

PERCEIVED FACTORS OF JOB SATISFACTION AMONG PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYEES

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Abstract. This study looks at how the work environment, work-life balance and job stress affect employee retention and satisfaction. Boustead Ikano Sdn Bhd, a real estate company has had a high employee turnover rate in recent years. Employees have said they left because there were not opportunities to advance in their careers and the working conditions were tough. There is research on job satisfaction. It has not looked closely at the specific problems faced by Boustead Ikano. This study used an approach and collected data through a questionnaire to examine the relationships between job satisfaction, job stress, work-life balance and the work environment. One hundred and five questionnaires were given online. A multiple regression analysis was done to see if there was a correlation between job satisfaction and its predictive factors. The results show that there is a relationship between job satisfaction and the work environment. However, no significant correlation was found between work-life balance or job stress and job satisfaction. More research should be done on key aspects, such as workload, company culture, leadership style and employee engagement. This will help understand their influence on job satisfaction. This study analyzes how the work environment and job satisfaction affect employee retention at Boustead Ikano. It contributes to the United Nations' goal of promoting satisfying, decent and sustainable work. The findings highlight that creating a work environment is not only important for organizations but also a critical step toward achieving the overall goal of decent work. Decent work ultimately promotes stability and employee well-being. The work environment plays a role in job satisfaction at Boustead Ikano. The company should focus on improving the work environment to boost employee satisfaction and retention. Work environment is key to achieving this goal. Employee satisfaction and retention are vital, for Boustead Ikanos success.

Keywords: *decent work, job satisfaction, job stress, work environment, work-life balance*

Introduction

Companies have only just started to understand how vital it is for people to be satisfied at work. People commonly leave their jobs when they are not satisfied with them. People may not like their job, feel like no one respects them, or not have the chance to learn and progress. Understanding the factors influencing job satisfaction at Boustead Ikano Sdn Bhd is essential for implementing strategies to enhance employee morale, reduce turnover, and improve organizational performance. Job satisfaction is closely linked to employees' mental well-being and overall productivity (Zhenjing et al., 2022). Satisfied employees are more likely to exhibit higher levels of commitment, reduce absenteeism, and foster a positive workplace culture (Mendoza, 2024). On the other hand, dissatisfaction can lead to burnout, stress, and attrition, all of which negatively affect organizational outcomes (Salama et al., 2022). Boustead Ikano Sdn Bhd, as a competitive player in the retail and property development sectors, faces the dual challenge of attracting and retaining talented individuals while fostering a culture

of continuous improvement. Previous studies suggest that multiple factors, including work environment, compensation, recognition, and growth opportunities, influence job satisfaction. There is also a gap in the literature regarding factors that influence job satisfaction in various industries, including manufacturing companies, with specific factors such as regulatory pressures, market volatility, and operational demands. By focusing on Boustead Group as a real estate company, this study aims to address the gap and test whether job stress, work-life balance, and work environment have a significant relationship with employee job satisfaction.

Job stress also shows a significant concern in organizational psychology, influencing employee job satisfaction. Salama et al. (2022) mentioned that stress has been shown to have a positive and significant effect on turnover intention among employees. People who work at Boustead Ikano Sdn Bhd can get stressed out since they must work strange hours, like on weekends and holidays. This can make it challenging for them to find a good balance between work and life. People's happiness with their occupations depends a lot on where they work. At Boustead Ikano Sdn Bhd, employees may face challenges such as excessive workload, lack of resources, or ineffective communication channels. A positive and supportive work environment contributes significantly to job satisfaction. Employees are more likely to be satisfied if their workplace is nice and helpful. Employees might feel like they belong and are pleased when they have a location to work, can talk to their supervisors, and are involved in decisions. Factors like ergonomic workspaces, open communication, and employee involvement in decision-making foster a sense of belonging and well-being. Radu (2023) also emphasizes the correlation between a positive work environment characterized by supportive leadership, safety, and collaborative culture and enhanced job satisfaction. Leaders at Boustead Ikano Sdn Bhd can do a lot to make employees happy by being supportive, recognizing their work and talking to them openly. When employees feel like their bosses care about them, they are more likely to work and be loyal. So, the business should develop initiatives to show staff they are doing a good job and provide them with rewards. These days, people who work aspire to establish a good balance between jobs and life. They can get upset if they have to work long hours or are under a lot of stress. A study by Lee and Kawachi, 2019 found that work-life balance initiatives positively influence job satisfaction and reduce burnout. Companies that help their workers find a better balance are more likely to keep them happy and not want to quit. This means that Boustead Ikano Sdn Bhd will have fewer employees leave, better teams, and a better organization overall.

While past studies focus on job satisfaction in standard corporate or manufacturing settings, there is a lack of research on unique hybrid companies like Boustead Ikano Sdn Bhd, which combines both retail and property development. Employees in this specific environment face distinct pressures, such as working irregular hours, weekends, and public holidays. While general literature shows that job stress, work-life balance, and the work environment affect morale, it remains unclear how these three specific factors interact to influence job satisfaction within Boustead Ikano's fast-paced operational context. This study addresses this gap to help the company understand how to reduce burnout and retain its talent.

Literature review and hypotheses

This literature review highlights the key factors that influence job satisfaction among employees at Boustead Ikano Sdn Bhd., as they have a direct impact on employee satisfaction, retention rates, and overall performance.

Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction essentially refers to how satisfied workers are with their jobs, which is influenced by things like job duties, pay, working environment, and relationships with coworkers and management. Every person has varying degrees of happiness depending on their priorities, values, and personal preferences (Lee and Kawachi, 2019). The degree of job satisfaction is a crucial measure of employee well-being and a predictor of retention since it is closely related to how well the position fits with employees' expectations, professional objectives, and personal goals (Mayowan et al., 2025). At Boustead Ikano, a number of pragmatic elements that directly affect workers' daily experiences have an impact on job satisfaction. The type of client contacts is one important component. Retail workers frequently interact with a wide range of consumer characteristics, from amiable and helpful to difficult and demanding. Customers with different personalities may respond in an unexpected or unpleasant way. In daily life, managing and controlling customers is undoubtedly quite difficult.

Job stress

In organizational psychology, job stress is a major worry that affects workers' job happiness. According to Salama et al. (2022), job stress escalates when an employee's perceived demands exceed their capacity to cope, resulting in detrimental consequences such as burnout, absenteeism, and plans to quit. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory is a model that investigates what motivates and causes job satisfaction among employees in the workplace. In Herzberg, job stress is classified as a hygiene factor stemming from poor environmental conditions and directly causes high job dissatisfaction and burnout. Across different industry sectors, research clearly shows that higher levels of stress are associated with lower job satisfaction. This result is consistent with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which emphasizes stress as a hygiene factor that, when unfulfilled, leads to unhappiness (Herzberg, 2008). Employees at Boustead Ikano experience job stress due to a number of particular stressors, which represent the difficulties faced by the retail sector. Long and erratic shifts, which frequently force workers to work on weekends, holidays, and during periods of high sales, are one of the main sources of stress. Physical weariness and trouble striking a healthy work-life balance might result from these rigorous schedules. Therefore, this leads to the first hypothesis (H1) of this study, which is: (H1): There is a relationship between job stress and job satisfaction

Work-life balance

Work-life balance, the harmony between obligations in one's personal and professional life, has become a crucial factor in determining job satisfaction. According to Herzberg's theory, work-life balance is a hygiene factor that connects to job satisfaction by eliminating workplace misery and burnout, thereby creating the necessary neutral baseline for overall satisfaction to exist (Herzberg, 2008). A study by Khairunneezam et.al (2017), workers who are skilled at handling their work-life balance report higher levels of job satisfaction. This finding is consistent with Herzberg's, which highlights how work-life balance might reduce discontent (Herzberg, 2008).

Unpredictable schedules and heavy demands might interfere with personal life in these settings, which may result in discontent. By examining the effects of work-life balance in service industries, Swaroop et.al (2025) broaden this discussion and demonstrate that flexible work schedules have a beneficial impact on job satisfaction. Like the previously stated studies, however, their conclusions might not apply to other businesses with erratic operational demands. Notably, some research points to a conflict in high-stress professions where workers could put their careers ahead of their personal well-being, making work-life balance seem more important. This relates to the second hypothesis (H2) of the study as follows: (H2): There is a relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction.

Work environment

The work environment encompasses both physical and psychological dimensions that significantly impact employee satisfaction. In Herzberg's theory, the work environment is classified as a hygiene factor because it represents the external physical and social surroundings of a job rather than the actual work tasks. It connects to job satisfaction by acting as a baseline requirement where a poor environment causes direct dissatisfaction, and a good environment simply removes that distress so satisfaction can occur (Herzberg, 2008). Research by Radu (2023) emphasizes the correlation between a positive work environment characterized by supportive leadership, safety, and collaborative culture and enhanced job satisfaction. Their mixed-methods approach identifies critical factors, including leadership styles and team dynamics, but falls short in addressing the distinct challenges inherent in sectors like pharmaceuticals and heavy industries. Thus, H3 becomes the third hypothesis of this study: (H3): There is a relationship between work environment and job satisfaction.

Research framework

This study utilizes Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory as the foundational theoretical framework to examine the relationships between job stress, work-life balance, work environment, and job satisfaction. Within Herzberg's paradigm, factors related to the context and surroundings of a job are classified as hygiene factors, which traditionally determine the spectrum between dissatisfaction and neutrality (Herzberg, 2008). In this research framework (*Figure 1*), the independent variables (job stress, work-life balance, and the work environment) are operationalized as hygiene factors, as they reflect the operational and environmental conditions of the workplace. Within the study, these hygiene factors serve as critical prerequisites for the dependent variable, which is job satisfaction.

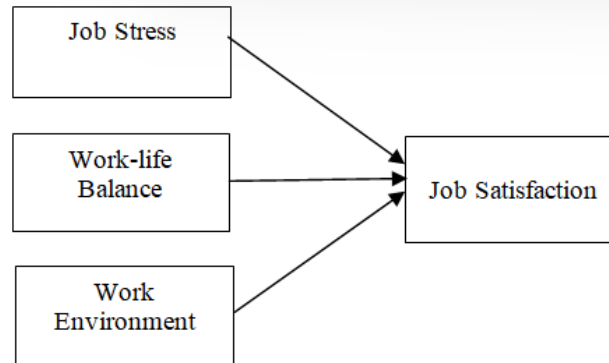


Figure 1. Research framework.

Materials and Methods

This study utilized a quantitative cross-sectional survey to investigate the proposed relationships. It focuses on four departments at Boustead Ikano Sdn Bhd and looks at 105 employees' job satisfaction. Convenience sampling is used in conjunction with a quantitative approach to gather data. Individual employees were used as the unit of analysis, and a sample size of 85 was established. An online survey that was adopted from earlier studies was used to gather data (Gazi et al., 2024; Leite et al., 2021; Ramli, 2019; Pasay-an et al., 2014). 5-point Likert scales were used to gauge job satisfaction as well as variables that affect it, such as work atmosphere, work-life balance, and job stress. In order to examine the connections between job stress, work-life balance, work environment, and job satisfaction, the study uses SPSS to analyze the survey data from Boustead Ikano Sdn Bhd. This study employs descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression to evaluate the proposed hypotheses. This study obtained ethical clearance from the Faculty's Research Ethics Committee.

Results and Discussion

Demographic profile

According to *Table 1* demographic profile, 55.3% of respondents are men (47) and 44.7% are women (38). 50.6% of respondents are between the ages of 25 and 35, 40% are above the age of 35, and 9.4% are between the ages of 18 and 25. Regarding marital status, 55.3% of respondents are married, 44.7% are single, and none reported being divorced. Malay respondents make up the majority (84.7%), followed by Chinese (9.4%) and Indian (5.9%). A significant percentage of respondents are comparatively early-career workers, as seen by the fact that 60% have one to five years of work experience and 40% have more than five years.

Table 1. Demographic profile of the respondents (N=85).

Demographic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	47	55.3
	Female	38	44.7
Age	18-25	8	9.4
	26-35	43	50.6
	35 years and above	34	40

Marital status	Single	38	55.3
	Married	47	44.7
Race	Malay	72	84.7
	Chinese	8	9.4
	Indian	5	0
Length of service	1-5 years	51	60
	5 years and above	34	40

Mean and standard deviations

The mean and standard deviation values for job satisfaction, job stress, work-life balance, and work environment are shown in *Table 2*. Mean and standard deviation for job satisfaction (M=3.503, SD=0.573), job stress (M=3.25, SD=0.501), work-life balance (M=4.27, SD=0.500), and work environment (M=3.67, SD=0.573).

Table 2. Mean and standard deviation.

Variable	Mean (M)	Standard deviation (SD)
Job satisfaction	3.503	0.573
Job stress	3.25	0.501
Work-life balance	4.27	0.500
Work environment	3.67	0.573

Reliability analysis

Table 3 presents the Cronbach's Alpha results for the dependent variable (job satisfaction) and the independent variables (job stress, work-life balance, and work environment). The Cronbach's Alpha value for job stress is 0.730, indicating acceptable internal consistency. Work-life balance records an alpha value of 0.778, also showing acceptable reliability. Meanwhile, the work environment variable has a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.896, indicating good internal consistency. Overall, all variables demonstrate acceptable reliability and are considered valid for this study (Hair, et al., 2014). The normality results for each item's skewness and kurtosis are examined for the dependent variable (job satisfaction) and the independent variables (job stress, work-life balance, and work environment). The analysis shows that the data are normally distributed.

Table 3. Cronbach's alpha value.

Variable	No of items	Cronbach' alpha	Internal consistency
Job Satisfaction	5	0.762	Acceptable
Job stress	5	0.730	Acceptable
Work-life balance	5	0.778	Acceptable
Work environment	5	0.896	Good

Multiple regression analysis

Table 4 presents the results of the regression analysis. The R² value shows the proportion of variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent variables. An R² of 0.411 indicates that 41.1% of the variance in job satisfaction is explained by job stress, work-life balance, and work environment. The remaining 58.9% is influenced by other factors not examined in this study. In addition, the significance value of the F-test is 0.000, indicating that the regression model is statistically significant.

Table 4. Results of multiple regression analysis.

Dependent variable	Standard coefficients	T-value	Sig. value
Job stress	0.207	1.926	0.058
Work-life balance	0.153	-1.409	0.163
Work environment	0.641	7.612	0.000
R square	0.411		

Adjusted R square	0.404
F	0
Sig. of F Value	0.05

Summary of hypotheses

The summary of the research hypotheses is presented in *Table 5* below.

Table 5. Summary of hypotheses.

Hypothesis	Relationship	Result
H1	Job stress has a significant relationship with job satisfaction among Boustead Ikano employees	Not supported
H2	Work-life balance has a significant relationship with the job satisfaction among Boustead Ikano employees	Not supported
H3	Work environment has a significant relationship with job satisfaction among Boustead Ikano employees.	Supported

The result indicates there is no significant correlation between job stress and job satisfaction; hence, the hypothesis is not supported. This result is in line with studies by Salama et al. (2022), which show that stress may have an impact on outcomes other than job satisfaction, such as the intention to quit. The findings demonstrate that employees can be content with their jobs even when they have a lot of responsibilities and must multitask if the activities they are assigned fit their skill set. Additionally, demographic characteristics like job level and experience may function as moderating variables, enabling workers to manage stress at work more effectively without significantly lowering job satisfaction. According to the data, there is no significant correlation between Boustead Ikano employees' job satisfaction and work-life balance. This outcome is in line with research by Swaroop et.al (2025), which showed that workers can maintain ongoing job satisfaction by effectively managing their work-life balance. This could indicate that the majority of workers are content with the company's flexible schedules and work arrangements. Additionally, despite the challenges of achieving work-life balance, workers can sustain job satisfaction through individual coping strategies like effective time management, family support, and self-care practices. The office atmosphere and job happiness are significantly correlated, according to the research. This outcome supports the findings of Radu (2023), highlighting the significance of work settings influencing job satisfaction. Out of all the factors, the work environment has the highest beta value, indicating its significance. Employee motivation, engagement, and job satisfaction can all be increased in a supportive work environment that fosters solid relationships, trust, and teamwork.

Conclusion

The results of this study show that the work environment is closely linked to job satisfaction. Employees do not respond only to the tasks they perform, but also to the conditions in which they work. Both the physical setting and the social climate appear to shape how individuals experience their roles daily. When the environment is supportive and well-managed, employees are generally more motivated and more comfortable in their work. From a practical standpoint, this suggests that organizations cannot afford to overlook the condition of the workplace. Improvements do not always need to be large-scale, but they should be consistent. Basic aspects such as cleanliness, adequate facilities, and suitable workstation design can make a noticeable difference to employees' well-being. At the same time, the social side of the workplace matters just

as much. Simple practices, such as maintaining open communication, encouraging cooperation, and acknowledging employees' efforts, can influence how valued individuals feel within the organization. It is also important to note that job satisfaction does not depend on a single factor. In this study, it is examined alongside workplace stress, work-life balance, and the work environment, all of which interact in different ways. Because of this, job satisfaction should be understood as a layered and evolving outcome rather than a fixed condition. Future research may benefit from looking into other related aspects, including workload, leadership approach, organizational culture, and the level of employee involvement, in order to build a more complete picture.

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Conflict of interest

The authors confirm that there is no conflict of interest involved with any parties in this research study.

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