

Article

Life Satisfaction among Women in Sabah, Malaysia: A Quantitative Study

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Abstract: Life satisfaction in Malaysia is influenced by socio-demographics such as marital status, age, gender, religiosity, ethnicity and geographical area. However, there is also additional external factor that influenced women's life satisfaction which is work-life conflict. This study aims to investigate women's work-life conflict in relation to their life satisfaction based in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia. Secondly, this study also investigates women's level of life satisfaction in Sabah, Malaysia. A quantitative research design by using self-administered questionnaire via online Google Form and physical hand-in was used to answer the research objectives. A total of 348 female respondents have voluntarily participated in the study that work in government institutions, by using convenience sampling method. Based on findings, work-life conflict has negatively correlated with a strong correlation of -0.373 towards life satisfaction and vice versa. In addition, female respondents' level of life satisfaction is overall between neutral. This study offers new insights where one of insights is women in Sabah, Malaysia, especially female government servants feel unsure whether that they are highly satisfied in life, especially individuals in the mid 30's and above.

Keywords: Happiness; life satisfaction; gender-based; marital status; women; government; Sabah; Malaysia

Introduction

In a global scale, discussion for ways to achieve a good life satisfaction is already becoming a hot topic that attracts researchers such as social scientists (Juli et al., 2024b; Veenhoven, 2012), psychologists (Ed Diener, Robert A. Emmons, et al., 1985), gerontologists (Kleinspehn-Ammerlahn et al., 2008), economists (Frey et al., 2002) and etc., to indulge in scientific investigations. According to Kuppusamy et al. (2023), life satisfaction is a very crucial component to ensure the social well-being of a nation is in a good level. Investigating life satisfaction might be sound unimportant in the eye of majority of social scientists (Veenhoven, 2008, 2012), but it is actually very important to investigate life satisfaction in the field of social sciences as it is to ensure good quality of life (Sirgy et al., 2001) not just towards individuals, but also in groups and societies (Veenhoven, 2008). Determinants of life satisfaction should not be restricted only influential factors (work-life conflict as an example), but should be considered other factors such as socio-demographics (Howell et al., 2012). According to Veenhoven (2012), life satisfaction is equivalent to happiness. In addition, preferable level of life satisfaction or happiness are solely justified by the individuals themselves.

Life satisfaction in Malaysia is not uncommon, as this investigation already in the eye of interests among researchers (qualitative method and quantitative method). Gender, age and marital status are very common to be associated with life satisfaction in a global scale. In Malaysia, accumulation of scientific studies

has their interests to investigate life satisfaction in relation with gender, income, culture, health, career and education. According to Howell et al. (2012), Malaysia has very diverse ethnicities, religions and cultures, where this produced various findings. When focused on gender-based, Kuppusamy et al. (2023) stated that women is a crucial component in the society due to women play very vital role in family institution. In addition, women when are viewed in biological concept, Salleh et al. (2022) stated that women who are married, especially with children, are expected by society to perform maternal responsibilities. Due to this, married women that are working full-time in workplaces have the tendency to leave labour force earlier. There are lists of negative effects when high percentages of women (only 55.5% among women in labour force and 80.9% among men in labour force in the year 2021 according to Salleh et al. (2022)), exits labour force early (Peng et al., 2022) such as mental health problems (Masuda et al., 2021) , financial burdens (Masuda et al., 2021), life dissatisfaction (Gedikli et al., 2023) and economy crisis (Dudová et al., 2022).

When focused on mental health problems, Raaj et al. (2021) has stated that Malaysia faced massive burden to cope with mental health issues, and Malaysian government has implemented several Acts from the very beginning; such as the implementation of Lunatic Ordinance of Sabah 1951 (initial implementation), followed by Mental Health Act 2001 (which has been approved by Malaysian Parliament in August 2001) according to Khan et al. (2015), and recently, Malaysian government decided to introduce Mental Capacity Act that have been exercised as well in the United Kingdom (UK) on the year 2005, Singapore on the year 2008, and India on the year 2017 ("Mental Capacity Act: Why does Malaysia need it and who will benefit from it? ," 2024). All these initiatives shown that the prevalence of mental health issues is still considered as unresolved issues in Malaysia, and most affected towards among Malaysian women, and mental health issues getting worse at the start of pandemic COVID-19 (Mud Shukri et al., 2023). According to Cham et al. (2024), having symptoms of high depression and high anxieties have significant relationship towards low level of life satisfaction; especially towards Malaysian women rather than Malaysian men. When focused on depression (one of most common of mental illnesses), Jawahir et al. (2020) stated that, in a global scale, females have higher percentages of experiencing chronic physical pain (carried 7.7%) compared to males (carried 6.3%) due to the cause of diagnosed with depression. In addition, women that are working and at the same time married have higher tendency to be diagnosed with depression compared to other working women with different marital status (Lee et al., 2021).

However, there are studies justified that working women that are classified as single mothers, also experienced mental health problems that contributed to low level of life satisfaction, by referring to later study by Kadir (2012), which its study focused among single mothers experienced depression and anxieties due to social norms; where single mothers perceived as "individuals who failed in their marriage". In addition, Shukry et al. (2024), the recent study, focused on single mothers (divorced or widowed) as well on where they expressed that they felt stressed and depressed, when they experienced financial struggles especially during pandemic COVID-19. Overall women have higher tendencies to experience mental illness (depression and stress) compared to men (Hassan et al., 2023; Mohd Tamil et al., 2024).

Since women are a complex human being and have complex lives (Scheiner et al., 2017), women have already associated with life satisfaction, because women that are from modern society have created their personal standards of achieving high level of life satisfaction (Sousa et al., 2001). In addition, women that have jobs, upgrade their ways of achieving life satisfaction especially setting up their goals to cope with the issues of GCW (Glass Ceiling for Women). According to Sharma et al. (2019), Glass Ceiling for Women (GCW) occurs when there are barriers, such as income barriers and job designation barriers. Sharma et al. (2019) also elaborated that career women did not receive salaries that they should receive despite holding high job position. This also supported by the evidence reported by Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM) on the year 2023 (DOSM, 2023) on where women only received RM 66.67 for every RM 100.00 received by men. From here, this study aims to investigate women's work-life conflict in relation with their life satisfaction in Sabah, Malaysia. Secondly, it is to investigate women's level of life satisfaction in Sabah, Malaysia. Below are the research objectives of this study in specific forms:

- i. To investigate women's work-life conflict in relation with their life satisfaction in Sabah, Malaysia.
- ii. To investigate women's level of life satisfaction in Sabah, Malaysia.

Literature Review

1. Life Satisfaction is Happiness

According to Veenhoven (2012), life satisfaction is equivalent to happiness and subjective well-being. Life satisfaction is divided into four type of satisfaction which are pleasure (instant satisfaction), domain satisfaction, top experience and happiness. Veenhoven (2012) stated that four types of satisfaction identified in stages of one's lives and it changes over the period of time due to socio-demographics especially the influence of age, marital status and gender. Four types of satisfaction as stated before are explained by researchers that studied life satisfaction. Pleasure or in other words, instant satisfaction, occurred when a person experiences quick feelings (in a positive satisfaction level) such as drinking one's favourite coffee, having a nice picnic with closest friends, create physical intimacy with one's spouse and etc (Kahneman et al., 1999; Veenhoven, 2012). Domain satisfaction, on the other hand, is where individuals' satisfaction due to the influence of drastic changes exist in the individuals' lives such as getting married or getting divorced, birthing a child and etc. Veenhoven (2012) explained that domain satisfaction is an anchor that acts as determinants for individuals' life satisfaction, and it depends on the strength of the domain itself whether it amplifies the individuals' desired level of life satisfaction or not.

Due to this, however, the strength of the domain itself led individuals to stay in that domain although, the individuals are unsatisfied. As for example, Veenhoven (2012) justified that marriage is an act of commitment between two individuals as what also agreed by Vaughn et al. (1997) and Fard et al. (2013). Individuals chose to stay in unsatisfied marriage because of obligations and some possible reasons which are the individuals have come to a self-acceptance of the circumstances, without aware of possible long-term negative outcomes such as will exhibiting mental health problems (Manalel et al., 2019) and suspended longevity (Lawrence et al., 2019). Next two types of satisfaction, which are top experience and happiness, Veenhoven (2012) stated that top experience is where individuals experience big accomplishments in their lives such as promoted to high job positions in work organizations, increment of salaries, won a competition and etc. For happiness, Veenhoven (2012) stated that this happiness is a combination of enduring a satisfaction and individuals' life-as-a-whole. This is where Veenhoven (2012) stated that happiness is the same as life satisfaction.

Sousa et al. (2001) emphasized that life satisfaction is related to women rather than men. Women have more complex lives compared to men, regardless of marital status, but it is undeniable that women that are married with children, is the most complex group, because of several reasons based on studies. A study by Cowan et al. (1998) stated that women's life satisfaction influenced by their own personal standards and what ideal lives that they should have, which also impulse them to compete with other women who have the same desires as they are. In addition, a study by Parker et al. (2022), where women seeks divorce as the best option if they do not feel equal in the marriage with their spouses. Parker et al. (2022)'s study also revealed that women in modern era have the options to control their fertility rate, plan their families, and achieve their professional goals. Malaysian study by Malek (2016) supported that divorce is already an acceptable option by societies if the marriage itself is not fulfilling any longer, to reduce prolonged marital conflicts in the households. Subsequently, it was found to be socially acceptable by communities for individuals that are married to be romantically involved with other people if they are unhappy in their married life (Yusof et al., 2024). Moreover, another study by Tripathi (2020) that shown women are complex individuals where women finds their ways of satisfaction by proving themselves to hold leadership roles or enrolling to job/career that made for men. In Tripathi (2020)'s study, female police officers are underrepresented by male police officers where patriarchal beliefs are strongly exists in India.

This summarizes that women and life satisfaction are interesting combination that is worth to investigate, because not just women outnumbered men (Alias et al., 2021), but women is highly needed as much men to contribute the developmental of economy (Alias et al., 2021).

2. Work-Life Conflict

Hartman (2016) studied in-depth in relation to dimensions in work-life conflict. According to Hartman (2016), work-life conflict consists of three dimensions which are time-based dimension, behaviour-based dimension and strain-based dimension. In Hartman (2016)'s thesis, time-based dimension or time-based conflict (one of sub-conflicts in work-life conflict), time-based conflict exists when individual faced imbalance amount of hours spent in one's workplace (work domain) and imbalance amount of hours spent in one's personal life or home life (life domain). Older studies by Carlson et al. (2000) and Greenhaus et al. (1985) also explained that time-based conflict occurred when individuals struggle to commit activities or responsibilities that they supposed to invest (given amount of time that should be invested in the workplace) towards other responsibilities that they want to put more time into. Hartman (2016) provided example where a full-time worker faces tension when push into dilemma to schedule time that should be more spent at work or at home. Adams et al. (1999) stated time-based conflict or time-based dimension (one of sub-conflicts in work-life conflict) are well-discussed in numerous literatures (Michel et al., 2011).

Behaviour-based conflict or behaviour-based dimension (one of sub-conflicts in work-life conflict), on the other hand, according to Hartman (2016), experience by individuals when he or she have to act certain behaviors that they should display in the workplaces, which restricted them to not to display behaviors that they used to display at their homes. In addition, accepted behaviors in the workplaces that workers should comply such as their interpersonal communications with co-workers, and also full-filled social expectations from higher authorities in the workplaces, which can create tension and pressure for individuals, especially those that have families (Dierdorff et al., 2008). Greenhaus et al. (1985) added that, however, behavior-based conflict (behavior-based dimension in work-life conflict) also occurred towards individuals that have to exert personalities that they are uncomfortable to do so, such as introverted worker is expected to get used to social expectations among co-workers in construction sites, where their interpersonal communications are consisted of yelling, used improper languages and etc, which this could lead to individuals to re-adjust their supposed behaviors that should be practised at home.

Third type of sub-conflict or dimension in work-life conflict which is strain-based conflict. Hartman (2016) and Juli et al. (2024a) stated that strain-based conflict (sub-conflict of work-life conflict) exists when individuals experienced pressure, stress, tension in the workplace and these emotions influenced individuals' interaction with their family members, relatives or friends in their households (non-work related), and vice-versa. Greenhaus et al. (1985) added as well on where strain-based conflict associated with psychological distress when individuals have to perform different roles in the workplaces. Different roles produced different stress which can triggers individuals to be detached with their home life or personal life, that can cause disharmony in the households among family members, friends and relatives. Strain-based conflict is a common conflict in this modern era because professional workers thirst for career advancements, salary increments, monthly bonus and job rewards and recognitions (Dierdorff et al., 2008; Juli et al., 2024a).

This summarizes that work-life conflict consists of time-based conflict/dimension, behavior-based conflict/dimension and strain-based conflict/dimension where these conflicts have existed in numerous literatures (Arham et al., 2019; Cazan et al., 2019; Juli et al., 2024a; Omar et al., 2016).

3. Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) created by Ed. Diener (Psychologist)

A renowned psychologist, which is Ed. Diener (Ed Diener, Robert Emmons, et al., 1985) defined life satisfaction as a subjective overall assessment of one's life as a whole and created an instrument which was called SWLS (Satisfaction With Life Scale), to measure individuals' level of life satisfaction. According to Ed Diener, Robert A. Emmons, et al. (1985), extensive investigation towards life satisfaction was existed because deep sense of curiosity to understand individuals' unhappiness and their well-being, which in the form of uncomfortable emotions, depression and anxieties. Depression and anxieties (mental health problems) more prevalent towards women rather men (Korayem et al., 2024). In addition, E. Diener et al. (1985) also stated that Satisfaction With Life Scale or abbreviated as SWLS, was designed for individuals of all ages in a global scale to be able to answer based on their own evaluations of what they viewed their life as a whole; by weighing domains on aspects of their lives independently.

4. Life Satisfaction in Martin Seligman’s View

Peterson et al. (2005) compiled theoretical views by past philosophers of what exactly happiness in association with life satisfaction is, although in sociology, Veenhoven (2012) has justified that happiness is equivalent to life satisfaction by comparing to items used in Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) created by Ed Diener, Robert A. Emmons, et al. (1985) and notion of “overall happiness” defined as “overall appreciation of one’s life as a whole” which similar to definition of life satisfaction stated by Ed Diener, Robert A. Emmons, et al. (1985).

5. Conceptual Framework

Based on previous studies and contribution by Ed. Diener of the purpose of creating SWLS (Satisfaction With Life Scale) and also Martin Seligman’s contribution to idea of life satisfaction (Peterson et al., 2005), this study has developed a conceptual framework to investigate the relationship between work-life conflict and life satisfaction among women in Sabah, Malaysia, and also to investigate women’s level of life satisfaction in Sabah, Malaysia. Work-life conflict that consisted of three dimensions which are time-based dimension, behavior-based dimension and strain-based dimension are selected as independent variable and life satisfaction is selected as dependent variable.

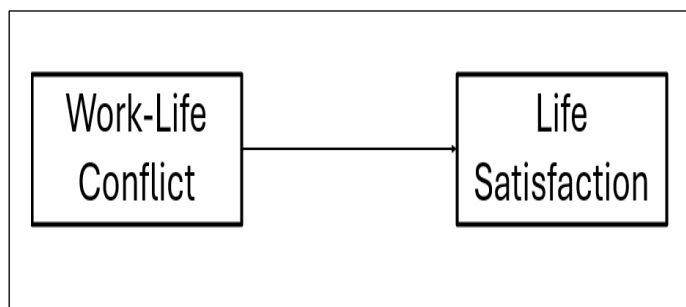


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of study

Based on Figure 1, work-life conflict acts an independent variable towards life satisfaction that acts as a dependent variable.

Methodology

A quantitative research study design is implemented towards female government servants in Malaysia based in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia. Convenience sampling method is used as the researcher has knowledge and awareness of the procedure to collect data in targeted area, which is based in Kota Kinabalu. Moreover, the researcher resides in Kota Kinabalu, which helps the researcher to perform data collection easier. In addition, the researcher has established good professional networks with female government servants that works based in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia. According to Yan et al. (2022), convenience sampling used in their quantitative study as well because they justified the sampling implemented as they have already established good relationships with higher authorities in the organizations that they seek to collect data and received back the data on the required timeframe.

Back to the researcher’s study, the researcher has selected three government institutions based in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia which are Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri Sabah, Kota Kinabalu (*Sabah State Education Department, Kota Kinabalu*), Jabatan Meteorologi Negeri Sabah, Kota Kinabalu (*Sabah State Meteorological Office, Kota Kinabalu*) and Jabatan Pendaftaran Negara, Kota Kinabalu (*Sabah State Registration Department, Kota Kinabalu*) to collect data.

Table 1. Process to get approval for data collection activities

Government Institutions	Process To Obtain Approval to Collect Data
Sabah State Education Department, Kota Kinabalu	Researcher informed by an administrative officer to submit documents (softcopy) via Education Research Application System 2.0 (ERAS 2.0) which are:

- a) Researcher’s active status in the university
- b) Researcher’s research proposal that has been approved by the university.
- c) A revised questionnaire
- d) A form that provided by ERAS 2.0 that has been signed by academic supervisor

Researcher waited five working days to receive approval letter from Ministry of Education Malaysia.

Sabah State Meteorological Office, Kota Kinabalu

Researcher enquired via e-mail and received response via WhatsApp by the officer-in-charge (within three days). The researcher went to the location and handed over a consent form (hardcopy) to the officer-in-charge and signed by the officer-in-charge (on behalf of the Director of Sabah State Meteorological Office, Kota Kinabalu.)

Sabah State Registration Department, Kota Kinabalu

Researcher enquired via e-mail and received response via WhatsApp by the officer-in-charge (within one week). The researcher went to the location and handed over a consent form (hardcopy) to the officer-in-charge and signed by the officer-in-charge (on behalf of the Director of Sabah State Registration Department, Kota Kinabalu.)

Researcher collected overall 348 samples from all three government institutions. According to Hair et al. (2010), recommended sample size for study will be minimum 200, as this amount already offers good statistical power for data analysis. In addition, Hoe (2008) stated that minimum of five observations should be made for each parameter. Below are the research instruments for work-life conflict based on Hartman (2016)’s study (Table 2) and life satisfaction using Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) based on Ed Diener, Robert A. Emmons, et al. (1985)’s study (Table 3). According to Ed Diener, Robert A. Emmons, et al. (1985), indicated that Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) has a good reliability analysis of a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.87, while Omar et al. (2016) stated the reliability analysis of work-life conflict used in their study is 0.953. 6-point Likert-Scale are used in this study which is 0 = strongly disagree, 1 = disagree, 2 = Not sure, 3 = Neutral, 4 = agree and 5 = Strongly agree.

Table 2. Work-life conflict in questionnaire based on Hartman (2016)’s study

Items	Dimensions
I have to miss activities in my personal life due to the amount of time I must spend on my work responsibilities.	Time-Based
My work takes up time that I'd like to spend with friends or family.	
The amount of time I spend working interferes with how much free time I have.	
The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfil responsibilities in my personal life.	
The time I spend on my personal life often causes me not to spend time in activities or work that could be helpful to my career.	
My personal life demands time from me that could be spent on my job.	
My personal life creates difficulties for me since I must behave so differently at work.	Behavior-Based
My personal life makes me behave in ways which are unacceptable at work.	
The behaviours I perform that make me effective at work do not help me to be a better friend or family member.	
The problem-solving behaviours I use in my job are not effective in resolving problems at home.	

My personal life makes it hard to adjust back to the way I must act at work.

Due to all the pressures at work, sometimes when I come home, I am too stressed to do the things I enjoy.

Personal life related strain interferes with my ability to perform job related duties.

Because I am often stressed from personal life responsibilities, I have a hard time concentrating on my work.

Due to stress at home, I am often preoccupied with home matters at work.

My job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfil personal life duties.

My personal life produces tensions and anxieties that decrease my performance at work.

After work, I come home too tired to do some of the things I'd like to do.

Strain-Based

When I get home from my job, I do not have the energy to do work around the house.

When I get home from work, I often do not have the energy to be a good friend or family member.

After work, I am often too tired to do things in my personal life.

My job makes me feel too tired to do the things that need attention in my personal life.

My job makes me feel too tired to do the things that need attention in my personal life.

Table 3. Life satisfaction in satisfaction with life scale (swls) based on Ed Diener, Robert A. Emmons, et al. (1985)'s study

Items	Variable
In most ways, my life is close to my ideal.	Life Satisfaction
The conditions of my life are excellent.	
I am satisfied with my life.	
So far, I have gotten the important things I want in life.	
If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.	

The Findings

1. The Socio-Demographics of Respondents

Socio-Demographics that are collected in the study which are marital status, religion, ethnicity, age and grade position. 68.7% of respondents are married which holds the highest percentages in this study. In terms of religion, 75.6% of respondents practice Islam (holds the biggest percentage). In addition, in terms of ethnicity, 34.2% (highest percentage) of respondents claimed that they are from other ethnicities apart from Kadazan-Dusun, Malay, Chinese and etc. Subsequently, in terms of age range, majority respondents that participated in this study are aged between 34 years old and 41 years old (30.7%). Lastly, for grade position, grade position from 41 until 48 are the highest number respondents which are 78.4%.

2. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variable (Work-Life Conflict)

In Work-Life Conflict, again, consisted of three dimensions which are Time-Based Dimension, Strain-Based Dimension and Behavior-Based Dimension. Each table which is Table 4, Table 5 and Table 6, represented each item that has highest mean followed by each standard deviation. For Table 4, represented for Time-Based Dimension. For Table 5, on the other hand, represented for Strain-Based Dimension and Table 6, represented for Behavior-Based Dimension.

Table 4. Descriptive analysis of item under time-based dimension (mean and standard deviation)

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
I have to miss activities in my personal life due to the amount of time I must spend on my work responsibilities.	2.83	1.454

Table 5. Descriptive analysis of item under strain-based dimension (mean and standard deviation)

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
After work, I come home too tired to do some of the things I'd like to do.	2.76	1.526

Table 6. Descriptive analysis of item under behavior-based dimension (mean and standard deviation)

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
My personal life creates difficulties for me since I must behave so differently at work.	1.76	1.349

Based on Table 4, for Time-Based Dimension, an item which is *“I have to miss activities in my personal life due to the amount of time I must spend on my work responsibilities.”* showed a mean of 2.83 and a standard deviation of 1.454. Based on Table 5, for Strain-Based Dimension, an item which is *“After work, I come home too tired to do some of the things I'd like to do.”* showed a mean of 2.76 and a standard deviation of 1.526. Based on Table 6, for Behavior-Based Dimension, an item which is *“My personal life creates difficulties for me since I must behave so differently at work.”* showed a mean of 1.76 and a standard deviation of 1.349.

3. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variable (Life Satisfaction)

In Life Satisfaction, again, consisted of five items which are *“In most ways, my life is close to my ideal.”*, *“The conditions of my life are excellent.”*, *“I am satisfied with my life.”*, *“So far, I have gotten the important things I want in life.”* and *“If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.”*. Based on Table 7, item for *“I am satisfied with my life”* has the highest mean of 3.78, and the lowest mean of 2.58 for *“If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.”*.

Table 7. Descriptive analysis of life satisfaction items (means and standard deviation)

Life Satisfaction	Mean	Standard Deviation
In most ways, my life is close to my ideal.	3.52	0.867
The conditions of my life are excellent.	3.66	0.923
I am satisfied with my life.	3.78	0.895
So far, I have gotten the important things I want in life.	3.72	0.954
If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.	2.58	1.481
Total	3.50	1.024

Based on Table 7, overall means and standard deviations for life satisfaction is 3.50 and standard deviation is 1.024.

4. Relationship Between Work-Life Conflict and Life Satisfaction

There are two constructs to observe the relationship between two variables which are Work-life Conflict and Life Satisfaction which are, correlation exists between Work-Life Conflict and Life Satisfaction, and also correlation exists between Life Satisfaction and Work-Life Conflict.

Table 8. Pearson correlation coefficient results

Constructs	Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r)	Sig (p)
There is a correlation between work-life conflict and life satisfaction	-.373**	<.001
There is a correlation between life satisfaction and work-life conflict	-.373**	<.001

Note: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Based on Table 8, the correlation between work-life conflict and life satisfaction is statistically significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). To explain in depth, work-life conflict is strong and negatively correlated towards life satisfaction and vice versa which is -0.373.

Discussion

Based on the findings found in this study, there are several discussions are to be addressed especially in relation to women in this study (female government servants). Female government servants' level of life satisfaction is overall neutral. There are several justifications that can be said on reasons female government servants' level of life satisfaction is overall neutral: or between not sure and neutral. This was because female government servants have achieved stability in terms of financial stability and long-term security; working for government provide stability in terms of receiving retirement savings, having privilege to purchase long-term assets and so on. However, according to Degges-White et al. (2020) and Borzumato-Gainey et al. (2009), women in midlife have desires to seek other ways to achieve their level of life satisfaction. Since female government servants that participated in this study are mid 30's and above, they find their current jobs are less satisfying and seek other options to feel satisfied in life. In addition, female government servants do experience level of work-life conflict especially in strain-based dimension and this does not contribute better life satisfaction.

Strain-based dimension is more visible compared to other dimensions in work-life conflict based on this study. One of the reasons because majority respondents in this study are married. Sousa et al. (2001)'s study supported this finding where women faced complex challenges in life where women have to do multiple job responsibilities such as having full-time job as a worker in organizations, a wife and a mother. Female government servants in this study although their level of work-life conflict is not that high, but the correlation between work-life conflict and life satisfaction is negative. This shown that work-life conflict does not contribute female government servants' high level of life satisfaction. Female government servants in this study faces stress, pressures and tensions in their workplace. It is proven that justifications by E. Diener et al. (1985) and Peterson et al. (2005) in relation to uncomfortable emotions such pressures, stress and tensions indeed contributed to unhappiness or life dissatisfaction. In addition, "After work, I come home too tired to do some of the things I'd like to do" proven that women in this study experienced more strain at work compared to their home-life. Since female government servants are aged mostly around 30's and above, they did not find the high level of satisfaction in life in relation to performing their job scopes any longer.

Moreover, female government servants in this study also expressed that their time at their workplaces has consumed much of their "needed time" to be actually invest in something that they really make them happy or highly satisfied in life as shown on item "I have to miss activities in my personal life due to the amount of time I must spend on my work responsibilities." This summarizes that female government servants that aged from mid-30's and above do not find their current jobs are satisfying any longer and desire to seek other options or other domain satisfactions that can lead to their happiness and high level of life satisfaction as what according to Degges-White et al. (2020)'s study, women in midlife values emotional connection, good social network and social circles, where this contribute to better life satisfaction.

There are several suggestions to cope with midlife women's level of life satisfaction into better. Policy makers such as Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development should support FWA (Flexible Work Arrangement) so that women can have the opportunities to explore their other areas of life such as making new friends, create other social circles, apart from their work circles. In relation to women and their life satisfaction, especially women that are working, since women are viewed as vulnerable individuals and

as well as complex human being, specifically women that are in middle-aged, seeking professional counselling that are specialized in promoting taking self-care such as providing guidelines to understand the importance of awareness to utilize taking time off or leave because middle-aged women have the tendencies to overworked and forgot to take care of self. In addition, government institutions should held workshops or events that advocate the importance of taking care of well-being (such as suggesting making some improvements or do some renovations to a better work environment) so that female government servants are happy to go to work every day and they will felt appreciated by the government of their dedication to come to work and continue to perform their job scopes.

Conclusion

The findings provided new insights especially in relation to women in Sabah's level of life satisfaction; specifically, women that are working. Working women in Sabah in this modern era that works in government institutions having struggles to experience high level of life satisfaction or being happy. In addition, work-life conflict does not contribute life satisfaction. Subsequently, strain-based affected female government servants the most in this study. Life satisfaction is the key element in this study because working women in Sabah, as majority reaching their midlife, does not feel entirely happy. Female government servants in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah today, has experience work-life conflict which has jeopardize their life satisfaction which was crucial to ensure female government servants have a good life satisfaction. There are limitations found in this study which was this was only focused on working women, but among women that do not work. Further research is needed to focus on non-working women.

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Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

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