

WORK-LIFE MANAGEMENT PATTERNS AMONG PUBLIC SECTOR WORKERS IN MALAYSIA

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Abstract

This paper aims to examine how Malaysian public sector employees' approach their work and non-work lives. The research was based on the integration of semi-structured interviews and the use of organisational documents in an attempt to examine workers' work and non-work lives in the Malaysian context. Conducting qualitative case study inquiry as the main method, this paper focuses on examining the ways in which employees organise their work and non-work lives. Based on different facets of diversity from three public sector case studies in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, this paper demonstrates how structural factors are significant when examining how workers are either enabled or constrained in their ability to manage the relationship between work and non-work. Workers' commitment to their work/non-work responsibilities depend on the degree of support, both institutional and private, that they are able to draw upon and their life-cycle stage. In considering the management of work and non-work life as a continuum in this study, some workers were found to achieve partial to full integration, segmented to conflictual, whereas others either experience conflictual relations between work and home, or develop strategies to segment work and non-work. Thus, this paper identifies different degrees of satisfaction and dis-satisfaction with the relationship between work and non-work as well as their capacity to integrate both spheres whether dependent on their work position, life-cycle position and availability of organisational support (both formal and informal), family help and paid support or vice versa.

Keywords: Work-life integration; work-life conflict; qualitative case studies; organizational supports; Malaysia.