



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Struggling in Difficulties: Factors Influencing Job Satisfaction Among Working Parents in Klang Valley

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ARTICLE INFO**ABSTRACT**

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This study examines the factors that impact job satisfaction among working parents in Klang Valley. Based on Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, it explores the relationships between career development, work environment, salary and rewards, and work-life balance with job satisfaction. Physical questionnaires were distributed to working parents using a convenience sampling method, with 108 valid responses analyzed. Four hypotheses were tested through hierarchical multiple regression. The results indicate that career development and salary and rewards have a significant impact on job satisfaction, while work environment and work-life balance were found to have no significant effect. These findings provide valuable insights into existing theories and offer guidance for employers seeking to enhance employee well-being and job satisfaction. Finally, the study discusses its limitations and offers suggestions for future research.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The number of working parents who skillfully balance professional commitments with the challenges of raising a family has significantly increased (Orellana et al., 2023). This group, which experiences job satisfaction, plays a crucial role in enhancing overall well-being, work-life balance, and productivity. Job satisfaction emerges as a key theme, as it is widely recognized for its impact on employee retention (Biaison, 2020).

The study of job satisfaction among working parents is a crucial area of research, aimed at understanding the unique factors that contribute to both their job satisfaction and overall well-being. However, investigations into job satisfaction specifically among working parents in urban areas remain underexplored. The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in Malaysia has highlighted the challenges faced by working parents, revealing significant hurdles in their daily lives. Reports indicate that the COVID-19 outbreak led to negative consequences, including job loss, economic instability, and declines in job satisfaction (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2020; Shah et al., 2020).

Working parents in urban areas, in particular, have been affected by economic factors such as rising living costs, difficulties in balancing family responsibilities, and health concerns. Previous research has failed to establish a clear link between the antecedents of job satisfaction in the post-COVID-19 context. Therefore, this study aims to identify the factors that influence job satisfaction among working parents as they navigate the complexities of balancing work and family responsibilities.

Our investigation holds significance implications both to working parents and employers; while also enriching academic perspectives on the theme of job satisfaction. This paper aims to identify and evaluate the variables that affect job satisfaction among working parents in the Klang Valley. A comprehensive examination of job satisfaction in this context will focus on key factors such as work-life balance, working environment, salary and rewards, and career development. This study seeks to bridge the existing knowledge gap and generate valuable data, empowering organizations and decision-makers to develop strategies and interventions that enhance job satisfaction and support the well-being of working parents.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Theory of Herzberg's Two-factor and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

This paper utilizes two foundational theories: Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, to explain the variables under study. Herzberg's theory posits that workplace satisfaction and dissatisfaction are influenced by two categories of factors: hygiene factors and motivators. Hygiene factors, such as work relationships, workplace conditions, and salary, can lead to dissatisfaction if they do not meet employee expectations. Scholars recognize that poor working conditions can create significant stress for employees (Naharudin and Sadegi, 2013). A lack of adequate hygiene factors can initiate job dissatisfaction, ultimately resulting in a potential loss for employers when skilled employees seek new employment opportunities.

In contrast, motivator factors such as recognition, achievement, advancement, and growth contribute to enhanced job satisfaction. This perspective is distinct from that of hygiene factors, which primarily serve to prevent job dissatisfaction. It can be inferred that motivator factors lead to job satisfaction, while hygiene factors exist to mitigate the negative effects of dissatisfaction. For instance, recognition as a motivator stems from the achievement of specific goals set by employers. When employees receive recognition for their accomplishments, it significantly boosts their satisfaction and overall happiness (Alshmemri et al., 2017).

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory posits that to achieve fulfillment and happiness, individuals must progress through five stages (Trivedi and Medta, 2019). This theory is often represented as a pyramid, starting with the foundational psychological needs. These are followed by safety needs, social needs, esteem needs, and culminating in self-actualization at the top. The first four levels are considered deficiency needs, meaning individuals are motivated to fulfill them to avoid discomfort. If these needs remain unmet, they drive individuals to strive for their attainment. The theory also suggests that individuals must satisfy each level before advancing to higher tiers. Integrating this theory is relevant to the current study, as achieving higher-level needs, such as self-actualization, can significantly enhance job satisfaction (Pudjiastuti and Sijabat, 2022).

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is defined as an emotional response to all elements encountered in the workplace (Sakarji et al., 2022). Rather than viewing job satisfaction as merely a matter of "liking" or "disliking" one's work, this perspective emphasizes its complexity as a multifaceted construct. It encompasses a range of emotional and cognitive reactions to work experiences (Anis et al., 2022). Job satisfaction extends beyond simple happiness to include a broader spectrum of positive and negative feelings, opinions, and emotions that employees have regarding their work environment, tasks, and relationships (Hoo et al., 2024).

While some definitions emphasize a positive emotional response to work, others adopt a more holistic view, encompassing a comprehensive evaluation of various work-related factors (Permawa et al., 2021). Consequently, job satisfaction can be understood as an overall affective attitude that arises from a thorough assessment of one's work and experiences. When employees recognize that their job aligns with their needs and values—either directly through their tasks or indirectly through the benefits they receive—their attitude towards both the job and the organization improves (Permawa et al., 2021). Employees are invaluable assets to a company, making it essential to study and understand the factors that can motivate and enhance their job satisfaction. When a company actively focuses on motivation and job satisfaction, its overall performance is likely to improve

(Riyanto et al., 2021). Key factors influencing job satisfaction include salary and rewards, work-life balance, working environment, and career development.

Career Development

Career development is an ongoing, intentional process focused on enhancing your knowledge, skills, and experiences to advance professionally over time. It involves active learning, pursuing opportunities for growth, and aligning your development with your aspirations and goals. This continuous journey fosters increased competence, job satisfaction, and fulfillment in your chosen field (Tracey and Tracey, 2022). It emphasizes building a rewarding career path rather than merely climbing a corporate ladder and may include acquiring new skills, taking on challenging roles, or exploring new career directions.

Effective career development programs can lead to higher job satisfaction (Minnis, 2014) and serve as a foundation for fostering employee creativity. In today's rapidly advancing technological landscape, employees seek to acquire knowledge throughout their tenure (Awada et al., 2022). Additionally, well-planned career development initiatives can help reduce employee turnover (Umer and Naseem, 2011). For working parents, particularly in large cities, downsizing initiatives may negatively impact job satisfaction. Therefore, employers should be responsive to emerging challenges and proactively anticipate trends. Therefore, the hypothesis presented is as follows:

H1 There is a positive relationship between career development and job satisfaction

Work Environment

The work environment encompasses all aspects related to the equipment, tools, materials, and procedures encountered, as well as the physical surroundings in which an individual works, whether independently or as part of a team (Budie et al., 2019). Given that employees spend a considerable amount of time at work, the physical work environment can significantly influence job satisfaction.

A conducive work environment fosters a sense of security, enabling employees to perform their duties to the best of their abilities. When employees feel comfortable in their work environment, they are more likely to carry out their tasks efficiently (Basalamah and A'sad, 2021). Key considerations for office design include creating a layout that promotes activity-based work by integrating private and open areas. This design aims to facilitate smooth communication and enhance collaboration among workers (Aidla et al., 2022). Research indicates that the work environment has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction (Hasan et al., 2021). Conversely, a stressful work environment can lead to employee burnout. When employees struggle to manage their emotions, they may find it difficult to cope with psychological stress, ultimately diminishing their performance (Bacotic and Babic, 2013). Therefore, this paper recommends the hypothesis as;

H2 There is a positive relationship between work environment and job satisfaction

Salary and Reward

According to Dessler (2020), an employee's compensation encompasses all elements of remuneration received in exchange for job performance, which includes fringe benefits, bonuses, extra work remuneration, and incentives. Essentially, pay represents the compensation an employee receives for their labor upon completing assigned tasks (Sasmithaa et al., 2023). Al-Suraihi et al. (2021) emphasize that an organization's remuneration plans significantly influence employees' willingness to remain in their roles. When employees lack financial security to meet their basic needs, job satisfaction declines, and non-monetary incentives can also lead to a decrease in employee loyalty (Wangechi et al., 2018). Recognizing and rewarding productive employees can enhance their productivity, ultimately contributing to the delivery of high-quality services to clients (Sakarji et al., 2022).

One of the primary factors contributing to increased turnover rates is dissatisfaction with salary (Ahuja et al., 2002). There is often an evident disparity between income generation and employee compensation. Employees may feel that their hard work is not fairly rewarded, especially when pressure mounts on employers—such as in the private sector—to generate income. As a consequence, frustrated employees may develop an intention to leave the organization. Due to fact that the importance of salary and reward to the working parents, we propose the hypothesis as;

H3 There is a positive relationship between salary and reward with job satisfaction

Work Life Balance

Work-life balance refers to the optimal state in which an individual's professional responsibilities and personal needs are effectively met. This dynamic equilibrium involves managing time and energy between work obligations and personal activities, such as family, hobbies, and self-care. Achieving a healthy balance promotes well-being, reduces stress and burnout, and enhances productivity and satisfaction in both work and personal spheres (Strazdiniene and Juodis, 2023). It is important to note that the ideal balance is subjective and continually evolves, shaped by factors such as career stage, family dynamics, and individual preferences. Striking a sustainable balance necessitates conscious effort, flexibility, and open communication with both employers and loved ones.

In Malaysia, although the overall level of stress may not be excessively high, an imbalanced work-life dynamic can significantly affect the progress of working parents (Hassim et al., 2022). Scholars suggest that despite the burdens of work, employees tend to feel happier when they can spend quality time with their family members (Peprah, 2024). A better work-life balance can lead to greater enjoyment in life, ultimately resulting in higher job satisfaction (Aidla et al., 2022; Jackson and Fransman, 2018). When working parents experience fulfillment in their personal lives, it can serve as an added incentive for employers to retain their existing workforce. Hence, in line with the aforementioned studies, this paper postulates:

H4 There is a positive relationship with work-life balance and job satisfaction

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research focused on working parents residing in the Kuala Lumpur and Selangor states, which are part of the Klang Valley area, home to a population of approximately 8.8 million people (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2023). For the purpose of this study, working parents are defined as individuals who are employed or self-employed and live with a child under the age of 18 (Niar, 2019). Due to the absence of a population frame, this study employed a non-probability sampling technique. Non-probability sampling involves selecting sample units based on personal judgment. We utilized convenience sampling, which allows for the selection of participants who are easiest to reach (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). At the same time, we remained mindful of the appropriate application of this technique, as it can affect the quality of the data collected. Using G-Power software 3.1.9.4 to determine the sample size, we set the effect size of "f square" 0.15, α error prob 0.05, power ($1-\beta$ err prob) 0.8 with a number of 4 predictors, the minimum sampling size generated is 85. Scholar suggested that sample size more than 50 and less than 500 are suitable for most studies (Roscoe, 1975). The physical questionnaire forms were distributed and after two months of data collection, we gathered 120 responses, of which 108 were deemed qualified for further analysis after filtering.

The measurement for all variables were adapted from previous research. Four job satisfaction items were modified from Chen (2008) and Vandenberg (2009) whereas fifteen items for salary and reward variables are adapted from Hackman and Oldham (1975) and Unutmaz (2014). We are also used fourteen items on working environment borrowed from Unutmaz (2014) and American Psychological Association (2023). Items measuring career development and work life balance were adapted from Bell et al. (2012). All variables used the 5-scale Likert scale, with 1 representing strongly disagree and 5 representing strongly agree.

In analysing the hypotheses, this study employs the hierarchical multiple regression method. This method was conducted by entering the independent variables into the block and the customer satisfaction into the dependent variable block in the SPSS software. The stepwise method was applied in order to determine the total proportion of variance in the dependent variable as explained independent variables in the model. At the same time, the stepwise method shows the contribution of each variable in explaining the dependent variable (Field, 2000).

4.0 FINDINGS

4.1 Descriptive Analyses

Table 4.1 presents the descriptive analyses of the respondents. Majority of the respondents were male (54.6 percent) and female respondents constitute 45.4 percent. Malay ethnic was majority by

96.3 percent, followed by Chinese (2.8%) and India (0.9%). The age of the respondents showed that most of the respondents were range 31 until 40 years old (45.4%) and least numbers are those respondents more than 50 years old (4.6%). Approximately 96.3 percent of the respondents are married meanwhile 1.9 percent were divorced and widowed.

Table 4.1: Respondents' Profile

Characteristics	Frequency (n=108)	Percentage (%)
Gender :		
Male	59	54.6
Female	49	45.4
Ethnic:		
Malay	104	96.3
Chinese	3	2.8
Indian	1	0.9
Age :		
25 - 30	21	19.4
31 - 40	49	45.4
41 - 50	33	30.6
more than 50	5	4.6
Marital Status:		
Married	104	96.3
Widowed	2	1.9
Divorced	2	1.9
Highest Educational Level:		
High School	6	5.6
Diploma	39	36.1
Bachelor Degree	52	48.1
Masters Degree	8	7.4
Ph.D	1	0.9
Others	2	1.9
Numbers of Children:		
1	34	31.5
2	21	19.4
More than 2	53	49.1
Tenure of Job Employment:		
1-5		
6-10	10	9.3
11-15	36	33.3
16-20	18	16.7
21-25	19	17.6
More than 25 years	13	12

At the same time, we discovered that 48.1 percent were degree holder, diploma 36.1 percent, masters degree 7.4 percent whilst high school education level, doctorate and others categories accounted to 8.4 percent. Majority of the respondents were more than two child (49.1%), minority of the respondents were only two (19.4%) and those parents possessed only one is 31.5 percent. For working period, majority of the respondents were 6 until 10 years (33.3 percent) and minority of the respondents were range from 1 to 5 years working period (9.3 percent).

Table 4.2 depicts the value of mean, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis for all variables. The mean ranged from 3.70 for career development to 3.98 as for job satisfaction. Meanwhile the value for standard deviation ranged from 0.38 to 0.56 which indicates the data did not violate far from the mean. To perform regression analyses, this study needs to ensure the data must adhere the normality testing which are skewness and kurtosis. From the table, it indicates that the data are fall in between -2 and +2 which indicate the data are normally distributed (Piaw, 2008).

Table 4.2: Mean, Standard Deviations, Skewness and Kurtosis

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviations	Skewness	Kurtosis
Career Development	3.70	.56	-.148	-.073
Working Environment	3.74	.39	-.122	-.002
Salary & Reward	3.92	.51	-.092	-.061
Work Life Balance	3.71	.38	.012	-.496
Job Satisfaction	3.98	.51	.120	-.033

Factor analyses were conducted on the variables to assess construct validity, with the results presented in Table 4.3. To perform the factor analyses, this study incorporated measures of sampling adequacy, utilizing Bartlett's Test of Sphericity and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure. For the factor analysis to be deemed appropriate, Bartlett's Test should be significant at a p-value lower than 0.05, and the KMO index should exceed 0.6 (Hair et al., 2006). Following the guidelines established by Nunnally (1978), items with loadings greater than 0.50 on a single factor were considered suitable for retention in further analyses. Consequently, this study adhered to the criterion of retaining items with coefficients of 0.50 and above.

For the first independent variable namely career development, the KMO value is 0.836 and the percentage of variance explained is 66.84 percent. As depicted in Table 4.3, all factor loadings were value above 0.5 and shall be retained for further analysis.

Table 4.3: Exploratory factor Analyses for Career Development

Label	Items	Factors Loading
CD1	I am satisfied with my opportunity for professional development	.765
CD2	I satisfied with the available career advancement opportunities	.821
CD3	The organization is dedicated to my professional development	.823
CD4	I am satisfied with the job-related training the organization has to offer.	.835
CD5	I am satisfied with the opportunities to apply my expertise and talents	.847
CD6	I am satisfied with the investment the organization makes education and training	.813

The KMO value for working environment variable is 0.799 and the percentage of variance explained is 56.2 percent. There are four items were dropped due to low value for factor loading (WE8, WE9, WE13, WE14). The remaining items valued above 0.5 were retained for further analysis. Table 4.5 portrays the factor loading value for salary and reward variable. There were 15 items were used to measure the variable. After factor analysis, there were three items were deleted (SR4, SR5, SR10). The KMO value for salary and reward is 0.823 and the percentage of variance explained is 68.4 percent. The remaining items were retained for the next analysis.

Table 4.4: Exploratory factor Analyses for Working Environment

Label	Items	Factors Loading
WE1	I am satisfied with physical working conditions	.538
WE2	I satisfied with current maintenance of the building	.754

WE3	I satisfied with the maintenance of hygiene in the organization	.714
WE4	I am satisfied with current fixed working hours	.646
WE5	I am satisfied with the work activities and the opportunities for improving my competence level	.615
WE6	I am satisfied with the access to equipment necessary for performing my tasks	.734
WE7	I am satisfied with the training opportunities in the organization	.700
WE10	I am satisfied with my supervisor who provides me with sufficient information related to work	.784
WE11	My supervisor has reasonable expectations of work	.898
WE12	There is immediate supervisors' trust in fellow co-workers	.719

Table 4.5: Exploratory factor Analyses for Salary and Reward

Label	Items	Factors Loading
SR1	Salary increases based on high performance has an impact on my performance	.851
SR2	Salary increases based on years of experiences has an impact on my performance.	.860
SR3	Salary increases based on the increase of price of commodities has an impact on my performance	.743
SR6	Allowance for hard-working employees has an impact on my performance	.762
SR7	Allowance given in the form of free accommodation has an impact on my performance	.841
SR8	Giving allowance as a motivation for work commitment has an impact on my performance	.785
SR9	Giving allowance as a retention strategy has an impact on my performance	.786
SR11	Promotion available based on performance appraisal has an impact on my performance	.819
SR12	Promotion inspires employees to work has an impact on my performance	.834
SR13	Promotion based on years of service has an impact on my performance	.664
SR14	Promotion makes employees loyal to the company has an impact to my performance	.779
SR15	Promotion as an instrument to retain employees has an impact on performance	.673

The fourth variable is work life balance. The KMO value for work life balance is 0.689 and the percentage of variance explained is 61.73. As depicted in table 4.6, the item of WL12 was deleted due to poor factor loading value. The other items were value from .588 up to .795 were retained for next analysis.

Table 4.6: Exploratory factor Analyses for Work Life Balance

Label	Items	Factors Loading
WL1	There is flexibility of working hours in my company	.703
WL2	I may take quick, short breaks during the day	.791
WL3	Organizational day to day assigned task takes my extra working hours*	.601
WL4	After working hour I get enough time with my family	.677
WL5	I have more pressure of work*	.615

WL6	I am satisfied with satisfy you are with leave policy	.588
WL7	My office provides leave if I need to take care of my children or dependents	.770
WL8	I generally feel that I am able to balance my work and life	.641
WL9	Having a positive balance between work and my personal life is important for my well-being	.731
WL10	I feel I miss out quality time with your family or friends because of work*	.729
WL11	My personal wellbeing is significantly improved due to positive Work Life Balance practices	.762
WL13	I feel that if the employees have good work-life balance then company will be more successful	.795

Note: * the reverse coded statement

Reliability assessments were conducted to all variables by examining the Cronbach's alpha coefficients (α) which all the variables' items were exceeding .70 (Chandler and Lyon, 2001). The content validity was implemented with three experts in the management fields to ensure the wordings are tally with the issues being investigated (Reynolds and Diamantopoulos, 1998). To double confirm the content of the instrument, the pilot testing was conducted to get the initial statistical analyses (Hunt et al., 1982). Thirty respondents were selected by using the convenience sampling technique and minor problems were detected in the instruments. The items were corrected based on what been suggested by the respondents. We are also examined the non-response bias by using early, moderate and late responses for both independent and dependent variables. By using the method proposed by Armstrong and Everton (1977), the results showed that each variable is almost comparable in terms of mean and standard deviation value. It can be concluded that non-response bias did not pose a problem in our study. By calculating mean and standard deviation were enough to validate the existence of nonresponse bias (Tanvisuth, 2007).

The correlation matrix in Table 4.7 indicates that all independent variables were significantly associated with job satisfaction. The highest value is career development (.384) and the lowest value is work life balance (.251).

Table 4.7: Correlation Analysis

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Career Development	1				
2. Working Environment	.458**	1			
3. Salary & Reward	.311**	.381**	1		
4. Work Life Balance	.235*	.218*	.420**	1	
5. Job Satisfaction	.384**	.340**	.364**	.251*	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed)

Referring to Table 4.8, all hypotheses were tested and elicited two steps by using stepwise method. The model shows the R= .382 and increase to .462 in the second step. R² is valued at .147 and .214 in the first and second step meanwhile F value indicates 14.11 (first step) and 11 (second step). The Durbin-Watson statistic (1.821) was shown to be closer to 2, indicating that the independent variables were not highly correlated with each other.

Table 4.8: Multiple Regression Analysis

	Standardised Beta (1st step)	Standardised Beta (2nd step)
Independent Variables		
Career Development	.384**	.299**
Working Environment	.208	.137
Salary & Reward	-	.271**
Work Life Balance	.170	.082
R	.384	.462
R²	.147	.214
R² Change	.147	.066
F Value	14.11	11
Sig. F Change	.00	.01
Durbin Watson Index		1.821

Note: ** p<0.01; *p<0.05

The hypotheses results were found mixed. Career development (Beta value=.299) and salary and reward (Beta value= .271) were found significantly positive relationship with job satisfaction (p-value <.05). Therefore Hypotheses 1 and 3 were supported. Hypotheses 2 and 3 were rejected due to p-value is insignificant towards job satisfaction (p-value >.05).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Our study examined the factors affecting job satisfaction, with a particular emphasis on urban working parents. Previous research has largely focused on job satisfaction among employees in general, thereby leaving a gap in studying working parents, especially in urban areas. The findings of this study aim to contribute to the existing body of knowledge and serve as a reminder for employers to recognize and understand the employment characteristics of their employees.

Our results indicate that career development is statistically significant in influencing job satisfaction, aligning with findings from Bourezg et al. (2024). Prior investigations have shown that employees in favorable positions tend to have clear plans for their career development, in contrast to those who passively follow directives without engaging in critical thinking about their roles (Munir et al., 2022). Furthermore, employees with future career planning actively challenge themselves to pursue better positions within their organizations (Umar, 2015). This perspective is particularly relevant in the current context, as urban working parents should prioritize their career development to enhance their job satisfaction.

In our investigation, the hypothesis examining the relationship between the working environment and job satisfaction was not supported. This finding is surprising, as it contradicts prior studies (Raziq and Maulabakhsh, 2015; Taheri et al., 2020). A plausible explanation for this discrepancy may be the inadequate rewards offered to boost employee morale during their employment (Rafiq et al., 2012; Tokuda et al., 2009). Notably, one study conducted in Malaysia revealed that 92 percent of respondents were willing to seek new employment due to insufficient rewards (Zahiid, 2023). Retaining talented employees becomes a significant challenge for employers if they remain in a state of "career cushioning" due to a lack of incentives.

Our findings also indicate that salary and rewards play a critical role in influencing job satisfaction. The results confirm the earlier assertion that salary and rewards significantly motivate parental behavior, thereby enhancing job satisfaction (Ibrahim, 2021; Ramli and Rasdi, 2021). This aligns with our second hypothesis, which posits that rewards should be emphasized to improve employee morale. Salary compensation reflects employees' efforts and skills, while additional rewards may be offered based on satisfactory performance (Reddy, 2020). In the case of working parents, with the rising cost of living increasingly impacting their lives, they often seek better salaries in their employment (Waitzberg et al., 2022). Working parents who receive better salaries and rewards are more likely to be dedicated and engaged employees.

Lastly, we discovered that our hypothesis regarding the relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction was unsupported. This finding contrasts with previous studies (Cohen et al., 2020;

Qodrizana and Musadieq, 2018). We suspect that the COVID-19 pandemic has reshaped the balance between work and life, further exacerbating the challenges faced by working parents (Shamhari et al., 2023). It is undeniable that the COVID-19 phenomenon drastically altered citizens' lives, leading to job loss, financial insecurity, and an imbalance between personal and professional responsibilities—all of which negatively impacted job satisfaction (Loh and Teoh, 2021). Ideally, working parents who successfully maintain a balance between their employment and personal life perform better than those contending with a tightly packed schedule. An imbalanced lifestyle may lead to burnout and depression, ultimately resulting in higher employee turnover rates (Abdirahman et al., 2020).

Based on our findings, we offer several recommendations for employers. First, employers should develop and implement effective policies and support programs tailored to the unique needs of working parents, ensuring that they feel comfortable and valued in their workplace (Adikoeswanto et al., 2024). Secondly, it is recommended that employers create programs and regulations that actively support work-life balance and enhance job satisfaction for working parents. Prior research has demonstrated that supportive work-life balance programs significantly increase job satisfaction (Aruldoss et al., 2022). These recommendations stem from the two rejected hypotheses in our study.

This paper contributes to the existing body of knowledge regarding job satisfaction among working parents in urban areas, specifically in Klang Valley. The study clarifies the factors influencing their level of job satisfaction. Notably, we identify a unique relationship where the two factors—working environment and work-life balance—do not consistently influence job satisfaction, contrary to what has been cited in prior investigations. This offers a fresh perspective, as the associated theory typically suggests a direct relationship between these factors.

It is important to acknowledge that this study has several limitations. Our research focused specifically on working parents in Klang Valley, which may limit the generalizability of the results to other countries or cultural contexts. Additionally, the sample size and regional focus may further restrict the applicability of the findings. Furthermore, the reliance on self-report data introduces the possibility of response bias and social desirability bias. To mitigate these limitations, we employed non-probability sampling methods and standardized measuring scales. Future studies could explore sectoral differences, for example, between manufacturing and service industries. Additionally, future research may examine differences between government employees and those in the private sector concerning job satisfaction. While private sector employees may experience heightened job insecurity, government employees often feel more secure in their positions, even when impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Addressing these areas in future research will provide a more nuanced understanding of the factors affecting job satisfaction across different sectors.

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