation. Therefore, employers need to create work-life balance and ensure these concepts are widely practised in each sector of the organisation.

The spillover theory offers the most popular suggestions which introduce insights into the relationship between work and family. Belsky et al. (1985) and several other researchers supported the idea that workers must bring their emotions, skills, behaviours, and attitudes together, whether while working or in their daily lives. This theory is frequently used in other work-life balance studies. It shows how a person's emotional decline affects their work and life. This theory explains how emotional spills affect work performance. This makes it clear that experience overrides affect one domain and another. The theory is therefore chosen as the theory closely related to the subject of this research study.

### 2.2 Elements of Work-life Balance

A damaging lifestyle may occur once the employees focus too much on their job without thinking about people around them, such as a spouses, kids, friends and families. One contradictory issue pertains to working extra hours because some employees and employers believe that working overtime is better. After all, it can bring happiness to the family and gain life satisfaction as well. Perhaps it is due to extra pay received due to overtime work. According to Social Trend (2011), studies have been proven in several countries like America, British men have worked overtime, which is more than the actual hours, and women in Swedish country, they work 0.8 hours a week, which is longer than their original working hour are having life satisfaction because of the rise of payment and luxurious lifestyle. Greenhaus et al. (2003) emphasised that if time management can have a good work-life balance for the employee, it may result in good job performance and personal life activities. The International Labor Organization (ILO) calls for developing a policy of empowering employees to engage in the workplace, and the Convention of Responsibilities (1981) advises the Human Resource Department to be fully responsible for planning and practising time balance in a workplace. Fagan & Walthery (2014) stated that working hours are not the only determinant of work-life balance that can affect an individual's job performance. Based on different views on this element, this is the right moment to measure whether time balance has a relationship with job performance.

Employers should have a good working relationship with their employees so that the current generation of workers can improve their performance and dedication while performing their duties and improving work performance. According to a study conducted (Shaw et al., 2013; Kurtessis et al., 2017), workers with highly supportive organisations are found to be less stressful in the workplace and have positive effects on job performance. The existence of the Human Resource Department (HRD) generally portrays organisational support. This makes employees feel comfortable even if they are working under pressure. Therefore, the organisational support handled by the HRD should be well supervised to have a positive impact on the employees.

In their study, Tazeem et al. (2011) commented that workload refers to the intensity of job assignments and is a source of mental stress for employees. He added that each employee seems to be exposed to the workload problem in real life. Hence, workload and stress issues are rising daily, requiring thorough studies to resolve the issue. This is vital as stress may affect an employee's well-being. Research findings by Johanim et al. (2018) postulate that employee well-being accounted for almost 42% of job performance. Olson et al. (2019) commented that to promote workplace efficiency, (the clinical and administrative) workload should be supported by sufficient resources to maintain quality, productivity, and work-life balance.

### 2.3 Job Performance

Performance is traditionally defined as purposeful data outputs generated by the human operator, which serve as inputs to other components of the man-machine environment system and may provide feedback on effort adequacy (Morray, 2013). Performance is

viewed as the implementation of an action or one's ability to perform the assigned tasks. Good performance is also related to achieving quality, quantity, cooperation, dependability and creativity. The Ninth Malaysia Plan stated that employee performance is considered the measure of the organisation's quality of human capital. Good performance can be achieved when the employees meet the expectations of the employer and are attributable to the company's success (Jalagat, 2017). Furthermore, every organisation is interested in finding out how the workforce performs positively in relation to productivity and how work impacts performance. However, it is more interesting to know that there is still an ongoing debate on whether there is a significant relationship between work-life balance and job performance, as it is a very complex phenomenon. Based on this reasoning, this study proposed three following hypotheses:

- H<sub>1</sub>: There is a relationship between time balance and job performance among the Royal Malaysian Police in Kedah
- H<sub>1</sub>: There is a relationship between organisational support and job performance among the Royal Malaysian Police in Keda
- H<sub>1</sub>: There is a relationship between workload and job performance among the Royal Malaysian Police in Kedah.

### 3.0 Methodology

A quantitative approach using a self-administered questionnaire was applied in this study. This study developed a survey instrument based on Mastrofski's dimensions of police service. This study focuses on the police department from different levels and positions among the administrative staff at the prescribed location in the state of Kedah. The workers consist of different levels and positions among the administrative staff of the police department in the state of Kedah. There are twelve police stations in the state consisting of Alor Setar, Kota Setar, Kuala Muda, Kubang Pasu, Langkawi Island, Kulim, Baling, Pendang, Padang Terap, Bandar Baru Kulim, Yan, and Sik. Random sampling was performed to ensure that all units within the sampling frame were easier to select. The conceptual framework consists of three independent variables (IV): time balance, organisational support and workload, and dependent variable (DV), job performance. A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed, but only 380 respondents responded to the survey. The purposive sampling technique was adopted, and respondents are the RMP in Kedah state. The data obtained were analysed by using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 25. In this study, researchers collected data voluntarily from individuals working within the same state but across various job locations. For instance, surveys were distributed in areas like Alor Setar, Kuala Muda, and Pulau Langkawi. These locations were chosen due to their relatively high crime rates, with Alor Setar at 46.3%, Kuala Muda at 42%, and Pulau Langkawi at 38.7%, according to Crime Statistics Malaysia, 2018. A preliminary study was conducted to assess the reliability of the distributed survey questions. This pilot study holds significance as it helps comprehend the variables that rely on whether individuals are actively employed. Moreover, independent variables were scrutinised to enhance the methodology during data collection.

### 4.0 Findings

Correlation analysis has been carried out to assess the relationship between the elements of work-life balance: time balance, organisational support, and workload and job performance. The correlation for the parametric test is Pearson's Correlation. Pearson's correlation shows the linear relationship between two variables. The value of this correlation coefficient ranges between -1 and +1 and shows the strength of the relationship.

#### 4.1 Measure research objectives: relationship between work-life balance and job performance

Based on the Pearson Correlation's result, research objective 1, which is to determine the relationship between time balance and RMP's job performance, is 0.137\*\* and its significance ( $p < 0.05$ ). The measurement, however, indicates a relationship between time balance and job performance; effective time management is crucial for success in any endeavour. The researchers discovered significant correlations between time management, the allocation of time to managerial duties, and job performance. As a result, they concluded that proficient time management is pivotal for managerial performance. However, the status is a very weak correlation. Research objective 2, which is to study the relationship between organisational support and job performance, shows 0.221\*\* and its significance ( $p < 0.05$ ). It shows that organisational support is positively correlated with job performance. It shows the perceived level of support; it is essential to identify the sources of stimuli that transform into information for the employee and to what degree the organisation provides support but establishes a low relationship. Research objective 3, which investigates the relationship between workload and job performance, shows the result of correlation, 0.256\*\* and its significance ( $p < 0.05$ ). It indicates that the workload has a positively low correlation with job performance and establishes a definite relationship. Table 2 presents that Cronbach's Alpha has been used as a reliability coefficient to determine the scale's internal consistency. Table 3 shows that all three variables are reliable ( $p > 0.6$ ).

Table 2. Reliability Analysis

Component	Number of Items	Cronbach Alpha
Time balance		0.699
Organisation support		0.625
Workload		0.684
Job Performance (Dependent Variable)		0.728

Table 3. Table 3 Normality Test

Component	Skewness	Kurtosis	Normality Assumed
Time balance	-.278	-.366	Yes
Organisation support	-.358	.344	Yes

Workload	-.270	.413	Yes
Job Performance (Dependent Variable)	.364	.728	Yes

Table 4. Correlation between Variables and Job Performance

Variable	Significant Value	R-Value
Time Balance	1.00	0.695**
Workload	1.00	0.256**
Organisational Support	1.00	0.221**

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

## 5.0 Discussion

This study focused on measuring the work-life balance and job performance among RMP in Kedah state. Three main objectives have been measured in determining the relationship between the work-life balance elements and job performance. Based on the results of research objective 1, the time balance has a very weak correlation with job performance, though it is still positive. This finding perhaps correlates with the study done by Social Trend (2011), whereby time balance is not necessarily a short time leading to good job performance, but longer working hours may contribute to better performance. In this case, the nature of the job or working hours for RMP is in a different setting, and the understanding of time balance is not similar to the other work culture. However, H1 is acceptable, whereby time balance has a positive relationship with job performance.

The finding for research objective 2, organisational support and job performance, shows a low correlation exists. In this case, there might be some reasons why it has a low correlation. We need to look at the reality of the level of organisational support in their settings. Respondents might take into consideration many aspects of job-related conditions when they answer the survey. These may include pay, overtime claims, allowances, transfer procedure, accommodation/quarters, chances to study further, top management support, career development, etc. However, the result shows a positive correlation, and this finding corroborates with past studies (Shaw et al., 2011; Kurtessis et al., 2017). Thus, H1, which states a positive relationship exists between organisational support and job performance, is accepted.

The finding for research objective 3, which investigates the relationship between workload and job performance, also shows a low correlation between the two variables. The result gives researchers more thinking and perceptions as it is expected to have a high correlation, but otherwise. If compared between the other two variables, the reading for workload received a slightly higher score at 0.256\*\*. The finding can be perceived as respondents not actually revealing the fact that the job is their passion; therefore, workload is not an issue. In the aspect of low correlation, it might be dissimilar to Tazeem et al. (2011), but the finding is positive; therefore, H1, which states that workload has a positive relationship with job performance, is accepted.

## 6.0 Conclusion, Recommendations and Limitations

The implication of this study is to help the employees achieve a work-life balance, which can serve as an indicator for them to perform better in the future. It can also help the management manage their employees well and practice work-life balance in the organisation. From this practice, the employees will feel appreciated and well-taken care of by the organisation, hence increasing their loyalty. Furthermore, time balance, organisational support, and workload factors in managing job performance are proven based on data analysis findings. Work-life balance factors include time balance, organisational support and workload as a factor in work-life balance and greatly impact individuals' job performance. Finally, the research finding shows that the RMP officers in Kedah are greatly concerned about work-life balance, and it is really affecting job performance.

This study investigates the relationship between work-life balance and job performance among the RMP in Kedah. The emerging trend of a high number of early retirements among RMPs has led to this study. Work-life balance and job performance are important variables that need to be studied and measured. Three objectives and hypotheses have been listed, and based on the findings, it is indicated that the three independent variables of work-life balance (time balance, organisational support, and workload) have a weak and low correlation with job performance. The findings suggest that these three independent variables are not the main causes of early retirement. As for the recommendations, future similar studies should use more relevant variables that might provide different findings for the study. The RMP headquarters or management team could provide continuous problem-solving sessions and counselling for problematic employees. Sometimes, these types of employees are reluctant to look for help, but by attending such sessions, they can discuss their personal or work problems when needed. The management may guide the employees in doing the job and give more support tangibly and intangibly to make them more independent. Finally, employee job performance is very important to the state government because it will reflect the government's performance. This employee is believed to be the "backbone" of the state government services, with the imperative role of ensuring that government policies and programs are implemented effectively and efficiently.

This empirical study has several limitations that need to be acknowledged. Firstly, the findings can only represent some members of the Royal Malaysian Police nationwide as the study focuses solely on Kedah, particularly in specific locations like Alor Setar, Kuala Muda, and Pulau Langkawi. Additionally, the study only includes rural areas and internal employees. Secondly, the study design only involves employees, but future research should incorporate management professionals since work-life balance concerns everyone in the organisation. Thirdly, obtaining accurate responses is challenging due to the nature of human behaviour. Respondents may not

always provide reliable answers, leading to low accuracy in the data obtained through SPSS. It's crucial to ensure cooperation from all parties to improve the accuracy of the results.

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## Paper Contribution to Related Field of Study

This paper contributes to the academic field in relation to social responsibility, social policy and human resource management. In this study, the researcher aims to approach the subject uniquely by focusing on suburban areas instead of larger cities. Kedah ranked fourth highest in crime rates in Malaysia (Crime Department Statistics, 2018), serves as the study's location. For future research, it is suggested that the study be replicated in an urban setting to facilitate a comparison between these two types of areas. Additionally, researchers could extend their investigation beyond Malaysia, comparing it with other jurisdictions to see if similar results are obtained.

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