

The Effects Of Working Environment Towards Job Satisfaction Among Uniformed Personnel In Pulau Pinang, Malaysia

¹Narehan Hassan, ²Nur Amirah Ahmad, ³Nur Athirah Sumardi, ⁴Mazuin Mat Halif

¹Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Selangor, 42300 Puncak Alam, Malaysia

²Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Selangor, 42300 Puncak Alam, Malaysia

³Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, 16310 Bachok, Kelantan, Malaysia

⁴Universiti Teknologi MARA Kelantan, 18500 Machang, Kelantan, Malaysia

¹drnarehan@uitm.edu.my, ²amirah.ahmad5882@gmail.com, ³athirah.s@umk.edu.my,

⁴mazui208@uitm.edu.my

Abstract

Working environment is recognized as one of the contributing factors toward job satisfaction. Hence, a study was conducted to investigate the effects of working environment toward job satisfaction among a special group of government employees who were the uniformed personnel in Pulau Pinang. The researchers developed two research questions based on the conceptual framework comprised of two variables. Working environment as the independent variable consisted of five dimensions: working hours, job safety and security, relationship with co-workers, esteem needs and top management. Meanwhile, job satisfaction as the dependent variable comprised of three dimensions comprised of employee loyalty, efficiency and effectiveness as well as productivity were used in this study. Quota sampling technique was employed to invite 359 respondents with the aid of a set of questionnaires. Findings from this study revealed that all working environment's dimensions (working hours, job safety and security, relationship with co-workers, esteem needs and top management) were significantly associated with job satisfaction as the dependent variable. However, job safety and security were the only dimensions found to have no significant relationship with the dimensions of job satisfaction (employee loyalty, efficiency and effectiveness and productivity). Findings obtained from this study have consequently provided implications and suggestions for better future research. Among others, it is suggested that supervisors of these uniformed personnel should be more open to the subordinates and should have a more harmonious relationship with subordinates as this will influence their esteem needs as well as job satisfaction.

Keywords: Working environment, Esteem Needs, Job Satisfaction, Employee Loyalty.

1 Introduction:

It is reported that some organizations failed to recognize the importance of working environment as a means to enhance the level of employee satisfaction. Raziq and Maulabakhsh (2015) revealed that some organizations were internally weak and did not accomplish to take care of their employees' well-being especially working environment including social, cultural, organizational and environmental essentials (Saeed & Nasir, 2016). It was reported that employees spend most of their time at the workplace than their homes. Therefore, it is important for organizations to assist their employees by providing better working environment; the one that places employees in comfort and conducive working environment. According to Salunke (2015), maintaining good working environment is the most practical way to reduce sick leaves, minimizing turnover rates, and enhance the efficiency of individual employee's activities, job satisfaction and job performance. Neog & Barua (2014) agreed by saying that poor working environment will lead to job dissatisfaction

Working environment contributes a significant role in accomplishing and enhancing employee job satisfaction. A study conducted in Pakistan by Raziq and Maulabakhsh (2015) discovered that employees were apprehensive about their working environment especially in the areas of working hours, job safety

and security, relationships with co-workers, esteem needs and top management. According to Raziq and Maulabakhsh (2015), in order to achieve the standards and organizational objectives, employees need working environment that allowed them to work freely without any complications that might control them from performing their fullest potential.

This study was conducted at five selected uniformed authorities in Pulau Pinang, Malaysia, consisted of Fire and Rescue Department of Malaysia, Royal Malaysian Customs Department, Immigration Department of Malaysia, Royal Malaysia Police, and Road and Transport Department of Malaysia.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction refers to an attitude of employees about their task and work. Job satisfaction is imperative in maintaining and retaining employees in the organization. According to Salunke (2015), job satisfaction is fitting the right individual to the right job in the right culture and keeping them feel satisfied with their work. Job satisfaction is allied with personal feeling of accomplishment, whether it is quantitative or qualitative. Job satisfaction according to Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) is an effective and passionate reaction to various facets of one's job. In addition, Locke (1976) described job satisfaction as being an emotional response that results from the employee's perceived fulfillment of their needs and what they believe the companies have offered. Thus, job satisfaction as defined by Aydin and Ceylan (2009) referred to a mixed of affective response which employees received on the outcomes beyond their expectation and perception.

2.1.1 Employee Loyalty

Employee loyalty is defined as an individual being faithful to the achievement of the organization and believing that working for that organization is their greatest option (Iqbal, Tufail & Lodhi, 2015). Salunke (2015) noted that a great working environment could improve and maximize an employee's job satisfaction and minimize employee turnover. Relationship between supervisor or management with co-workers could directly affect employee well-being and engagement at workplace which influenced the timeframe for employees to decide whether to stay or not in the organization.

2.1.2 Efficiency and Effectiveness

Efficiency and effectiveness is defined as the capacity of employee to produce higher with greater quality in a given timeframe (Silva, 2014). An organization that comprises of extremely satisfied employees contributed to the operational effectiveness and ensuring the organizational persistence. It is different between the total time of productive task and job, and the time that employees spent to perform their particular task. Hence, achievement of a maximum level of employees' efficiency and effectiveness would always be the highest priority for organizational mission and goals. Inefficient employees are troublesome for the organization. In addition, these employees could be harmful to the whole performance capability of the organization in the long run.

2.1.3 Productivity

Productivity is described as one's job performance; it involves the behavior and action taken by an employee (Shobe, 2018). According to Tio (2014), employee's productivity is a crucial issue due to its relationship towards job satisfaction. It is worth to highlight that productivity is also related to employee working environment, as the effects can be both positive and negative. Salunke (2015) agreed that productivity can diminish as a result of employee working environment. The study also emphasized on

how working environment can greatly affect the employee's level of motivation and successive performance. By creating a good working environment, employees tend to be more productive and at the same time, increase profits for their organizations.

2.2 Working Environment

The success of an organization depends on its employees. Organization remarkable growth is depicted from among others, conducive working environment. Working environment demonstrates great impact in affecting job satisfaction among employees. According to Agzobo, Owusu, Hoedoafia and Atakorah (2017), work environment may affect both physical and mental well-being of employees. Working environment is described as the environment in which people work in a very wide category that incorporates the physical scenery (e.g. noise, equipment, heat), fundamentals of the job itself (e.g. workload, task, complexity), extensive business features (e.g. culture, history) and even extra business background (e.g. industry setting, workers relation) (Jain & Kaur, 2014). According to Lane, Esser, Holte, and Anne (2010), varied configurations of working environment such as wages, working hours, autonomy given to employees, organizational structure and communication between employees and management could affect job satisfaction.

2.2.1 Working Hours

Working hours is described as the key feature of working condition and determine the possibilities for employee to balance their work with their lives' spheres (Wanger, 2017). A study conducted on police officers in India by Rani, Garg and Rastorg (2012) revealed that they worked for a very long period to retain law and order in their country. Meanwhile, Sundaram and Kumaran (2012) conducted a similar study in India on female police officers. The researchers found that long working hours, lack of opportunity of advancement and inadequate salary had led to job dissatisfaction. This finding is supported by another study by Husain (2014) who also found that long working hours led to employee job dissatisfaction. Findings by Schultz and Schultz (1998) revealed that employee spent one third to one half of their hours at the workplace, for at least 40 to 45 years. As such conducive working environment is inevitable in helping employees to have greater job satisfaction.

2.2.2 Job Safety and Security

According to Badekale (2012), safety in the workplace can be defined as an organization's way of protecting their employees from any danger and threat of harm. As stated by Pousette, Larsman, Eklof, and Torner (2017), in order to guarantee the safety of employees, safety improvement interventions must be planned alongside organizational expansion. In essence, organizations should implement safety code of conduct that serves as guidelines to employees. As such, according to Choi & Loh (2017), training and education are important for the employees to understand and exercise workplace safety. This can help to ensure that employees have certain point of information and knowledge about the safety code which is set by the organization. Choi and Loh (2017) further reiterated that schedule of the security's maintenance must be organized in effective way to improve and increase the efficiency in discovering any future potential job safety and security issues.

2.2.3 Relationship with co-workers

According to Lin and Lin (2011), relationship with co-workers is the friendship, acceptance and loyalty between group members. Besides, co-worker's relationship is referred to the degree of trust, confidence and respect of subordinates to their leaders (Chen, 1989; Lin & Lin, 2011). Co-workers as defined by Yoon and Thye (2000) are people or individual who work together in a workplace and each holds a similar position at work. Hussin (2011), defined relationship with co-workers as individuals who are

sympathy, helpful, concern and advisor to their colleagues while Lin et al. (2011) stated that relationship with co-workers is referred to the friendship, acceptance and loyalty towards team members in organization. The greater the relationship with co-workers, the more satisfied employees feel, thus giving the organization a competitive advantage of having a dynamic workforce of happy and productive employees.

2.2.4 Esteem Needs

Esteem needs deliberated on the need for respect, self-esteem, and self-confidence. It also described as the origin for the human needs as we all have to be established and appreciated by others (Deterding, Dixon, Khaled & Nacke, 2011). Thus, esteem needs covered both self-aspect and gratitude. As stated by Mullins (2002), esteem needs can be defined as the confidence, strength, independence and freedom, and achievement as well as the reputation, status, recognition, attention and appreciation received at the workplace. Generally, in any typical organization, the more employees contribute to the company, the more reward and appreciation they received.

2.2.5 Top Management

Top management includes managers who serve at the top of the organizational hierarchy and are responsible for the entire organization (Enz & Grover, 1992). Top management is generally anticipated to display fairness to all employees. As reported by a study conducted by Clark (1997), when employees are dissatisfied with the tasks assigned to them, top management or supervisor is not the factor that influenced their satisfaction. Meanwhile, Lane, Esser, Holte, and Anne (2010) noted that supervisor or top management is the one of the bigger influences that affects employee job satisfaction.

3 Research Objectives and Hypothesis

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study on the relationship between working environment and job satisfaction. There are two research objectives formulated for this study which are:

1. To find out the relationship between working environment and job satisfaction and
2. To examine the effects of working environment towards job satisfaction.

Several hypotheses were also formulated for this study which are:

- H₁ There is a significant relationship between working hours and employee loyalty.
- H₂ There is a significant relationship between job safety and security and employee loyalty.
- H₃ There is a significant relationship between relationship with co-workers and employee loyalty.
- H₄ There is a significant relationship between esteem needs and employee loyalty.
- H₅ There is a significant relationship between top management and employee loyalty.
- H₆ There is a significant relationship between working hours and efficiency and effectiveness.
- H₇ There is a significant relationship between job safety and security and efficiency and effectiveness.

H₈ There is a significant relationship between relationship with co-workers and efficiency and effectiveness.

H₉ There is a significant relationship between esteem needs and efficiency and effectiveness.

H₁₀ There is a significant relationship between top management and efficiency and effectiveness.

H₁₁ There is a significant relationship between working hours and productivity.

H₁₂ There is a significant relationship between job safety and security and productivity.

H₁₃ There is a significant relationship between relationship with co-workers and productivity.

H₁₄ There is a significant relationship between esteem needs and productivity.

H₁₅ There is a significant relationship between top management and productivity.

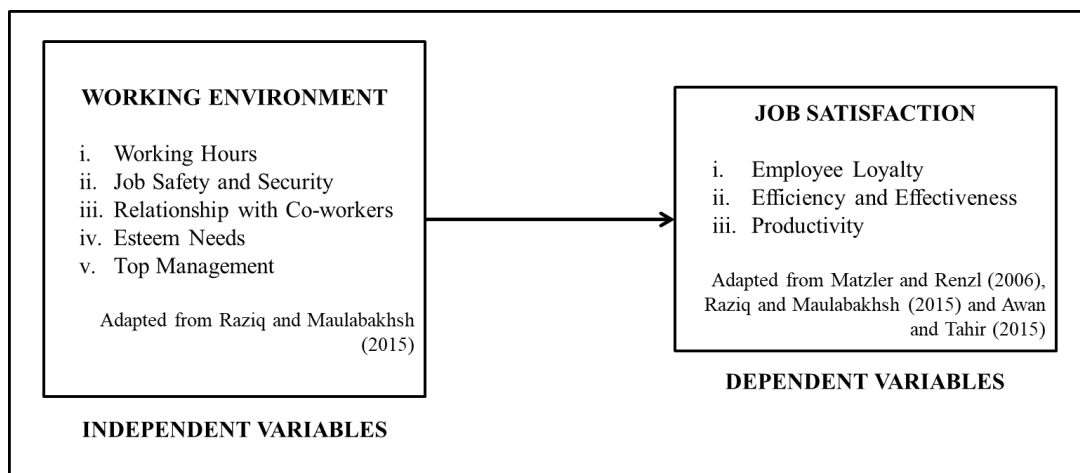


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework on the Relationship between Working Environment and Job Satisfaction

4 Methodology

The data were collected at five selected uniformed personnel offices in Pulau Pinang, Malaysia. The five selected government sectors were Fire and Rescue Department of Malaysia, Royal Malaysian Customs Department, Immigration Department of Malaysia, Royal Malaysia Police, and Road and Transport Department of Malaysia. In order to determine the sample size of this study, Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table was used as a reference to ascertain the correct sample size. The sample size suggested a minimum of 351 respondents as the potential population was 4000 employees. A quota sampling technique was used in collecting data from respondents. As highlighted by Sundram, Rajagopal, Atikah, Rohani, Nazura, and Akmal (2016), quota sampling is useful when the time is limited and detailed accuracy is not important. The instrument for working environment comprised of 23 items adopted in Raziq and Maulabakhsh (2015) while job satisfaction was measured by 16 items developed by Matzler and Renzl (2006), Raziq and Maulabakhsh (2015) and Awan and Tahir (2015), encompassing a total of 39 items for a complete instrument for both working environment and job satisfaction. Descriptive, correlation and multiple regression analyses were used to analyze the data in order to answer the objectives of this study.

5 Results and Discussion

5.1 Reliability Analysis

Zamalia (2009) mentioned that reliability refers to the degree the measures of questions are free from errors and lead to consistent results. Besides, reliability analysis is performed to check whether the items in the questionnaire are reliable for the actual study. According to Sekaran (2006), the value of alpha level of more than 0.6 will result in the instrument being reliable. The reliability analysis derived from the actual data is shown in Table 1 below. The results show that the Cronbach's Alpha for independent variable and dependent variable are above minimum 0.7, indicating the reliability of these measures.

Table 1: Reliability Analysis (Actual Data)

Variables	Scales	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Independent variables	Working Hours	3	.767
	Job Safety and Security	3	.784
	Relationship with Co-workers	5	.820
	Esteem Needs	3	.628
	Top Management	6	.900
Dependent variables	Employee Loyalty	5	.865
	Efficiency and Effectiveness	6	.811
	Productivity	5	.743

5.2 Pearson Correlation Analysis

The Pearson Correlation Coefficient was applied to determine the relationship between working environment and job satisfaction among uniformed personnel at selected government departments in Pulau Pinang, Malaysia. The findings from this analysis were used in order to determine whether the hypotheses of the study were supported or not. The researchers used a guideline developed by Cohen (1988) to explain the strength of the relationship of the variables in terms of the value of Pearson Correlation (r) and the direction of the relationship for the variables used in the study (Refer to Table 2).

Table 2: Interpretation of correlation coefficient (Cohen, 1988)

Degree of Correlation	r-Values
Small	-0.10 to -0.29 and +0.10 to +0.29
Medium	-0.30 to -0.49 and +0.30 to +0.49
Large	-0.50 to - 1.00 and +0.50 to +1.00

Findings

Table 3 shows the findings on the correlation between working environment and job satisfaction in selected government sectors in Pulau Pinang. It was found that there was a medium, significant and positive relationship between Working Environment and Job Satisfaction among uniformed personnel in Pulau Pinang ($r=0.388$, $p<0.01$). Hence, research objective one was answered.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis between Working Environment and Job Satisfaction

		Working Environment	Job Satisfaction
Working Environment	Pearson Correlation	1	.388**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	359	359

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

The researchers further investigated the dimensions under Working Environment (Working Hours, Job Safety and Security, Relationship with Co-workers, Esteem Needs and Top Management) against the sub-variables of the dependent variable, which is Job Satisfaction (Employee Loyalty, Efficiency and Effectiveness and Productivity). The findings as displayed in Table 4 revealed that for employee loyalty, it was found that there were positive and small relationships between working hours ($r=.115$, $p<.05$), relationship with co-workers ($r=.277$, $p<.01$), and esteem needs ($r=.110$, $p<.05$). Meanwhile, top management dimension had a positive and medium relationship with employee loyalty ($r=.376$, $p<.01$). As for efficiency and effectiveness, it was found that there were positive and small relationships between working hours ($r=.154$, $p<.01$) and relationship with co-workers ($r=.215$, $p<.01$). Further, it was also found that esteem needs and top management dimensions had positive, significant and medium relationships with efficiency and effectiveness dimension ($r=.316$, $p<.05$; $r=.322$, $p<.01$ respectively). In addition, for productivity dimension, there were positive and small relationships between esteem needs ($r=.239$, $p<.01$) and top management ($r=.274$, $p<.01$). Meanwhile, relationship with co-workers was found to have positive significant medium relationship with productivity dimension ($r=.312$, $p<.01$). Beside all of the significant relationships discovered in this study, job safety and security dimensions of the independent variable were found to have no significant relationship to any dimension of job satisfaction as in employee loyalty, efficiency and effectiveness and productivity ($r=.048$, $p>.05$; $r=-.048$, $p>.05$; $r=.084$, $p>.05$ respectively). The same goes with working hour dimension, this study found that there was no significant relationship between the dimension and productivity dimension of job satisfaction ($r=.077$, $p>.05$).

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Analysis

Variable(s)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Working Environment								
Working Hours	1							
Job Safety and Security	-.011	1						
Relationship with Co-workers	-.005	.042	1					
Esteem Needs	.116*	-.093	.287**	1				
Top Management	.275**	.060	.316**	.273**	1			
Job Satisfaction								
Employee Loyalty	.115*	.048	.277**	.110*	.376**	1		
Efficiency and Effectiveness	.154**	-.048	.215**	.316*	.322**	.261**	1	
Productivity	.077	.084	.312**	.239**	.274**	.236**	.616**	1

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

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).”

5.3 Multiple Regression Analysis

The findings from the regression analysis between working environment (working hours, job safety and security, relationship with co-workers, esteem needs, top management) and job satisfaction (employee loyalty, efficiency and effectiveness and productivity) are displayed in Table 5 below. The results indicated that R^2 was at .261, in which all sub-variables of the independent variables (working hours, job safety and security, relationship co-workers, esteem needs and top management) explained 26.1% of the variance in employees' job satisfaction. Besides the value of Durbin-Watson was at 1.700 which in the range of 1.5 to 2 as one of the assumptions for bivariate correlation analysis. Besides, collinearity statistics indicated that the results met the requirement for regression with value of $VIF < 10$, tolerance $> .1.7$

From the results of this analysis, the researchers found that top management ($\beta = .326$, $p < .05$), relationship with co-workers ($\beta = .220$, $p < .05$) and esteem needs ($\beta = .112$, $p < .05$) were the predictors of job satisfaction among uniformed personnel. Therefore, the findings from this study indicated that top management, relationship with co-workers and esteem needs can significantly influence uniformed personnel's job satisfaction.

Table 5: Multiple Regression Analysis

Independent Variable(s)	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
Working Hours	.052	1.091	.276	.910	1.099
Job Safety and Security	.022	.485	.628	.980	1.020
Relationship with Co-workers	.220	4.408	.000	.843	1.186
Esteem Needs	.112	2.272	.024	.864	1.158
Top Management	.326	6.358	.000	.794	1.259
R Square	.261				
F	24.969				
Sig. F Change	.000				
Durbin-Watson	1.700				

a. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction

Based on the findings for research objective two, the researchers concluded that uniformed personnel's job satisfaction can be significantly influenced by three areas which are top management support, relationship with co-workers and employees' esteem needs. This finding is also supported by previous research conducted by Raziq and Maulabakhsh (2015), who highlighted that top management role and support had significant and positive relationship towards police job satisfaction. Top management plays a crucial role in the organization in a way that they need to hear the voices and the needs of lower level employees as they are the ones who are involved in the operational activities of the department. It is also vital for the top management to have a clear chain of command. With better supervision, employee job satisfaction is enhanced. Brough & Pears (2004) also found that job satisfaction was associated with supervision and relationship with co-workers.

This result of the study is also supported by a study conducted by Cahill and Sias (1997) in which it was discovered that employees established relationship with co-workers in order to seek comfort and social support. Hence, a supportive working environment as well as supportive co-workers at the workplace are favorable in increasing employee job satisfaction. In relation to esteem needs, Raziq and Maulabakhsh (2015) also found that it had significant and positive relationship with job satisfaction.

Table 6 reports the summarized findings of hypotheses developed for the study. Four hypotheses were not supported while eleven others were supported. It is interesting to report that the element of job safety and security did not have any relationships with all three dimensions under Job Satisfaction which were employee loyalty, efficiency and effectiveness and productivity. It is understood that government jobs are generally secured and that employees will remain to work for the government for a long time.

Table 6: Hypotheses Findings

No.	Hypotheses	Results
H ₁	There is a significant relationship between working hours and employee loyalty.	Supported ($r = .115^*$, $p < .05$)
H ₂	There is a significant relationship between job safety and security and employee loyalty.	Not Supported ($r = .048$, $p < .01$)
H ₃	There is a significant relationship between relationship with co-workers and employee loyalty.	Supported ($r = .277^{**}$, $p < .01$)
H ₄	There is a significant relationship between esteem needs and employee loyalty.	Supported ($r = .110^*$, $p < .05$)
H ₅	There is a significant relationship between top management and employee loyalty.	Supported ($r = .376^{**}$, $p < .01$)
H ₆	There is a significant relationship between working hours and efficiency and effectiveness.	Supported ($r = .154^{**}$, $p < .01$)
H ₇	There is a significant relationship between job safety and security and efficiency and effectiveness.	Not Supported ($r = -.048$, $p < .01$)
H ₈	There is a significant relationship between relationship with co-workers and efficiency and effectiveness.	Supported ($r = .215^{**}$, $p < .01$)
H ₉	There is a significant relationship between esteem needs and efficiency and effectiveness.	Supported ($r = .316^*$, $p < .01$)
H ₁₀	There is a significant relationship between top management and efficiency and effectiveness.	Supported ($r = .322^{**}$, $p < .01$)
H ₁₁	There is a significant relationship between working hours and productivity.	Not Supported ($r = .077$, $p < .01$)
H ₁₂	There is a significant relationship between job safety and security and productivity.	Not Supported ($r = .084$, $p < .01$)
H ₁₃	There is a significant relationship between relationship with co-workers and productivity.	Supported ($r = .312^{**}$, $p < .01$)
H ₁₄	There is a significant relationship between esteem needs and productivity.	Supported ($r = .239^{**}$, $p < .01$)
H ₁₅	There is a significant relationship between top management and productivity.	Supported ($r = .274^{**}$, $p < .01$)

6 Recommendations and Conclusion

Several recommendations are derived from this study to improve working environment towards job satisfaction among uniformed personnel:

1. Top management needs to ensure that employees are clear with their tasks given. Briefings, problems or issues must be addressed at the beginning so that the employees can conduct their jobs efficiently. Top management must be more considerate when assigning task to the lower level employees.

2. Good relationship with co-workers is vital in enhancing job satisfaction at the workplace. This is because, relationship with co-workers and supervisors can highly influence job satisfaction among uniformed personnel. Hence, the researchers believed that employees can be more productive if they had a strong relation among co-workers and with their supervisors.

3. It is further recommended for employees to have a balanced work-life between their personal and professional career. Uniformed personnel are exposed to harmful working environment such as apprehending criminals and non-law abiding citizens. Hence, both supervisors and employees should have a supporting work environment so that stress can among them is manageable.

7 Acknowledgement

The researchers would like to express a deepest appreciation to five selected government offices, which are the Fire and Rescue Department of Malaysia, Royal Malaysian Customs Department, Immigration Department of Malaysia, Royal Malaysia Police, and Road and Transport Department of Malaysia in Pulau Pinang for their great cooperation. The researchers also would like to thank the Research Management Institute of Universiti Teknologi MARA for partial funding of this study.

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- Agbozo (2017) drawn on an extensive range of sources in the past research into working environment factor which as addressed on job satisfaction as majority of the employee suffering from problems associated with their supervisor. The problem came from the top management where supervisor treated their employees badly without considerate employee's feeling. A strong relationship between top management and job satisfaction has been reported where 89.5% explained that top management support play an essential role in ensuring employee job satisfaction in organization (Lankeshwara, 2016).