

Work-Family Conflict and Family-Work Conflict on Worker's Work Roles Effectiveness in the Call Centre Industry in Klang Valley: A Comprehensive Model

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Abstract

Call Centre industry has been the most challenging and yet highly stressful environment work place. Call Centre are known implementing high target as well as rotating shift pattern that further challenges by causing conflicts on the employee's focus between work and family. This study will focus on work-family conflict challenges and solutions among employees and organizations in the Malaysia on the Asian context. Is it imperative to find the relationship between work and family with the employee's Job Role, Career Role, Innovation Role, Team Role, and Organization Role. The research will adopt the quantitative approach using the survey (through a structured questionnaire). Primary data for this research will be collected from original sources through distribution of questionnaires to employees of call centre organizations in Klang Valley. The findings are expected to benefits the employee's, the human resource professional and the organization itself.

Keywords: work-family conflict, family-work conflict; work roles effectiveness; employee's

INTRODUCTION

In the current global economy, the lines between work and home are blurring as technology reshapes the workplace and the nature of home life evolves. In organizations, the challenge of work-life balance is rising to the top of many employers' and employees' consciousness. In today's fast-paced society, human resource professionals seek options to positively impact the bottom line of their companies, improve employee morale, retain employees with valuable company knowledge, and keep pace with workplace trends. A previous research by Lockwood (2009), HR Content Expert for the Society for Human Resource Management state that there are three factors: 1) global competition 2) personal lives-family values and 3) an aging workforce that present challenges that exacerbate work-life balance. This research will offer a perspective to human resource professionals in their effort to assist their companies to capitalize on these factors by using work-life initiatives to gain a competitive advantage in the marketplace.

According to Ulrike (2016), a well-lived life is about being a good worker, good parent, and good daughter or son—about being able to fulfill many different responsibilities and pursue various talents, so that the individual, the family, the workplace, and all of society benefit. A fair

and just society is one that gives everybody a chance and appreciates those who are performing vital tasks.

The purpose of this study is to examine the factors that contribute to the work and family life balance issues among employees in the Call Centre industry in Klang Valley and the effects on their work role effectiveness. Besides, this study will investigate the influence of moderating variables, (employee's demographic variables) on the relationship between work and family life balance and work role effectiveness.

Work-family conflict and family-work conflict if not managed properly is known has the ability to post conflicts of push and pull between work and family responsibilities in the employees. Each day employees face the dilemma of managing work obligations and personal/family responsibilities. It is interesting to study how organizations in Malaysia view this challenge and how they can come up with efforts to curb this issue. Study of previous research in the west has shown that most employees will resort to absenteeism or leave their job in the process of juggling their work-family conflict issue.

Significance of study

Work-family life conflict and family-work conflict has been a global phenomenon for quite some time. Previous researches were based mainly on employees and organizations in the west. However, for the purpose of this research will focus on work-family conflict challenges and solutions among employees and organizations in the Malaysia on the Asian context.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

Work-life balance history

The expression was first used in the late 1970s to describe the balance between an individual's work and personal life. The term "work/life balance" was coined in 1986, although its usage in everyday language was rare for a number of years. Interestingly in the west, work/life programs existed as early as the 1930s. Before World War II, the W.K. Kellogg Company created four six-hour shifts to replace the traditional three daily eight-hour shifts, and the new shifts resulted in increased employee morale and efficiency. (Society for Human Resource Management survey June 2009) Work-Life Balance: is a broad concept including proper prioritizing between career and ambition on one hand, compared with pleasure, leisure, family and spiritual development on the other.

Two types of stressors in this interface have been identified: work–family conflict (W–FCON) and family–work conflict (F–WCON). W–FCON emerges from job demands that interfere with performing home and family responsibilities (e.g., long work hours may prevent an individual from attending a special family occasion), and F–WCON stems from home and family responsibilities that interfere with carrying out job-related responsibilities (e.g., meeting with the

child's teacher may prevent an individual from performing his or her duties in the workplace) (Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996 in Scott et al, 2003).

Work-Family Conflict and Family-Work Conflict (WFC & FWC)

Heather, 2016 argues that resolving work–life conflicts is as vital for individuals and families as it is essential for realizing the country's productive potential. The federal government, however, largely ignores the connection between individual work–life conflicts and more sustainable economic growth. The consequence: business and government treat the most important things in life—health, children, elders—as matters for workers to care about entirely on their own time and dime. Conflict between work and family has become an increasingly popular topic in organizational research (Carlson and Kacmar, 2000; Frone et al., 1997a; Greenhaus and Powell, 2003; Netemeyer et al., 1996 in Scott et al, 2003). Such conflict between work and family domains promises to become even more relevant, given increases in the following: women entering the workforce, working single mothers, and the number of elderly requiring help from family (Ervin, 2000; Fullerton, 1999 in Scott et al, 2003). These trends potentially increase the chance that work and family roles could interfere with each other. Although some researchers have used global measures (e.g., Burke, 1988; Yang et al., 2000 in Scott et al, 2003), current research evidence suggests two distinct constructs, work-to-family conflict (WFC) and family-to-work conflict (FWC; e.g., Frone et al., 1992a, 1996; Gutek et al., 1991; Kossek and Ozeki, 1998 in Scott et al, 2003).

WFC occurs when work activities interfere with family responsibilities, and FWC occurs when family activities interfere with work responsibilities (Netemeyer et al., 1996 in Scott et al, 2003). Either WFC or FWC has been empirically linked to alcohol use, job and life satisfaction, career and family satisfaction, exhaustion, depression, and physical ailments (Adams et al., 1996; Beutell and Wittig-Berman, 1999; Frone et al., 1997a,b in Scott et al, 2003). However, relatively few studies have investigated whether both WFC and FWC relate to work behaviours (cf. Greenhaus et al., 2001; Kossek et al., 2001; Kossek and Nichol, 1992 in Scott et al, 2003). Clearly, nonattendance behaviours (i.e., absenteeism, leaving work early, and tardiness) can contribute to dysfunctional norms, cause disruption to staffing, and cost money (e.g., Rosse, 1988; Sagie, 1998; Harrison and Martocchio, 1998; Iverson and Deery, 2001 in Scott et al, 2003). Thus, managers would want to understand how WFC and FWC affect nonattendance to control or reduce these behaviours. Despite specific calls for research on nonattendance (Frone et al., 1992a, 1997a,b in Scott et al, 2003), few studies have tested these relationships. Gignac et al. (1996 in Scott et al, 2003) found a significant relationship for FWC and self-reported absenteeism, but none for WFC. Goff et al. (1990) in Scott et al, (2003) examined non-attendance and work–family conflict, but they used a global measure. Thus, the simultaneous relationships of WFC and FWC with absenteeism remain somewhat unclear. In addition, Hepburn and Barling (1996) in Scott et al, (2003) found that a composite index of leaving and tardiness were highly correlated with parent–work inter-role conflict. However, they confounded the two nonattendance behaviours and did not directly assess WFC or FWC.

Thus, no studies have assessed relationships of both WFC and FWC with work role effectiveness. The purpose of the current study is to extend the current work–family research by examining the relationships of both WFC and FWC to factors of employee work role effectiveness that is job role, career role, innovative role, team role, and organization role. Examining employee’s demographic and kinship responsibility (KR), important constructs from the work–family literature (Rothausen, 1999 in Scott et al, 2003), as possible moderators of the relationships.

Role Theory, Identity Theory and Performance Measurement

Theresa et al, (1998) has introduced a set of roles that should be measured by an instrument that focuses on measuring overall performance at work.

Role Theory

According to (Theresa et al, 1998) Role theory has been used effectively by researchers in psychology, social psychology, sociology, organizational behaviour, and human resource management since the early 1930’s. Multiple researchers from these various fields have concluded that roles play an important part in social structure (Mead, 1934; Turner, 1978), and roles have been recognized as central to understanding employee behaviour in organizations (Katz & Kahn, 1978). In the strictest sense, roles are positions within a social framework (Oeser & Harary, 1964) however, they also are defined by individuals who occupy them (Callero, Howard, & Piliavin, 1987; Oeser & Harary, 1964). According to role theory, individuals’s role expectations are influenced by both their personal attributes and the context in which they exist. Thus, role theory suggests that employee performance will be a function of both the individual and the organization. This theory represents a major advance in explaining performance since it combines a psychological (individual contributions) and a sociological (organization framework) perspective. In previous attempts to theoretically explain performance, researchers sought either individual predictors, neglecting to recognize that both can contribute simultaneously.

An important contribution of the role theory to the performance management is its ability to provide direction for avoiding measurement errors in performance appraisal tools. Although not using role theory specifically, researchers have suggested using roles as the basis for job descriptions as well as for specifying organizational expectations and performance requirements (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1992; Van Dyne, Cummings & Parks, 1995). Despite this recognition of the importance of the roles and the facts that employees choose to enact multiple roles in their organization, research has continued to measure employee performance as if one role job holder existed.

As a result, performance systems that rely on evaluating only those work behaviours defined by an organization as related to specific job may exhibit deficiency error. Role theory suggests that, to correct this measurement error, performance management systems need to account for multiple roles at work. In fact, researchers have recently begun to recognize the importance of using roles as a way to conceptualize work performance (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1992; Jackson & Schuler, 1995). Ilgen and Hollenbeck offered a theoretically based model of work roles that makes a major contribution toward viewing work performance from this perspective. These authors provided a comprehensive argument for the need to incorporate roles in a theory of work

performance. Their main claim is that the omission of roles, in any approach to performance, is a deficiency.

Although Theresa et al, (1998) concur with this view, they also argue that role theory only suggest roles as a way to conceptualize multiple behaviours at work; it does provide a way to define which dimensions of performance (or roles) should be included or excluded in a multi-dimensional measure of performance. The number of potential roles employees may take on at work is limitless. One theory that may help in understanding which roles should be measured in an instrument that focuses on behaviour at work is identity theory.

Identity Theory

Theresa et al, (1998) state that according to identity theory, it is not the existence of roles, but their saliency, that affects behaviour (Burke, 1991; Thoits, 1992). Identity suggests a process by which people use an internal control system to filter information. The likelihood that an event or information will trigger behaviour is associated with the saliency of a particular role (Thoits, 1991, 1992). According to Thoits, (1992) "The more salient the role identity is, the more the meaning, purpose and behavioural guidance the individual should derive from the its enactment" (1991:106). In other words, the roles that are most salient to people provide the strongest meaning or purpose. In turn, the more meaning that is derived from a role, the greater the behavioural guidance that ultimately leads to the enactment of behaviours associated with that role. Thus, organization can affect the behaviour of employees at work by influencing the saliency of work-related roles. Firms influence work-related role saliency in many different ways, including rewarding behaviours, requiring behaviours, formally and informally recognizing behaviours, and even punishing employee when roles are not enacted. Since different organization have different expectations of their employees, role saliency is most likely to be different across organizations. Because firms differ on the roles considered important for individual success, it has been difficult to create a generalizable performance measure applicable to all firms.

All the ways by which organizational influence role saliency should be explored to determine which roles are most appropriate to include in a performance measures, but a project of this size was beyond the scope of this study. Theresa et al, (1998) employed two additional criteria. First, one obvious method was employed by firms to encourage certain work roles, several compensation and roles that has been designed to elicit has been reviewed. Theresa et al, (1998) analysis has provided an exploratory foundation for establishing a basic role-based performance measure. Second, Theresa et al (1998) chose roles that have been emphasized by other researchers as important for other organizational success. Combined with role theory and identity theory, these two criteria provide five unique roles: job, organization, team, career and innovator.

Theresa et al, (1998) suggest that employees enact multiple roles beyond that of job holder (role theory) and employing identity theory, also suggested that roles that are considered important from organizational perspectives should be measured through a comprehensive assessment of employee performance. Compensation systems are tools organization use to communicate their intentions. Therefore, compensation provides a clue for uncovering which role should be measured at because they are one of the mechanisms by which firm communicate which

particular roles are considered important for the firm's success. Using this theoretical and empirical support, Theresa et al (1998) developed the Role-Based Performance Scale (RBPS).

Roles Included in the Role-Based Performance Scale (RBPS)

The job and organization roles

Theresa et al (1998) state found that in previous model of performance, the job and organization roles are easily identifiable as dimensions of work performance. Job holder role represent the traditionally held view of employee performance, whereas the organization member role parallels those behaviours associated with organizational citizenship behaviours associated with organizational behaviours (Organ, 1988). Although the job role has clearly been the most heavily researched over the last 60 years (Austin & Villanova, 1992), numerous studies have more recently investigated the importance of organizational or non-required work roles (Batemen & Organ, 1983; Borman & Motowidlo, 1993, 1997; Brief & Motowidlo, 1986; Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994). It has been demonstrated that employees enact both roles in the workplace. Moreover the job role is clearly supported by compensation systems (e.g., merit pay, individual bonus plans).

Theresa et al (1998) found that Welbourne and Cable (1995) recently applied identity theory to the study of group based incentives. Their researches only considered the jobholder role and the organization member role. Welbourne and Cable (1995) found that the saliency of job role was affected by the implementation of individually based incentive systems, such as merit pay, sales commission, or piece rate plans, but that the organization member role was influenced by the existence of group based incentive plans, such as profit sharing, gain sharing and stock options or grants. Theresa et al, (1998)

These initial findings provide evidence that different types of rewards affect the saliency of different roles enacted in at work. (Theresa et al, 1998) Expanding on this same logic, Theresa et al (1998) suggested that varying forms if compensation may encourage other types of role related behaviour at work. Three key roles was identified in addition to the job holder and organization member roles by reviewing the work of several authors who have emphasized the importance of these additional roles (e.g., Gerhart, MInkoff, & Olsen, 1995; Milkovich & Newman, 1990 in Theresa et al, 1998)

The Career Role

Theresa et al (1998) suggested that in addition to the job and organization member roles, there is a career role. Promotion systems reward individuals for career role. Promotion systems rewards individual for career accomplishment (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, & Wright, 1994). Another pay system that emphasizes the career role is skill based pay (Ledford, 1991). According to Theresa et al (1998) these pay program provide employees with the increases in their base pay when they participate in training and acquire new skills. Career role, however, should be considered in performance models for another important reason. It is commonly accepted that a new psychological contract is developing between employees and employers in which both share

responsibility for career planning (Miner, 1986). Many would argue that companies no longer can offer job security and promotion opportunities. Instead, the new psychological contract implies employers will provide a well-developed career program and that employees should attempt to increase their value to their employers by taking responsibilities for career planning (Noe et al, 1994 in Theresa et al., 1998). Thus, employers can emphasize the importance of career roles either directly, through compensation plans, or by providing career development for employees. This increased recognition of and emphasis on the joint career responsibility of employers and employees makes the career role an important one to consider in a model of performance. (Theresa et al., 1998)

The Team Role

Theresa et al, (1998) identified this second additional work role as of team member. Arguably, teamwork has been critical component of organizational performance for years; however, recognition of the importance of the team role as well as the use of teams in organizations has only increased over the last several years (Stevens & Campion, 1994 in Theresa et al., 1998). In fact, many of the new performance models have included teamwork as a vital component (Borman & Motowildo, 1997; Campbell, 1990 in Theresa et al, (1998). In addition, the compensation literature clearly provides evidence of the increasing reliance on teams in organizations. Gainsharing plans and team based incentives both support behaviours associated with being a team member Theresa et al, (1998). Theresa et al, (1998) also noted that gain sharing plan in which a business unit's financial performance gains are shared with its entire workforce reward behaviours associated with the organization member role (Welbourne & Cable, 1995 in Theresa et al., 1998). These pay systems also encourage cooperation among team members and between teams (Welbourne & Gomez-Mejia, 1995 in Theresa et al., 1998).

The Innovator Role

The fifth and final role included in Theresa et al.'s (1998) model of performance is that of innovator. Schein (1980) argued that if firms intend to remain competitive in a complex and changing environment, they must have employees who are creative on behalf of an entire organization, not just creative in their jobs. This argument implies that employees need to behave in innovative ways, not just applying their creative skills to their jobs, but also contributing to the effectiveness and adaptability of their organization as a whole (Schein, 1970, 1980; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979 in Theresa et al., 1998). Many companies provide compensation incentives, such as gain sharing and cash rewards for suggestions that promote this entrepreneurial role. Moreover the innovator role is important in both large and small organizations (Gomez-Mejia & Balkin, 1992 in Theresa et al., 1998).

Theresa et al (1998) emphasized that; employees can enact many potential roles while at work. Thus, RBPS are not the only relevant ones; however, there is clearly theoretical support for including these five roles in a performance measure. Theresa et al, (1998) also suggested that these roles are indeed distinct from each other and that they measure components of performance that cannot necessarily be measured via firms' traditional performance appraisal systems.

Based on Theresa et al.'s (1998) study on six different firms, the finding and analysis concluded that the five roles of RBPS is unique and had predictive power above and beyond what was available with the firms' own performance appraisal instruments.

To the best of the researcher knowledge there is no other study in the past has attempt to investigate whether the WFC and FWC can be related to RBPS. Being this the reason hence this study is being proposed.

Based on the above discussion, Figure 1 illustrated the proposed conceptual framework for the study.

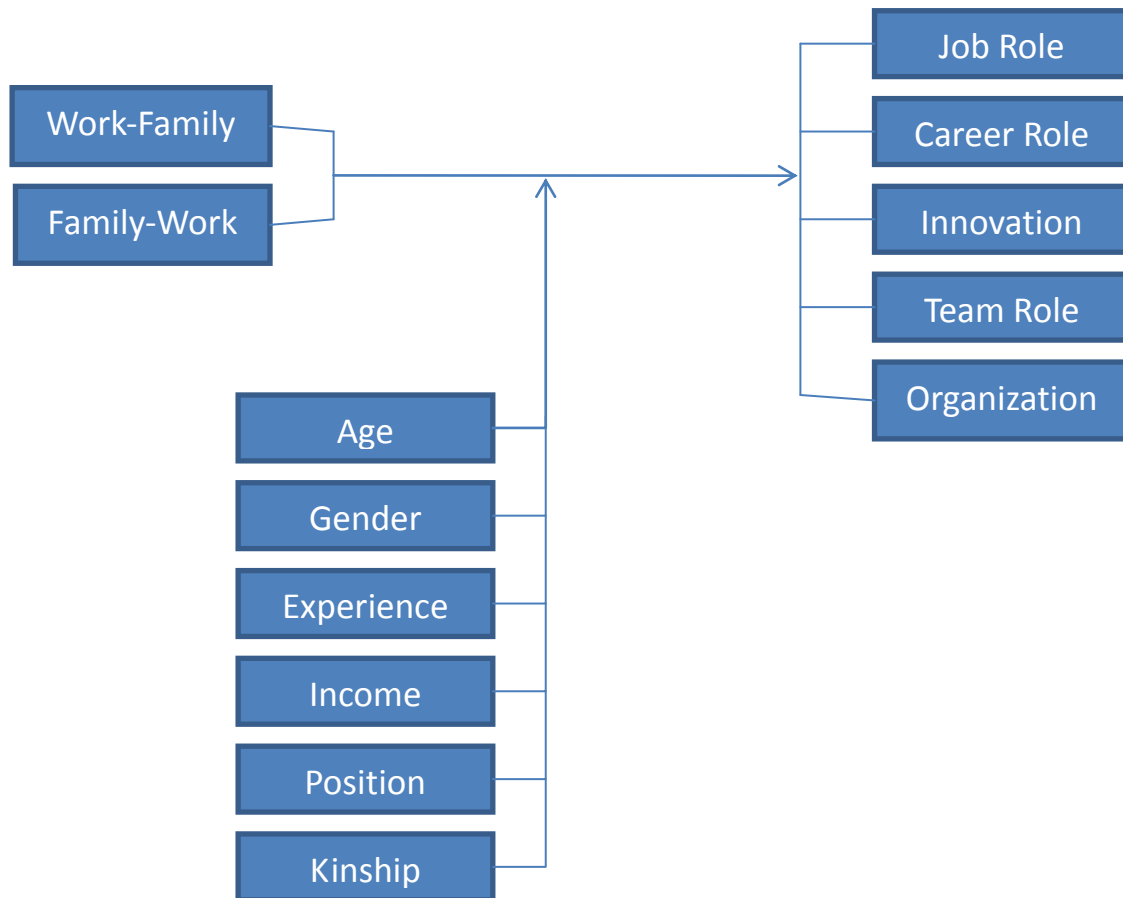


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research will adopt the quantitative approach using the survey (through a structured questionnaire). Primary data for this research will be collected from original sources through distribution of questionnaires to employees of call centre organizations in Klang Valley.

Primary Data collected from the survey using the questionnaires will be used as the data base for analysis in this research. The stages will include questionnaires items' selection and development, identifying the potential location of respondents, channels of questionnaires distribution, collection and coding of responses as well as token of appreciation for respondent who complete and return the survey form.

The respondents will be required to respond to a self administered questionnaire containing structured questions. The questions will be designed to elicit the employee's perception of work-family conflict and family-work conflict, the challenges they faces and how they make the decision to solve their issues, their preferences on solutions suggested in the questionnaire and in their own opinions on what and how their organization should solve the work-family conflict issue. These will be register on a Likert scale. A numerical scale of 1 to 7 will be used for respondents to record their feedback.

Purposive sampling would be used. Employees of selected companies would be respondents to the questionnaire. They will be approached through their respective offices. The research target was set at 260 samples from the employees of the companies understudied.

CONCLUSION

The study is an in-progress research, and still at an infant stage. However, the study may offer several potential contributions. The adoption framework may help researchers explore and assess the Work-Family Conflict and Family-Work Conflict on Worker's Work Roles Effectiveness in the Call Centre Industry. Hence, it will assist practitioner and service provider in providing excellent services.

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