Indirect Effect of Organizational Commitment on The Relationship Between Quality of Work Life and Job Performance Among Academics in Malaysia

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Abstract: Knowledge is increasingly a valuable asset that transfers among nations. This trend has led to challenges in producing the best graduates and competition among organizations to retain these talents. These global trends require skilled and highly productive employees. The Malaysian education sector is no exception to these changes, as academic functions are crucial in universities. The success of universities in accomplishing their goals depends on highly motivated and committed academics. Several past studies have identified the significance of quality of work life (QWL) in building a more committed and productive workforce in the education sector. However, studies on QWL and how organizational commitment (OC) reinforces its effect on job performance (JP) among academics in Malaysian research universities (RUs) are limited. Therefore, this inquiry explores the correlation between QWL, OC, and JP. A questionnaire was utilized for data collection from 387 academics, and the data were analyzed using SPSS 21.0. The findings reveal that QWL has a significant influence on OC and JP. Additionally, OC significantly influences JP and partially mediates the relationship between QWL and JP. As a result, improved QWL of the academics is necessary for enhancing their OC and JP.

Keywords: *Academics, job performance, mediation analysis, organizational commitment, quality of work life.*

Introduction

The advancement of the knowledge-based economy has driven not only competition among businesses worldwide for the best intellects but also the institutions that train the best intellects. These challenges and competitions in the global market have caused organizations to demand high-performing workforces (Hee et al., 2019). The education sector is charged with a more prominent duty to produce the best brains, and academics are the essential resources within institutions of higher learning (IHLs) to satisfy the job expected by the general public. Education is crucial in realizing Malaysia's goals to be a fully developed nation (Wan et al., 2018). With education, a nation can establish global competitiveness, build a knowledge-based economy, and uphold sustainable environmental growth. Education systems and organizations globally and in Malaysia are confronted with various issues dealing with the workforce, such as scarcity of talented employees, increased turnover intention, low motivation, low commitment, and decreased performance (Bhayo et al., 2017; Kaur & Randhawa, 2021; Yahya & Kaur, 2010).

Existing works of literature on academics have provided strong evidence of the significance of quality of work life (QWL) in combating these challenges (Acheampong et al., 2016; Daud et al., 2015; Ehido et al., 2019; Endayani et al., 2018; Farid et al., 2015; Mohammadi & Karupiah, 2020). A more significant portion of QWL studies in Malaysia have been carried out in different sectors (Alzamel et al., 2020; Dousin et al., 2019; Mazlan et al., 2018). However, the previous investigations have not addressed QWL in-depth among academics in the Malaysian research universities (RUs), regardless of its notable contribution to accomplishing the education sector goals (Ehido et al., 2020a). At the

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same time, this inquiry endeavors to narrow the existing research gap on the mediating role of organizational commitment (OC) because there was no empirical evidence found on the mediating role of OC on the association between QWL and job performance (JP) among Malaysian academics.

QWL addresses the financial facets of work and considers other crucial features of the job, such as employment situations, JP, efficacy, OC, social support, and social relevance (Mohammadi & Karupiah, 2020). Thus, improving academics' QWL would significantly improve OC and JP. By employing existing theories on work conditions and employee-employer relationships (Maslow's Need Theory and Social Exchange Theory), this inquiry, therefore, aims to achieve the following objectives: 1) To determine the factors influencing JP among academics in the Malaysian RUs; 2) To determine the mediating effect of OC on the association between QWL and JP among academics in the Malaysian RUs.

This inquiry founded its theoretical foundation on Maslow's Need Theory (Maslow, 1954) and Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) to explain the expectations of employees that need to be fulfilled for optimum performance and the economic exchange relationships between employees and employers. Based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs by Maslow (1954), human needs are organized in a hierarchical manner of prominence: physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs. The perception of QWL has a strong background in Maslow's need theory because the hierarchical needs are similar to those of the components of QWL. The theory recognizes that employees have different levels of needs to satisfy to motivate them to offer their best services for the corporation's advantage.

By highlighting the concept of reciprocal relationships, this inquiry also employed the SET by Blau (1964) and Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005), emphasizing the quality of relationships between workers and their employers. SET identifies that a person receiving a benefit is fused with a strong normative duty to give back in one way or another (Blau, 1964; Ojedokun et al., 2015). According to Dinc (2017) and Afzali et al. (2014), the reciprocity norm of SET proposes that workers feel obligated to react benevolently when they experience appropriate conduct coordinated towards them. As a result, workers who feel indebted to employers due to their improved QWL efforts reciprocate with higher commitment and performance (Loan, 2020).

QWL is a broad concept that includes a person's professional well-being and the level to which job involvements are encouraging, satisfying, and free of stress and other undesirable individual concerns (Akter & Banik, 2018; Bora, 2017). QWL is a multidimensional paradigm encompassing a worker's physical, mental, social, and environmental components. It results from an appraisal that individuals perform by matching their needs and expectations with what they see as reality (Nayak & Sahoo, 2015). According to Mejbel et al. (2013) and Leitão et al. (2019, 2021), the most frequently utilized components of QWL in literature are benefits, reward, work environment, supervisor's support, career development, compensation, communication, safety, healthcare, security, management involvement, the cohesion of work and life, employee motivation, working time and job satisfaction. Akram and Amir (2020) defined QWL for academics as the extent to which they can fulfill their significant personal desires while participating in the institution. Accordingly, Akram and Amir (2020) and Ishak et al. (2018) studies revealed that a high perception of QWL among academics could result in better organizational performance, OC, effectiveness, and innovativeness.

OC incorporates robust confidence and embracing of organizational objectives and standards, an inclination to wield optimum effort for the organization, and a solid desire to retain employment in the establishment (Al Zefeiti & Mohamad, 2017; Dajani, 2015). According to Suharto et al. (2019), OC is the extent to which people embrace organizational principles and objectives and relate them to accomplishing their work obligations. Allen and Meyer (1990) outlined three dimensions of OC: affective, continuance, and normative. The relationship between QWL and OC has a strong foundation in the SET, which recognizes the reciprocal interactions between employers and employees. QWL has been confirmed to significantly and positively influence OC in previous studies (Almarshad, 2015; Batvandi & Ghazavi, 2017; Daud et al., 2015; Nayak, 2016; Taşdemir Afşar, 2014). Farid et al. (2015) and Daud et al. (2015) concluded that QWL, which arises as an outcome of reacting to several desires of employees, is one of the significant predictors of OC among academics in Malaysian public IHLs. As noted by Onukwu (2020), the majority of employees respond to what they see as encouraging treatment from their employers by committing more to the organization. Alzamel et al. (2020) established that highly committed employees are more loyal to the organization. Accordingly, committed workers are seen to be more productive, and flexible, have a sense of duty, and are not financial burdens to the establishment (Demir, 2012; Nayak & Sahoo, 2015). An investigation carried out among academic staff by Hussain et al. (2020) discovered a statistically positive connection between OC and JP. Another similar study conducted on academics in universities in Pakistan likewise found that the performance of committed academics is superior to that of less committed staff members (Chughtai & Zafar, 2006). Furthermore, Adnan et al.'s (2018) the study found that OC has a significant influence on JP.

JP of employees is crucial in accomplishing organizational performance (Wang et al., 2015). JP is characterized as the total anticipated contribution to the association of an individual's discrete series of conducts throughout a standard timeframe (Motowidlo & Kell, 2012). Ehido et al. (2020b, 2020a) stated that writing and publication, teaching and supervision, services, research and innovation, and consultancy are performance indicators for academics. It is

recommended that employers offer employees a safer work setting to enable them to perform at their optimum capacity (Al-Omari & Okasheh, 2017). For establishments, an improved QWL has been confirmed as a vital construct to entice and maintain high-performing workforces (Al-Otaibi, 2020; Khajehnasiri et al., 2021). Additionally, QWL is imperative for companies to achieve development and profitability and attain more effective and efficient results from workers (Majumder & Biswas, 2022; Yadav & Khanna, 2014). Dahie et al. (2017) investigated the factors impacting the QWL among academics. The study revealed that general well-being, career and job satisfaction, and good working conditions at the workplace significantly influence their QWL (Dahie et al., 2017). Furthermore, a study by Al-Shawabkeh and Hijjawi (2018) established a significant influence of QWL on JP in private Jordanian universities. Therefore, academics' QWL should be an important consideration by the institutions' decision-makers because how they manage their concerns greatly influences the overall organizational performance. Accordingly, the subsequent hypotheses are proposed.

H1. Quality of work life (QWL) of the Malaysian academics in RUs has a significant effect on their Organizational Commitment (OC)

H2. Organizational Commitment (OC) of the Malaysian academics in RUs has a significant effect on their Job Performance (JP)

H3. Quality of work life (QWL) of the Malaysian academics in RUs has a significant effect on their Job Performance (JP)

Quality output is attained when employees have a strong psychological commitment to the organization (Al Zefeiti & Mohamad, 2017; Suharto et al., 2019). Several works of literature show a significant relationship between QWL and OC (Farid et al., 2015; Nayak et al., 2018; Yadav et al., 2019). Likewise, other former investigations have confirmed a significant positive effect of OC on JP (Al Zefeiti & Mohamad, 2017; Hafiz, 2017; LiLin & Shiqian, 2018).

Research on academics studying OC as a mediator in the link between QWL and JP is, to the best of our knowledge, scarce. Acheampong et al. (2016) conducted one of the studies on OC as a mediator and discovered that OC partially mediated the relationship between QWL and JP among the academics in Kumasi Campus, Ghana. Regarding other industries, however, there is research documenting the mediating effect of OC on the connection between QWL and JP. For example, previous studies on workplace variables and performance relationships have shown that commitment has an important mediating effect on this relationship (Agus & Selvaraj, 2020; Awan et al., 2014; Nayak & Sahoo, 2015). Research among nurses in private hospitals in Malaysia by Agus and Selvaraj (2020) revealed that OC partially mediates the correlation between QWL and the intention to stay. The authors concluded that if workforces are pleased with their QWL, their commitment to the company will be stronger, and their intention to stay for continued service will be stronger (Agus & Selvaraj, 2020). Consistent with the study of Nayak and Sahoo (2015), utilizing samples from healthcare employees indicated that OC has a partial and significant mediating influence on the correlation between QWL and JP. Based on the abovementioned, the hypothesis is as below:

H4. Organizational Commitment (OC) mediates the relationship between quality of work life (QWL) and Job Performance (JP) among Malaysian academics in Rus.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a quantitative approach using descriptive, exploratory, correlational, and confirmatory research techniques to explain the QWL, OC, and JP interactions of academics. In addition, the confirmatory and explanatory research methodologies established the reliability and validity of the measurement instruments used in the study prior to further analysis. This study considered a research approach that allows academics from five Malaysian RUs to participate in a single investigation. In order to investigate the hypotheses of the study, a Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis was employed.

Participants

The target population for this study consists of academics working with the five Malaysian Research Universities (RU). All universities are located in major cities of Malaysia. The academics involved were senior lecturers, associate professors, and professors, and they were all actively employed by the universities at the time of the investigation. Therefore, the academics were considered eligible to participate in this inquiry. With a population (N) size of 11,894, the calculated sample (n) size using the formula proposed by Charan and Biswas (2013) was 384. However, this research used 387 samples for equal distribution amongst the three strata of interest. The respondents were selected randomly from each stratum based on the sampling frame.

Measurements

Ehido et al.'s (2020b, 2020a) previous exploratory research served as the basis for the study's measurement instruments. The selected respondents were given a set of self-administered questionnaires for the data collection. The respondents were required to respond in a way that best described their perceptions on a 5-point Likert scale denoting 1 (Strongly Disagree) and 5 (Strongly Agree). They could attend the questionnaire at their own convenient time without fear or pressure. After obtaining the expert verification for content validity, face validity, and criterion validity, the study conducted a pilot study. Using data from 100 respondents, the study employed exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to assess the importance of each item through factor loading and determine their components (if any) to establish reliable and accurate measures for the constructs.

The QWL construct, measured using 32 items, was extracted into four components by the EFA procedure. The procedure also grouped a certain number of items in each component with Job Stress (JS: 12 items), Fair Compensation (FC: 9 items), Physical Work Environment (PWE: 8 items), and Perceived Organizational Support (POS: 3 items). All four components attained satisfactory levels of internal reliability measured through Alpha Cronbach (α =.940, α = .905, α = .801, and α = .752), respectively. The OC construct, which was measured using 13 items, was extracted into three components: Continuance Commitment (CC: 8 items, α = .927), Affective Commitment (AC: 3 items, α = .903), and Normative Commitment (NC: 2 items, α = .768). The JP construct, measured using 9 items, was extracted into two components: Supervision and Service (SS: 7 items, α = .903) and Research and Innovation (RI: 2 items, α = .734). Thus, all the components and their respective indicators measuring the three constructs attained adequate reliability coefficients ranging from .734 to .940.

In addition, this study made considerable attempts to minimize common method bias. Although Podsakoff et al. (2003) recognized that gathering the measures of both predictor and criterion variables within the same rater or source is one of the key causes of common method variance, they advocated obtaining the data from various sources. Due to the study's exclusive focus on academics working in Malaysian RUs, it was not possible to obtain data from alternative sources as a possible means of navigating this issue. This study considered enhancing scale items to avoid method biases by constructing the items carefully with the assistance of two subject matter experts.

Tourangeau et al. (2000) highlighted that one of the most common issues in the interpretation phase of the response process is item ambiguity and advised researchers to (a) explain ambiguous or unfamiliar terminology; (b) eliminate vague concepts and provide examples when such concepts must be used; (c) keep questions clear, detailed, and short; (d) prevent double-barreled questions; (e) breakdown questions relating to multiple options into easier, more specific questions; and (f) avoid using complex syntax. This study's assessment of the measurement model's unidimensionality was a further attempt to control method variance. To get a reasonable model fit, the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) unidimensionality method was implemented using modification indices in SPSS-AMOS to eliminate redundant indicator variables with low factor loadings (Hair et al., 2010). Unidimensionality was achieved as a result of all indicator variables having factor loadings over .60 for the specific latent construct, they measured (Awang, 2015). Bido et al. (2018) acknowledged the assessment of unidimensionality as legitimate and advocated CFA over EFA in the academic setting since CFA ensures that discriminant validity and unidimensionality are evaluated as important procedures to minimize and control common method bias.

Procedure

To augment the response rate, the researcher employed both online and hand methods to distribute the questionnaires to the selected respondents. For the hand questionnaire distribution, the researcher visited the academics' offices to hand out the questionnaire. For the online data collection, the researcher obtained the email addresses of the selected academics and sent the questionnaire link developed in Google Forms directly to their email addresses. A friendly reminder was sent to the respondents for their cooperation. This study utilized a probability stratified random sampling method, and the strata of interest are (1) Professors, (2) Associate Professors, and (3) Senior Lecturers. The stratified random sampling procedure was used because it permits the investigator to study variances among various subcategories of the population and assures the depiction of definite groups in the population (Taherdoost, 2016). Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) stated that stratified random sampling increases the likelihood of representativeness in a study population. The collected data were analyzed using IBM SPSS version 21.0 and IBM SPSS AMOS version 21.0 for structural equation modeling (SEM).

This research used Mahalanobis distance (D^2) to identify outliers (Hair et al., 2010). Various authors have proposed D^2 as the default outlier identification method (e.g., Johnson & Wichern, 2007; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). Therefore, D^2 distance was investigated to identify multivariate outliers by linear regression analysis in SPSS. D^2 values were computed and compared to the Chi-square distribution. The degree of freedom was established at 4 based on the number of components measuring the independent construct (QWL). In this instance, two multivariate outliers (having D^2 greater than 9.21 and Chi-square statistics with p < .001) were identified and eliminated. Extreme observations are those with a D^2 of more than 9.21 (Prabhakaran, 2019), while outliers are those with a p-value of less than .001 (Bobbitt, 2020). In addition, the study dataset satisfied the normality assumption since all skewness values ranged

between -1.35 and -.392. According to Awang et al. (2018), the study just has to demonstrate that the skewness values for all indicators do not deviate from normality, and the skewness values should fall within the range of ±1.5 to be considered satisfactory.

Demographics

Of the 387 valid and usable responses received, the participants constitute about 42.1% male and 57.9% female, indicating a higher number of women academics. The age group of the academics were between 30-34 years (35.4%), 35-39 years (13.4%), 40-44 years (27.1%), 45-49 years (8.8%), 50-54 years (10.6%), 55-59 years (2.6%), and above 60 years (2.1%). Therefore, the majority of the academics in the Malaysian RUs were somewhat young (below 50 years old). The majority, 281 (72.6%) of the participants, were married, 104 (26.9%) were single, and only 2 (.5%) of the respondents were divorced. A total of 55 (26.9%) of the respondents have attained a Master's degree, while the majority, 329 (85%), possessed a Ph.D. degree. Very few, 3 (.8%), possessed a DBA (Doctor of Business Administration) degree. These results indicate that the sample was drawn from highly educated respondents because academics constantly improve themselves academically to meet the key performance indicators (KPIs) set by the stakeholders. Therefore, it is unsurprising that the percentage of those with a Ph.D. degree was high. A significant proportion of the participants' positions were senior lecturers, 250 (64.6%), followed by associate professors, with a total number of 91 (23.5%), and only 46 (11.9%) were professors.

Findings

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were employed to describe the study constructs, such as mean, frequency, standard deviation, and skewness. The mean discloses the average value for each construct which ranges from 3.39 to 3.74 in this investigation. Academics rated their overall QWL, OC, and JP at moderate to high levels based on the categorized data (frequency). The standard deviation values for all constructs are between .62 and .91, which reveal that the responses provided by the respondents were consistent. The skewness values of -1.038 to -.296 indicate that only a few respondents rated their QWL, OC, and JP low.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics	Quality of Work Life (QWL)	Organizational Commitment (OC)	Job Performance (JP)
Mean	3.45	3.74	3.39
Std. Deviation	.81	.62	.91
Minimum	1	2	1
Maximum	5.00	5.00	5.00
skewness	-1.038	-.806	-.296
kurtosis	.616	.053	-.893
	Low (1.00 – 2.339)	Low (1.00 – 2.339)	Low (1.00 – 2.339)
Frequency	35	11	60
%	(9.0)	(2.8)	(15.5)
	Moderate (2.34 – 3.669)	Moderate (2.34 – 3.669)	Moderate (2.34 – 3.669)
Frequency	164	146	158
%	(42.4)	(37.7)	(40.8)
	High (3.67 – 5.00)	High (3.67 – 5.00)	High (3.67 – 5.00)
Frequency	188	230	169
%	(48.6)	(59.4)	(43.7)

The Structural Model

The explanation regarding the performance of R^2 (coefficient of multiple determination) of the model (see Figure 1) is explained in Table 2.

Table 2. The Coefficient of Multiple Determination (R2) and Interpretation

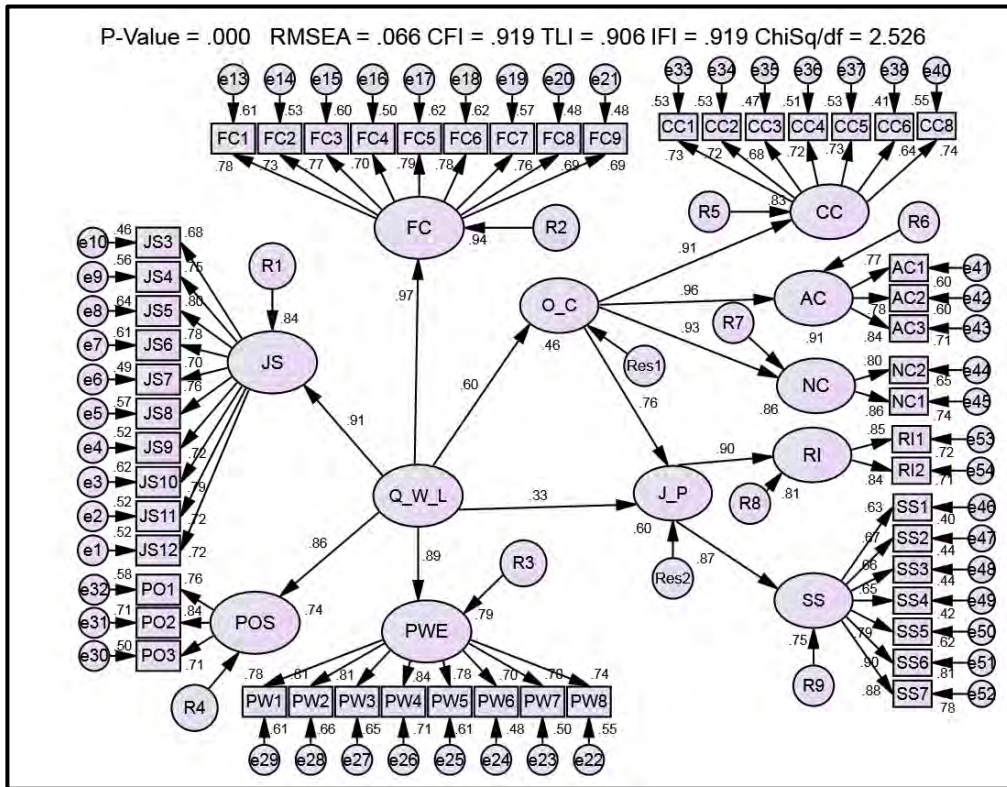| Endogenous Construct	R^2	Conclusion
OC	.46	The QWL construct explained about 46 percent of the variance in OC.
JP	.60	The QWL and OC constructs explained about 60 percent of the variance in JP.

Figure 1. The Standardized Regression Path Coefficient of the Model

All constructs in the model achieved construct validity when all Fitness Indexes in Figure 1 achieved the satisfactory level of all three fit categories: absolute fit, incremental fit, and parsimonious fit (Afthanorhan et al., 2018). Accordingly, both convergent validity and composite reliability achieved the required levels since the factor loading for all items as well as all components are above .60. As for the discriminant validity, this requirement is also achieved since the correlation between any pair of constructs is much less than .85 (Afthanorhan et al., 2020).
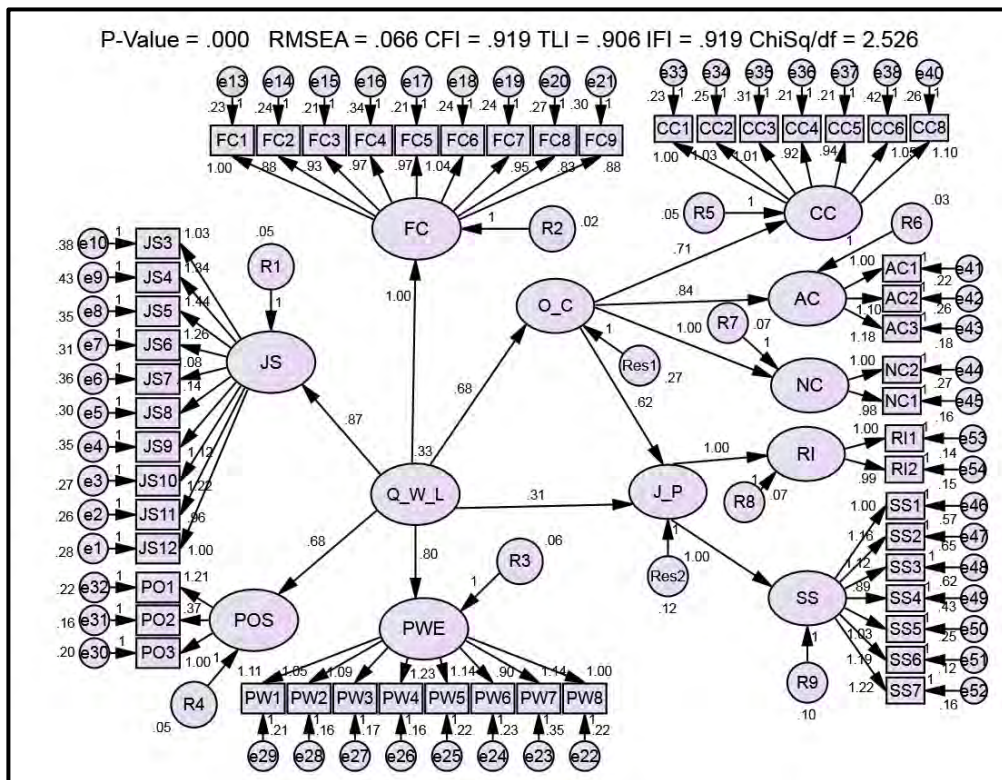

Figure 2. The Regression Path Coefficient of the Model

The outputs for regression path coefficient (regression beta) from the exogenous construct on endogenous construct extracted from Figure 2 are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. The Regression Weight and its Significance

			Estimate	**S.E.**	**C.R.**	*p*-value	**Result**
OC	<---	QWL	.679	.068	9.975	.001	Significant
JP	<---	OC	.625	.059	10.528	.001	Significant
JP	<---	QWL	.311	.051	6.097	.001	Significant

The regression path coefficients of the structural model indicate that the effect of QWL on OC was significant (β = .679, p < .05). Therefore, H1 was supported. As hypothesized, OC significantly influences JP (β = .625, p < .05). As a result, H2 was supported. Finally, QWL was established to be a significant factor in predicting JP (β = .311, p < .05), giving H3 full support.

Mediation Analysis

This investigation utilized the mediation analysis procedure developed by (Awang, 2012, 2015) and has been employed in Mohamad et al. (2016), Raza et al. (2019), and Raza and Awang (2020). The complete procedure for testing the mediator in this study is showcased in Figure 3. The values in Figure 3 are obtained from the standardized regression path coefficients output, as presented in Figure 1. Later, the study would confirm the results of mediation testing through a bootstrapping procedure.

Table 4. The Hypothesis Testing for Mediation Effect of OC

H4	OC mediates the relationship between QWL and JP among Malaysian academics

1. The Indirect Effect **a** = .60 (significant)
2. The Indirect Effect **b** = .76 (significant)
3. The mediation occurs since both indirect effects are significant
4. The Direct Effect **c** = .33 (significant)
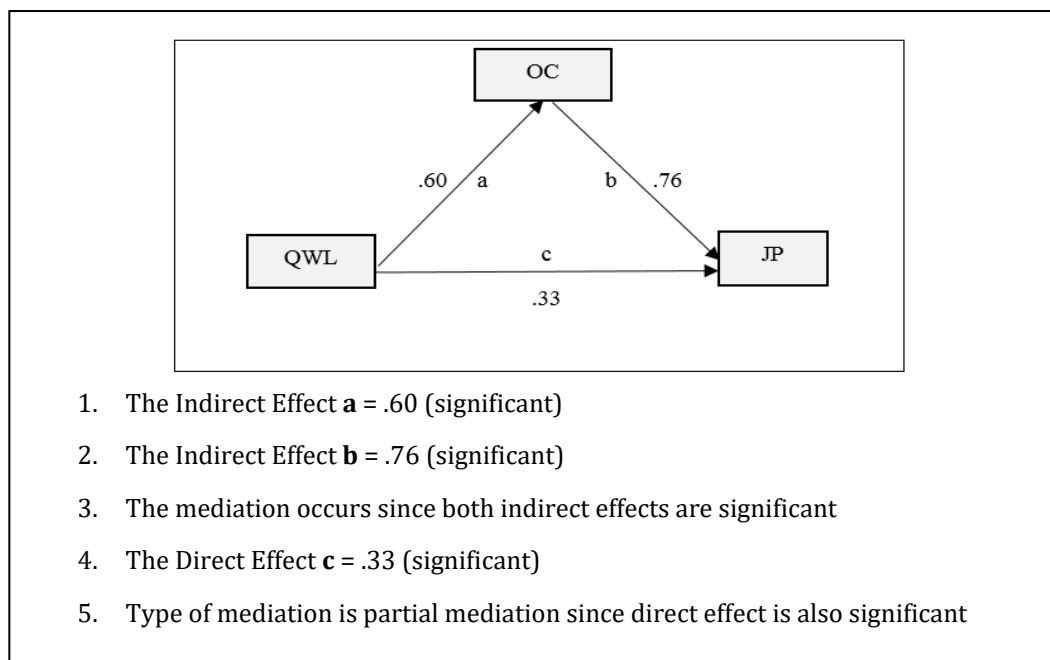5. Type of mediation is partial mediation since direct effect is also significant

Figure 3. The Mediation Testing Procedure for QWL – OC – JP

Bootstrapping Procedure

To confirm the results in Figure 3, the bootstrapping procedure utilizing the maximum likelihood estimation (MLE) algorithm was implemented with 1000 samples, a 95 percent bootstrap confidence interval, and a 95 percent bias-corrected confidence interval to confirm the mediation effect of OC. The results for bootstrapping to establish the OC as a mediator in the relationship between QWL and JP are showcased in Table 5.

Table 5. The Bootstrapping Result for Testing OC as a Mediator

	Indirect effect (a-b)	Direct (c)
Bootstrapping Results	.457	.332
Bootstrapping p-Value	**.001**	**.002**
Results on Mediation	Significant	Significant
Decision	The significance of indirect effects indicates that mediation exists between QWL and JP	
Type of Mediation	Partial mediation since the direct effect is also significant	
Hypothesis Statement	Result	Type of Mediation
H4: OC mediates the relationship between QWL and JP among the Malaysian academics in RUs	Significant (Mediation exists)	Partial Mediation

The results in Table 5 revealed that the bootstrapping results are consistent with the results of the initial mediation tests. Accordingly, the mediation results were confirmed (Mohamad et al., 2016; Raza & Awang, 2020; Raza et al., 2019).

Discussion

This inquiry makes a noteworthy contribution to establishing a significant association between QWL, OC, and JP. Even though previous investigations confirmed a significant association between QWL and OC (Almarshad, 2015; Batvandi & Ghazavi, 2017; Daud et al., 2015; Nayak, 2016), OC and JP (Adnan et al., 2018; Dinc, 2017; Loan, 2020), QWL and JP (Al-Shawabkeh & Hijjawi, 2018; Majumder & Biswas, 2022; Sattar et al., 2018). The relationships between the three constructs in an integrated model have not been empirically tested by academics in the Malaysian RUs.

As expected, the tested hypotheses reveal that all the constructs were significantly correlated. Hypothesis 1 examined the significant effect of QWL on OC among academics in Malaysian RUs. Accordingly, it was found that QWL has a significant positive effect on OC. In other words, QWL was positively associated with OC. Thus, hypothesis H1 was supported. Hypothesis 2 predicted that OC has a significant effect on JP. This proposition was supported, and the significant effect was positive. In other words, OC was positively and significantly correlated with JP. Hypothesis 3 assessed the significant influence of QWL on JP. The finding indicates that QWL has a significant positive influence on JP. Thus, there was a significant positive association between QWL and JP, and H3 received full support. Hypothesis 4 proposed that OC plays a mediating role in the correlation between QWL and JP. The mediation analysis results show that OC partially mediates the association between QWL and JP. The mediation effect indicates that the increase in JP due to the influence of QWL is strengthened by the impact of OC in the association. Hence, H4 was supported.

The findings are consistent with previous research (Acheampong et al., 2016; Nayak & Sahoo, 2015). The results of the study indicate that the OC is a crucial factor for the improvement of both individual and organizational performance. This study reveals that a commitment to one's job is likely to result in a focus on those work activities that provide demonstrable evidence of knowledge in one's profession and are likely to result in performance. To increase their JP, the RUs should evaluate and promote the academics' OC to boost their JP. Importantly, the findings of the study indicate that the academics' performance can also be improved by fostering their loyalty and commitment through a better QWL. The overall performance of universities is largely determined by the quality of their academics and their level of OC (Hussain et al., 2020). This study establishes a connection between the success of Malaysian RUs and the academics' perceived QWL and OC. Several studies have also demonstrated that personnel with higher QWL and OC achieve corporate goals more effectively (Akram et al., 2017; Hafiz, 2017; Suyantiningsih et al., 2018; Tolentino, 2013).

Conclusion

This study is of major significance because it sheds light on the need-satisfying and reciprocal interactions between employees and organizations in the context of Malaysian RUs and the academics' JP. In light of this, our research has uncovered an optimal model for comprehending the interaction between the Malaysian RUs and their academics, with a particular emphasis on QWL, OC, and JP. Despite the plethora of studies on the relationship between QWL and JP in many industries and scenarios, little attention has been given to the academics at Malaysian public universities. Very few studies have been undertaken on the academics' capability to achieve their work-life expectations and attain optimal JP. This is owing to the lack of research on QWL in Malaysia, especially in the public higher education sector. One of the limited attempts was done among non-academic personnel at a private university and focused on the relationship between work-life balance and employee satisfaction, two of the few components of QWL in Malaysian higher education. Another study centered solely on a few predictors of QWL, such as working overtime and on weekends, family support, and the influence of work on life, as the key concerns highlighted by academics about work-life balance and satisfaction. On various QWL dimensions and their implications on the JP of Malaysian academics, there is currently a paucity of comprehensive studies. In addition, the role of OC as a mediator in the relationship between

QWL and JP among academics in Malaysian RUs has not been examined in prior study. Until date, research has included OC as a contributing factor to academics' JP. Consequently, this research contributes to theory by analyzing the mediating role of OC in the link between QWL and JP in the context of academics working with the five Malaysian RUs.

This study corroborates the importance of QWL and OC for enhancing the JP of academics in the Malaysian Rus. This investigation aimed to offer empirical proof for enhancing the JP of academics in the Malaysian RUs by exploring their perceived QWL and OC. The academics in this survey reported a moderate to high level of QWL, which contributed to a high level of OC and a moderate to high level of JP. The assessment of the primary data divulged significant positive relationships among all the study constructs. The outcomes demonstrate that the improvement of QWL can increase the commitment and JP levels of the academics. The results of this investigation may offer an understanding to assist decision-makers in the RUs in recognizing strategic predictors of academics' JP. These identified predictors may add to their resourcefulness for developing policies enhancing academics' JP within Malaysian RUs. This study endorses that adequate consideration of the academics QWL would result in higher OC and JP. Therefore, improved QWL is crucial to attracting and retaining committed and high-performing employees.

Recommendations

While all the study hypotheses gained full support, this investigation raised new inquiries for further review. Therefore, future studies may consider academics in comprehensive and private universities to broaden and confirm the discoveries of this survey. Upcoming investigations can examine the influence of other mediators, excluding OC, to clarify the connection between QWL and JP to derive fascinating results. Investigators may also lead several comparative surveys directed towards QWL and JP among personnel working with Malaysian public and private universities. Additionally, it is suggested that future investigations test whether the current discoveries can be generalized to people with lower education. It would also be intriguing if future studies on JP should be done qualitatively and as a longitudinal inquiry, as this exploration may produce information dependent on experience regarding the academics' JP.

Limitations

This study confines itself to understanding the JP of Malaysian RUs academics alone. Therefore, the respondents were drawn from only five Malaysian public universities. Data drawn from only a few public universities might not be representative to generalize the study results to other universities because the perception of academics working in comprehensive and private universities may be entirely different. Furthermore, the present investigation utilized a highly educated sample. Due to the constraint of resources, this investigation limited the study constructs to QWL, OC, and JP. Finally, this research was based on a cross-sectional survey because data were obtained from specific respondents at a certain period. The outcomes may vary from a longitudinal inquiry, where the changes in the characteristics of the respondents are assessed over time.

Authorship Contribution Statement

Ehido: Conceptualization, design, data acquisition, data analysis and interpretation, writing - drafting manuscript. Awang: Supervision, critical revision of manuscript, validation, material support. Ibeabuchi: Investigation, data acquisition, writing – reviewing/editing. Abdul Halim: Supervision, project administration, reviewing.

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