Work Satisfaction Among Rank and File Police Personnel of Royal Malaysia Police

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Abstract
This study explored work satisfaction among rank and file (RF) police personnel of Royal Malaysia Police (RMP). Not everyone can thrive in a demanding law-enforcement job. Police officers have to endure hardships and remain focus at all times during their job. Three factors were determined in assessing work satisfaction, namely work environment, work values, and career development. Self-administered survey questionnaires were distributed to the sampled respondents at the police headquarters in Bukit Aman using purposive sampling. A total of 96 police personnel responded to the survey. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. This study has found that all three independent variables have positive relationships towards work satisfaction. Among the three variables, the most significant factor turned out to be work values. Hence, the findings in this study suggested that the RMP could look into this aspect and harness employees’ organisational commitment and satisfaction level to retain them. Future research may incorporate different independent variables or expand the research to other ranks/levels.

Keywords: Work satisfaction, Work environment, Work Values, Career development, Royal Malaysia Police, Rank and file personnel.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Royal Malaysia Police (RMP) is one of the largest law enforcement agencies shouldering the responsibility of maintaining internal security and peace in Malaysia. The RMP covers all security operations such as traffic control, patrolling and intelligence gathering. Its head-quarter is located in Bukit Aman, Kuala Lumpur. According to Choo (1996), RMP is a singular force under the centralised command of the Inspector General of Police (IGP).

In the context of RMP, police inspectors are known as middle-managers who are always in interaction with the lower ranking police personnel or also known as the rank and file (RF) in order to perform the police tasks such as investigation, arresting suspects, prosecution, administration and other law-enforcement responsibilities. According to Ng (1999), the RF personnel act to support the police inspectors towards achieving the vision and mission of the police force. They have to carry out the duties once they received the order or directive from senior police officers, especially the immediate officers. In the RMP structure, police inspectors and the RF are the ones having to face and deal with the public constantly. They have to be very professional yet friendly, with a high manner of discipline in performing their duties to carry the good image of the police
force. Nonetheless, an alarming figure of about close to 3000 disciplinary cases were reported among the RF in the year 2015 from the statistics of the Board of Disciplinary, Integrity and Standards Compliance Department.

Not everyone can thrive in a demanding law-enforcement job. According to Dantzker (1997), the causes of stress among the police in United States (US) are long working hours, lack of time for family, negative working environment, uneven eating habits, and poor living condition, the need to make tough decisions, restless nights, torturing by senior officers, private life disturbances and declining of public confidence in the police force. A police officer has to be good at dealing with stress, be calm in dangerous situations and able to work in a team. An officer who cannot cope with stress or feel very dissatisfied is likely to leave the job, or experience burnout. Even though the concept of job satisfaction in general has received widespread research, little is known about the job satisfaction of police personnel (Danzker & Surrette, 1996; Seltzer, Alone, & Howard, 1996).

1.1 Background of the study

This research attempts to consider an alternative look at job satisfaction whereby it adopts the terminology of ‘work’ rather than ‘job’. Work encompasses a broader meaning than job because it reflects the person behind the job and not simply the physical aspects or tasks. This study explores the relationship between work satisfaction elements such as work environment, work values, and career development.

This study was conducted at one of the sub-section of the RMP head-quarters in Bukit Aman, called the Division 1-B3. located at the federal territory of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The respondents of this study were the lower ranking police personnel or referred to as Rank and Files with the ranks of Constable (KONT), Lance corporal (L/KPL), Corporal (KPL), Sergeant (SJN), Sergeant major (SM) and Sub-inspector (SI). The respondents were selected among the RF because they are the ones majorly performing and assisting the senior police officers in all the routine tasks and activities.

The Division 1-B3 has about 120 RF police personnel. According to Sekaran (2003), based on the sampling frame, a minimum of 92 respondents is required as the sample size. This research has adapted the self-administered questionnaires from Ibrahim (2011) and were distributed to 100 RF personnel. A total of 96 respondents participated and returned the completed questionnaires. The objectives of this study are:

1. To identify the relationship between work environment and work satisfaction.
2. To identify the relationship between work values and work satisfaction.
3. To identify the relationship between career development and work satisfaction.
4. To determine which factor influences work satisfaction the most.

2. LITERATURE

According to Kula (2005), the law-enforcement profession is one of the most important occupations. It is because they have to deal with different kinds of people from different levels of society. Police officers must have good communication with community members and also with other law enforcement officers in their daily routine. They are taught how to interact with different kinds of individuals, and as Brough and Frame
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(2004) stated, it is still challenging especially when they need to make decisions for specific condition in a limited time frame.

2.1 Past research on work satisfaction in police force

The nature of work as a police officer is very different from other occupations (Zhao, Thurman, & He, 1999). Most research have assessed job satisfaction with regards to police force in terms of job stress and job performance (Bano, 2011; Brunetto et al, 2012; Hoath, Schneider & Starr, 1998, Martelli, 1989), salary, recognition and reward (Cohen & Golan, 2007; Ford, Weissbein, & Plamondon, 2003), and working condition (Lee, 2014, Skogan & Alderden, 2011; Adams, Rohe, & Arcury, 2002; Halstead, Bromley, & Cochran, 2000). It is anticipated that high job satisfaction will be reflected in positive work attitudes and thus lower stress level or stress-related symptoms such as (absenteeism, burnout, alcoholism, corruption) (Othman, 2014; Cohen & Golan, 2007). Meanwhile, according to Acryl (2001), as cited in Othman et al. (2014) job satisfaction among the police officers found that workload has opposite relationship with organizational motivation among police officers. Dantzker and Surrette (1996) in their research revealed that police officers felt least satisfied towards the job satisfaction in two areas: pay and availability of in-service training but they felt the most appreciation in their current assignment and support from their supervisors. Other aspects of police job satisfaction found that work-family conflict and career conflict are also potential predictors work satisfaction (Judge, Locke, & Durham, 1997, Burke & Mikkelsen, 2006).

The common notion of these influences is that, any negative work attitude of the police force will leave a negative perception or image to the public. Ercikti, Vito, Walsh and Higgins (2011) and Zhao, Thurman and He (1999) emphasized that it is crucial to investigate police’s job satisfaction. They found that negative attitudes toward job can negatively affect job performance, thus reduce the quantity and quality of services rendered. Officers who have negative experience towards his or her job will express their dissatisfaction or anger towards the public, whether intentionally or unintentionally (Ercikti et. al, 2011). Furthermore, research suggested that poor performance may have an effect on the relationship between police and community (Adams, Rohe, & Arcury, 2002; Seltzer, Alone, & Howard, 1996; Othman, 2014). Therefore, it is perhaps critical to explore further and understand the factors influencing work satisfaction, apart from the obvious remunerative motives.

2.2 Variables

Work satisfaction is the dependent variable, while the independent variables in this study are work environment, work values, and career development. These variables are further elaborated below:

a. Work satisfaction

Many research used job satisfaction and work satisfaction interchangeably. However, these two terms have slightly different connotation, depending on the usage and definition. In many previous studies, the term ‘job’ satisfaction is more widely used, or popular. Work satisfaction can be defined as a related constellation of attitudes about various aspects of the job or a global feeling about the job (Spector, 1977). According to Spector (1977), “job satisfaction can be measured from these 14 criteria such as
appreciation, communication, coworkers, fringe benefits, job conditions, nature of the job, organization, personal growth, policies and procedures, promotion opportunities, recognition, security and supervision”. In other words, these are what the employees want from their jobs, and make them content. These factors are related to one’s quality of life as an employee. These factors are not all equally important for each employee, if one gets what he or she wants or considers important, then job satisfaction is higher. As Burke & Mikkelsen (2006) claimed that work satisfaction is determined by various factors and its impact is different depending on individual satisfaction with life because different individuals have different importance of work. In addition, Brunetto et.al (2012) believe that, work satisfaction is the psychological state of how an employee feels regarding work. It is the feeling and attitude individuals have in regards to multiple aspects of their job and the organisation.

b. Work Environment

Work environment can be defined as one’s approach in performing job task with the autonomy and support from the organisation (Skogan & Alderden, 2011). However, work environment can also translate as the working durations, levels of noise, resources, degree of the safety and working temperature as well as atmosphere conditions free of dust and cleanliness of the working place (Lee, 2014). Unsatisfied working condition may lead to employees’ dissatisfaction and lead to poor performance, turnover, and absenteeism (Cohen & Golan, 2007). Another study done by Zhao, Thurman, & He (1999) revealed that working environment significantly correlate with employee’s performance, effectiveness, convenience and safety in the organisation. This means good working environment could influence work job satisfaction among the employees. A pleasant work environment could trigger employees’ motivation at work, to assume greater responsibility and remain committed to the organisation where they work. This then translate into employees understanding of organisational mission and goals (Zhao, Thurman, & He, 1999).

c. Work Values

Personal values can be explained as people’s internal conception of what is good, beneficial, important, useful, beautiful, desirable, constructive and etcetera. Values like honesty, hard work and discipline can increase an employee’s efficacy in the work place and help them serve as a positive role model to others. Work values can be defined as one’s personality attribute, passion, belief and integrity in work (Ibrahim, 2011). As highlighted by Brunetto et al. (2012) most organisations hope to find the right people who can best meet the job demands, adapt to training and remain loyal and committed to their organisations. One study found that personal values determine, regulate and modify relationship among individuals, organizations, institutions and societies (Othman, 2014).

d. Career development

Many studies correlate promotion as a main determinant of career development. Promotion can be explained as the act of raising someone to a higher or more important position or rank. While promotion or upward mobility is important in one’s career, it does not define career development entirely. Career development encompasses one’s growth within the organisation or personally. It is meaningful as it influences the talent level in a work force (Burke & Mikkelsen, 2006). For instance, an
employee can still experience career development with an enhanced knowledge and competencies provided by the organisation, even without claiming a higher position, which translate to recognition or monetary incentives. Locke (1976) claimed that the need to be promoted stems from three main desires: the desire for psychological growth, the desire for justice and also the desire for social stays. In other word, promotion served as a very positive motivating tool to ensure that employees maintain performance and goals. Zhao, Thurman, & He (1999) implied that if an organisation neglects employees’ career development, it will lose its talented employees or they would become less motivated.

3. DISCUSSION

The results of this study are presented in both descriptive statistics and inferential analyses. Table 1 below illustrates the respondents’ demographic background.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>below 26 years</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-35</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>45.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-45</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 yeard above</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malay</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>46.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-inspector</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sergeant major</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sergeant</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coperal</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lance Coperal</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>42.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constable</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPM</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>79.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STPM</td>
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<td>13.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Majority respondents are female with 72 per cent, while 28 per cent are male. Almost half (50 per cent) of the respondents fall into the age category of between 26 to 35 years old. Malays are the dominant group with 46.9 per cent. In terms of position (rank), 41 out of 96 respondents comprise of lance corporals with 42.7 per cent. And if combined with the lowest rank (constable), they make up about 70 per cent of the respondents.
Education wise, almost 80 per cent of them hold the SPM certificate, which is the general high school qualification in Malaysia.

### Table 2. Result of correlation analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work environment</strong></td>
<td>.456**</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work values</strong></td>
<td>.830**</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Career development</strong></td>
<td>.716**</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Correlation is significant at 0.01 (2-tailed)

The reliability test (Cronbach alpha) value fall in between the range of .727 and .933, meaning the items on the questionnaire for this study and can be understood by the respondents, hence, discard any potential ambiguous question/statement. Table 2 indicates the correlation analyses between the three independent variables and the dependent variable. All three variables are significantly correlated towards work satisfaction. However, only work values and career development factors showed a strong relationship with work satisfaction, with $r$ value of .830 and .716 respectively. The result signifies that work satisfaction among RF police personnel could be influenced by these two factors more than work environment.

To find out the impact of these factors, a multiple regression analysis was performed. Regression analysis showed that the $R^2$ value is 0.756, meaning the factors of work environment, work values and career development impacted 75.6 percent towards work satisfaction. However, only two of the three dimensions have the most influence onto work satisfaction. The two dimensions are work values (beta value of .529) and career development (beta value of .230), while work environment only has beta value of .098. It can be concluded that the results of correlation and regression analyses were consistent on work values and career development. From the analyses, it can be said that the RMP top management should emphasise on these two factors in order to enhance work satisfaction among the RF police personnel.

### 4. CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to explore the relationship between work satisfaction and the factors of work environment, work values, and career development. Findings implied all three variables have positive relationships with work satisfaction, and that work values have the most impact. The police force is a unique public service entity that demands focus, dedication and commitment. Public expectation towards RMP is very high. We want to see a competent police force, but above all, police personnel of high integrity, regardless of whether they are RF or officers. The RMP needs a comprehensive and effective measures to continue strengthen its personnel and maintain the public’s trust. Future research could be extended to the higher rank police officers and incorporate other variables.
REFERENCES


