



The Management of Impact and Interplay of Spousal Relationships on Work Engagement: a Study in International Transnational Education Association

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ABSTRACT :

Abstract: This study examines the influence of marital relationships on work engagement and interaction management in the context of the International Transnational Educational Association (ITEA). The study investigates how legally recognized marital dynamics affect employee work engagement. Work engagement is defined as a positive state of mind characterized by enthusiasm, dedication, and commitment to one's work. The study is specifically based on the legal framework of employment in Indonesia. Historically, Indonesian law has prohibited partners from working in the same company. However, a recent constitutional ruling has challenged this restriction and allowed for a re-evaluation of workplace policies related to couple work. The study used a qualitative methodology and included in-depth interviews with four married participants working in different departments within the same workplace. The results demonstrate the importance of healthy relationships between men and women in increasing emotional support, reducing stress, and improving overall job satisfaction and performance. By aligning and encouraging human resource management practices within the context of the realities of personal relationships, companies can develop better engaged and productive employees. The study contributes to the understanding of work-life balance and highlights the importance of supportive workplace policies for improving employee well-being and organizational success.

Keywords : *Work involvement, husband-wife relationship, transnational education, human resource management, International Transnational Education Association.*

1. INTRODUCTION :

1.1 Background

Employment law is a principle that regulates everything related to policies and activities in carrying out work. We need to know that there are several laws that the author will discuss as a basis for thinking about the theme in the journal that the author analyzes. Law Number 39 of 1999 concerning Human Rights (HAM) stipulates that (1) Every citizen, in accordance with their talents, skills and abilities, has the right to decent work. (2) Everyone has the right to freely determine the work they like and also has the right to fair employment conditions.[1][3] The Manpower Law No. 13 of 2003 of the Republic of Indonesia is the basis for business owners' decisions not to allow couples with legal husband and wife status to work in the same office. The right to marry a co-worker who also works in the same

office is limited by a condition set by a number of companies, both government and private. Article 153 Paragraph 1 Letter f of Law Number 13 of 2003 concerning Manpower is one of the policies in the legislation that regulates the prohibition. The article allows termination of employment caused by the emergence of a husband or wife relationship between employees.[2][3]

According to *Ni Komang et al (2023)* The elimination of the prohibition on employees who are legally husband and wife working at the same company is in accordance with the Constitutional Court Decision Number 13/PUU-XV/2017. [4] The Constitutional Court's decision on the material review of Article 153 paragraph (1) letter f of the Manpower Law was granted by the Constitutional Court Decision No. 13/PUU-XV/2017. [5] The panel of judges decided that the

article was contrary to the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. The Human Rights Law, especially paragraph (1) of Article 10 in "everyone has the right to form a family and continue their descendants through a legal marriage", and the 1945 Constitution and Article 28 B paragraph (1), "everyone has the right to form a family and continue their descendants through a legal marriage" . According to Decision Number 13/PUU-XV/2017, a legal marriage can only be carried out at the will of the parties involved in it and in accordance with applicable laws and regulations . Apart from that, paragraph (2) of Article 28D states: "everyone has the right to work and receive fair and proper compensation and treatment in employment relations" . Thus, the Employment Law does not regulate employment contract agreements between employees in the same company which prohibit marriage or legal husband and wife relations . [6][7][8]

According to Noe et al (2010) in his book entitled Employee Training and Development, Human Resource Management is a regulation, practice and system that influences employee behavior, attitudes and performance. [9] Human Resource Management (HRM) involves the formulation and implementation of systems , namely recruitment , assessment performance, and compensation that is aligned with the organization's strategy to ensure that employees have the competencies and behaviors necessary to achieve the organization's strategic goals. It is essential that the Human Resources strategy (HR) is aligned with the plan company strategy (Suparna & Noor , 2022) . [10]

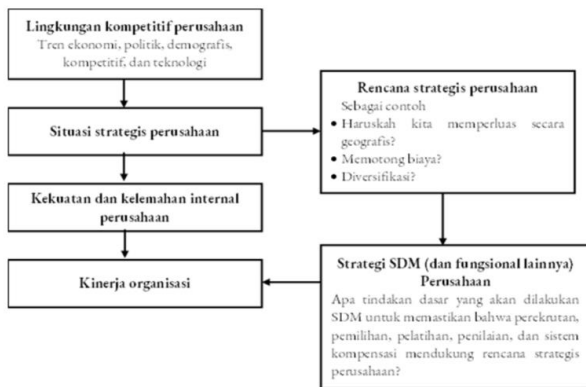


Figure 1.1 Linking Corporate Strategy and HR

Human Resource Management (HRM) has undergone changes from time to time and take an important role in the company . The role of staff in Human Resources (HR) has changed. HR practices have been built and influenced by beliefs and attitudes employees related to the rights of all employees. Economic conditions , government , globalization , labor market problems, technology, and environmental

problems are some of the external factors of HR, while those that have a large impact are the internal factors that arise, namely the climate and culture of the organization and management practices, including the policy of employment contract agreements between employees who have the status of legal husband and wife who work in the same company.

The International Transnational Education Association (ITEA), established in 2022 and officially launched during the “Opening Ceremony of the 2022 China-ASEAN Education Cooperation Week,” jointly organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, the Ministry of Education of China, and the People’s Government of Guizhou Province, brings together organizations and institutions in the field of transnational education. Registered in the UK, ITEA works closely with vocational training councils, education authorities, and industry alliances such as the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road Vocational Education Alliance. ITEA serves as a platform for international cooperation, knowledge exchange, and cultural engagement, promoting transnational education globally. [11]

Mission: Fostering Transnational Cooperation To promote and advance transnational education globally by facilitating cooperation, sharing best practices, advocating for its recognition, and supporting its members in delivering high-quality education programs across borders and aims: Facilitate the exchange of knowledge and best practices among countries, institutions, and stakeholders involved in transnational education.

Promoting Quality Education to promote the quality and standards of transnational education programs through the development of guidelines and accreditation processes.

As a Regulatory Advocacy in Advocating for the recognition and regulation of transnational education at the national and international levels. International Transnational Education Association (ITEA) until 2024 has partners spread across 60 countries with 1 head office in Malaysia, 6 offices in China and 2 offices in Indonesia. With a total of 184 employees from several countries including: Malaysia, China, Nigeria, Pakistan, Uzbekistan and Indonesia. Implementation of policies, practices and systems that influence employee behavior, attitudes and performance at the International Transnational Education Association (ITEA), namely:

1.2 Policy

1.2.1 Human Resource Management Policy

In recruitment and selection: implementing a transparent and fair process in recruiting new employees according to their abilities in their placement. Focusing on diversity and inclusion in recruitment to build a solid international department in increasing creativity and innovation.

Career development: Providing clear career paths and training for professional development support to increase employee motivation to contribute more.

1.2.2 Work-life balance implementation policy:

Work Flexibility: allowing employees to have 5 days of flexible working hours and remote working options can help them balance personal and professional commitments.

Leave and Vacation: Supportive leave policies, including maternity leave, sick leave, and annual leave for employees with more than 2 years of service to maintain employee well-being.

Training Program: Periodically provide education to employees about the importance of diversity and inclusion helps build a positive work environment respecting differences, creating a work environment that respects each other.

1.3 PRACTICE

1.3.1 Training and Development

Orientation Program: Orientation training for new employees to help adapt to the organizational culture and understand each role clearly and accelerate the process of adaptation and project integration .

Ongoing Training: Men support ongoing training or workshops in skills development both online and offline so as to provide employees with the opportunity to continue learning and advancing in their careers.

1.3.2 Feedback System

Regular Performance Appraisal: Conducting performance evaluations periodically, namely weekly, monthly and annually, which allows employees to get quick feedback and opens up an approach for discussing achievements and challenges faced .

feedback : Giving employees the opportunity to get input from their superiors, coworkers, and subordinates can provide a more comprehensive view of an individual's performance.

1.3.3 Team Activities and Culture Development

Team Bounding : Organizing offsite activities to build teamwork to strengthen interpersonal relationships and communication among team members.

Awards and Recognition: Implementing a bonus system as a reward to celebrate employee achievements to increase motivation and encourage employees to work harder for better achievements.

1.4 SYSTEM

1.4.1 Performance Management System

Performance Assessment: Integrating Google Sheets in performance management that integrates individual goals with organizational goals allows all parties to have a clear direction and focus on achievement while seeing progress to increase accountability and responsibility.

1.4.2 Internal Communication System

Employee Portal: Integrates digital communication applications and Google spreadsheets and allows important information, announcements, and resources to be easily accessible to all employees.

Regular Team Meetings: Conduct regular team meetings daily, weekly, monthly and annually to discuss progress and challenges while helping to ensure all employees are on the same page.

1.4.3 Technology System

Team Collaboration Tools : Using a communication application that is integrated with Google Sheets can facilitate communication and collaboration between team members, especially in a multitasking work environment.

Project Management System : Implement a good project management system to help the team plan , execute, and track work progress more efficiently.

Overall Impact

Employee Behavior: Policies that support increased sense of belonging and loyalty, which can reduce absenteeism and employee turnover rates.

Employee Attitudes: Employees who feel supported in their professional development will have positive attitudes towards their work and the organization.

Employee Performance: Employees who are engaged and feel valued tend to deliver higher performance, innovate, and solve problems more effectively.

By combining all of these policies, practices, and systems, the International Transnational Education Association (ITEA) can create a work environment that is not only productive but also enjoyable for all employees .

Couple relationships can have a significant impact on individual well-being and performance at work. Previous studies by Allen and Kauffman (2021) showed that healthy relationships can increase productivity and job satisfaction. In the context of the International Transnational Education Association , the ability to manage the interaction between personal life and professional life is crucial to the success of the entire program . This study aims to investigate how husband and wife relationships in work life affect the work engagement of ITEA employees . " [12]

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Concept of Work Engagement

Job involvement is defined as a positive mental state of affect that includes strength, high dedication, and absorption in work (Schaufeli et al., 2002). [13] Job involvement can also be defined and measured in seeing and reviewing the extent to which employees are committed to a project being run or behavior to coworkers in the organization, and how strong or dedicated they are to work, the strength to survive and maintain work in the organization (corporate leadership council, 2004b).[14]

2.2 Husband and Wife Relationship Theory

In Social Regulation theory indicates that positive couple relationships can provide emotional support, which can affect stress reduction and mental health improvement (Bodenmann, 2005). [15] Good relationship quality is determined by effective communication, trust, and strong support (Roberts et al., 2020). [16]

2.3 Mediation and moderation factors

The importance of social support in enhancing work engagement can be attributed to a variety of factors, including perceived stress, work-life conflict, and overall satisfaction and quality of life (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). Knowledge of these factors contributes to a better understanding of interpersonal dynamics in the workplace. [17]

3. METHODOLOGY

This study uses qualitative methods to study and provide a comprehensive picture of the relationship between the dynamics of a couple, namely a legal husband and wife relationship and its influence on work involvement. Qualitative research is a type of research that aims to understand how to regulate conditions experienced from a person's experience (Willig, 2008). [18] Through qualitative methods, it is expected that information and behavioral descriptions observed in research participants can be described in depth in a certain context studied from a measurable, complete, universal, and unified perspective (Rahmat, 2009). [19]

Data collection was carried out by individually recording data from 4 participants who were husband and wife. The time for data collection was adjusted to a close time, namely in the period of October 2024 with a duration of 20-30 minutes for each participant. The researcher first looked for participants who met the predetermined criteria with purposive sampling and tried to build rapport before data collection began. Before collecting data, the researcher first prepared a research instrument which was a guideline for collecting data, then the results of the interviews that had been recorded were then made in verbatim form, then analyzed.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

All names of participants in this study are pseudonymous. Participants in this study a total of 4 people who are husband and wife who work together in one office in the same country and region, but in different divisions. Here is a general description of each participant.

Table 1. Overview of participants

No	Name	Age	Domicile	Division	Position	Duration of work	Remarks Personal Relationship
1	Nici Liu	34	Chengdu, China	International Department	Head of Department China Office	> 5 years	Jeff Zhang Wife
2	Jeff Zhang	35	Chengdu, China	Enterprise Cooperation Department	Head of Department China Office	> 5 years	Nici Liu Husband
3	Cynka	37	Yogyakarta, Indonesia	International Department	Head of Department Indonesia Office	< 5 years	Wife Amo
4	Amo	41	Yogyakarta, Indonesia	Consular Department education	Department Head Indonesia Office	< 5 years	Husband Cynka

Participant overview 1 (Nici Liu)

Nici Liu is 34 years old from Chengdu, China. Became a full-time employee and started leading the International Department for the China Office since

2009. is the wife of Jeff Zhang. Has 1 child who is 2 years old. Nici Liu works with Jeff Liu in the China office working with Jeff Zhang in different divisions. Initially Nici Liu supervised the International

Department from Malaysia and China, but since 2020 has supervised employees from several countries, namely Malaysia, China, Nigeria, Pakistan, Uzbekistan and Indonesia. Communicates with overlapping projects with Jeff Zhang every daily, weekly, monthly, and annual meeting.

Overview of participant 2 (Jeff Zhang)

Jeff Zhang is 35 years old and comes from Chengdu, China. He has been a full-time employee and started leading the International Department for the China Office since 2018. He is the husband of Nici Liu. They have 1 child who is 2 years old. Jeff Zhang works with Nici Liu in the China office in different divisions. Jeff Zhang oversees cooperation between China Enterprise and overseas institutions. Communicate with overlapping projects with Jeff Zhang every daily, weekly, monthly, and annual meeting.

Overview of participant 3 (Cynka)

Cynka is 37 years old and lives in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Became a full-time employee and started leading the International Department for the Indonesia Office since 2020 is the wife of Amo. Has 3 children aged 14, 12 and 10 years old. Cynka works with Amo in the Indonesia office in different divisions. Cynka leads the International Department whose entire team is from Indonesia. Communicates with projects that overlap with Amo every daily, weekly, monthly, and annual meeting.

Overview of participant 4 (Amo)

Amo is 41 years old and lives in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. He has been a full-time employee and started leading the Education Consular Department for the Indonesia Office since 2020. He is the husband of Cynka. He has 3 children aged 14, 12, and 10. Amo works with Cynka in the Indonesia office in different divisions. Amo oversees the Education Department where his team comes from Malaysia and Indonesia. Communicates with projects that overlap with Cynka every daily, weekly, monthly, and annual meeting.

Summary of interview results to participants with the development of questions related to conditions, challenges, and solutions in work involvement involving their respective partners in the workplace. All of them are directions to explore individual experiences and views on the dynamics of working with a partner in a professional environment, this is shown in the following explanation:

Adapting to Dynamic Working Conditions

Participants such as Nici Liu and Jeff Zhang emphasized that working with a partner provides benefits in communication. In this case, it was found that mutual understanding between partners who work in the same office allows for more effective conversations on work projects while also resulting in faster problem-solving efficiency and more teamwork.

It is difficult to distinguish the professional aspect from the personal aspect.

Each participant admitted that it was difficult to adjust and differentiate personal relationships from the professional aspects of work. Nici Liu and several others said that there were times when the burdensome work pressure affected personal relationships especially when meeting at work. There were several suggestions from participants that in order to avoid conflict, the time for work and time for personal life should be separated and clearly regulated.

Communication and Division of Responsibility

Participants who participated emphasized the importance of open communication when assigning tasks. Nici Liu and Jeff Zhang stated that giving and clear division of workload helps avoid and suppress conflicts that arise. Participants said that holding regular meetings or gatherings to discuss responsibilities in each project can help increase mutual respect and honesty between partners.

Emotional Support and Motivation

The participants agreed that working in the same work environment with a partner offers an advantage and benefit in the form of great emotional support. When one of the partners faces difficulties, the other partner can help improve overall motivation and work ethic. This can lead to maximum engagement in the workplace.

Conflict and Resolution

Participants agree that conflict in work relationships is very difficult and unavoidable. However, this shows that the way to solve problems involves more open conversations where each other's opinions are highly valued. When dealing with conflicts that occur, Jeff Zhang emphasizes that it is crucial to keep work issues that arise from personal relationships.

Co- worker Perception

Co-workers' perceptions and perspectives were also an important part of the participants' experiences. Some participants said that they were initially skeptical about the dynamics of their workplace partners, but over time they came to appreciate the synergy and communication that resulted from the relationship.

Hope for the Future

Each participant expressed the same hope for their respective professional advancement in the future . This was shown in the participants' confidence that the working relationship could open up more opportunities by building significant projects and the possibility of developing joint businesses.

The findings from these interviews revealed that to face, overcome and manage the various emotional and practical aspects when collaborating with a partner at work requires the following:

Effective Communication: Participants stated that transparent communication with sincerity plays a vital role in fostering a measured and constructive working relationship between partners. Engaging in open and intense conversations and discussions allows for issues to be addressed before they escalate and escalate into larger disputes.

Managing Emotions and Setting Boundaries between Personal and Professional: To prevent unnecessary conflicts and establish a healthy relationship between partners, it is important to establish, define and discuss a clear distinction between personal time and work time. One strategy used to achieve this balance is an agreement between the participants not to discuss work-related issues at home.

Team Engagement and Emotional Support: The presence of a spouse in the workplace adds value through emotional support. This support can increase motivation and engagement in dealing with challenges and stress at work, especially when compared to scenarios where employees do not have such support. [20]

Environmental Perception and Adaptation: Coworkers' perspectives on workplace couple relationships can vary. Jeff's experience shows that delivering results and

increasing productivity can change an unfavorable view into a favorable one.

Innovation and Project Development for the future : The combination of experiences and ideas between partners in the workplace not only helps to get the job done better and more efficiently , but also paves the way for the development of future innovations .

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study suggests that managing the effects of partner relationships in the workplace requires a balance of personal and professional dynamics. The participants' experiences suggest that working with a partner depends not only on technical skills, but also on the ability to communicate well and overcome personal and professional boundaries. The difficulty in separating these aspects suggests that the work environment or organization should also provide encouragement to coworkers. Organizations can provide training on communication and conflict management to help each partner become more efficient in their professional roles and emphasize the need for emotional support and effective collaboration that may arise from partner relationships in the workplace context. Therefore, deeper insights into how such reciprocal relationships affect work engagement and work output can provide very useful guidelines for human resource management practices in organizations. [21][22]

Examining couples' experiences in the workplace suggests that managing these relationships can improve employee productivity and engagement. By implementing the above recommendations, managers can create a collaborative work environment that benefits not only individuals but also the organization as a whole. Future research in this area could expand our understanding of personal relationships in professional contexts and show how they can be better integrated into organizational policies and practices. [21][22]

RECOMMENDATION

4.1 For management

Personal Relationship Management Training: Organization managers should provide training to employees on how to manage personal relationships, namely husband-wife relationships in the workplace, including effective communication strategies and conflict resolution.

This allows employees to strengthen personal relationships while maintaining professionalism.

Flexible Work Policy: Implementing a flexible work policy that allows employees to adjust their work schedules can help couples balance work hours and collaboration opportunities without interfering with personal time.

Promote inclusive team activities: Management should support and encourage social and inclusive team activities. After-hours activities aimed at building relationships between employees can improve the overall team dynamic.

Creating a Culture of Openness: Managers must foster an open and inclusive culture in the workplace. Organize open communication sessions and forums where employees can voice their opinions on the work dynamics they face.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Regularly evaluating the dynamics of the relationship between employees as a married couple to ensure that work is going well and provide constructive feedback. This will help the management team understand new dynamics that may emerge over time and provide employees who are married couples with the support they need so that they are not afraid to make decisions can minimize distrust and increase overall team trust. [22] [23]

4.2 For further research

Multinational Research: Further research could be conducted to examine the experiences of married couples in the same workplace in different cultures and countries. The way companies support these relationships varies depending on their social and cultural context.

Long-term effects: Further research into the long-term effects of working with a partner in the same workplace and how this relationship impacts job satisfaction, employee retention, and productivity could further our understanding .

Gender Roles in Couple Dynamics: further research can explain how gender roles influence couples' experiences and interactions in the workplace. This broadens the horizon of how men and women approach the same situations differently.

Impact on mental health: Further research into the impact of marital relationships on employees'

psychological health, including stress, job satisfaction, and possible burnout experienced by dual-earner couples.

Conflict Management Mechanisms: To gain a deeper understanding, examining the specific conflict management strategies and mechanisms used by couples in the workplace can provide useful insights for future management practices.

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