WORK FAMILY CONFLICT AND STRESS: A REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT:

Work-family conflict is a rapidly developing field of research, considering the changes that have occurred in the structure of the family and of work in recent years. Organizations that want to avoid the negative implications of the work-family conflict should encourage OCBs, which reduce the workers' job-related stress and consequently reduce the conflict between the realms of family and work. OCB was found to relate negatively to job stress and work-family conflict. Namely, the higher the OCB, the lower the job stress. Stress has the implications for the individual as well as the organization and it can no longer be considered merely as the individual manager's problem. It is now generally accepted that prolonged or intense stress can have a negative impact on an individual's mental and physical health. This paper is a modest attempt to study the relationship between work-family conflict and job-stress.
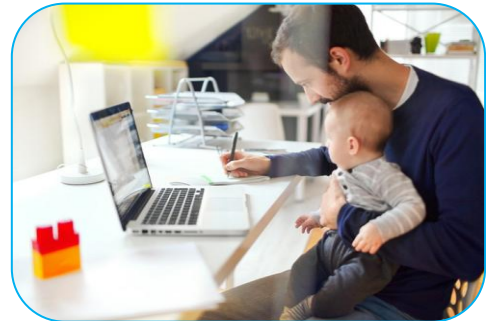
KEY WORDS*: Stress, OCB, Work Family Conflict*

INTRODUCTION:

Work-family conflict is among the most commonly studied outcomes in the work-family literature (Byron, 2005; Kossek, Colquitt, & Noe, 2001). While there can be both a positive and negative spillover between work and family domains (Westman, 2001), the work-family conflict research focuses on the difficulties employees have in balancing their work and family commitments. Work-family conflict is of particular importance to those interested in workfamily practices, as these are often depicted as allowing greater balance between work and family responsibilities (Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005), which suggests that there should be some interaction between work-family practices and work-family conflict. The relationship between employee work lives and non-work pursuits has been previously scrutinised (Kanter, 1977). Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) suggested that the conflict an employee experiences between their work and other life roles deserve particular attention from researchers. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) defined work-family conflict as "a form of interrole conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect. That is, participation in the work (family) role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in the family (work) role" (p. 77). Simplified, conflict between an individual"s work and home responsibilities can be labelled work-family conflict (Boles, Johnston, & Hair, 1997). According to Frone, Barnes and Farrell (1994), work-family conflict reflects the overall goodness-of-fit

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between work and family life, and has been conceptualized as an important source of stress that can influence an individual"s well being. The relationships between work-family conflict and employee attitudes and health have been well examined and established (Lallukka et al., 2009; Greenhaus, Allen & Spector, 2006; Frone, Russell & Barnes, 1996; MacEwan & Barling, 1994). According to Frone et al. (1994), little research has been devoted to the issue of managing work-family conflict. We suggest that while the work-family conflict literature has explored many sources of conflict, for example hours worked (Major, Klein & Ehrhart, 2002), what has been missing is an attempt to explore how employees might seek to manage these sources of conflict. For example, employees might seek the aid of professional services such as housecleaning, or the help of family to effectively manage their work and family responsibilities. Consequently, the present study seeks to provide some insight into the management of work-family conflict. In addition, we also test the relationships between use of work-family practices and work-family conflict levels, as this has been notably overlooked in the literature (Kossek & Ozeki, 1998).

WORK STRESS

Developing work life has also revealed negative situations in addition to innovations and improvements occurring as a result of changes. Stressful situations are among these negative situations that workers face over time. One of the crucial factors in emergence of the concept of stress is individual–work fit. This adaptation, in general, is known as the adaptation among an individual's current personality characteristics, e.g., knowledge, skill, and talent, and requirements of the job he/she will do. In the event of providing individual–work adaptation in question, studies concluded that individuals are more satisfied with their jobs, deviation to organization showed an increase, their work performances increased, their tendency toward leaving a job decreased, and stress became a less experienced situation (Kristof-Brown, 1996). Worker stress is defined as physiological and psychological reactions to given situations and events, the effects of which can be perceived in a threatening and wearing way by individuals (Riggio, 2014, p. 249). Work stress refers to stressful situations they encounter in the work environment. In work life, differences between performance expected from workers and their realized performance are regarded as among the main causes of formation of stress. Many stress factors affect the individual in life in general and in work life. All these challenge individual's physical and emotional capacity (McShane & Von Glinow, 2016, p. 81). Most individuals resort to the denial of the existence of stress until they face the consequences. This situation results in an unavoidable vicious circle. To cope with stress, timely and accurate decisions should be applied (McShane & Von Glinow, 2016, p. 83). Failing to cope with stress may create various effects on work–family life conflict and worker performance. According to Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), an increase in demands related to interest and energy from family and work results in work.

WORK – FAMILY CONFLICT AND JOB STRESS

When trying to balance work and family responsibilities, many workers experience conflict between these two roles. Work – family conflict has been defined as a mutual incompatibility between the demands of the work role and demand of the family role,. Juggling work and family responsibilities is a common experience for many employees,. Although engaging in both work and family roles can have positive effects for individuals, but if workers are unable to balance the responsibilities associated with both roles, the potential for conflicts between roles increases

Several studies in the literature have been found in examining the association between work – family conflict and job stress. The research on work – family conflict and job stress are rising because it is a growing problem. Obradovic and Obradovic explained that the employees experience crossover effect when the employees faced a conflict at work as well as family that ultimately affecting their spouse and family. In determining the relationship between work – family conflict and job stress, Panatik et al. have found that employees in Peninsular Malaysia the work – family conflict are strongly correlated with stress. Similar results for example, Sultana, found that working women in Peninsular Malaysia experienced higher level of job stress as compared to non-working women. Sultana further

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explains that working women are stressful due to incapability to socialize and poor quality time with children and family. Moreover women are also found to have poor relationship with their spouses as results of demanding work schedule and unfinished work. Stress and work family conflict is a common problem faced by majority of employees especially working mothers with young children. These results is supported by Kaye and Gray that explained employees that tries to fulfil the increasing work role while at the same time fulfilling the family responsibilities are struggling with work family conflict and stress.

WORK-FAMILY BALANCE PRACTICES AND WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT

Work-family conflict is associated with negative work outcomes in organizations, so it is imperative that organizations should minimize their employees' work-family conflicts. Many initiatives have been employed to decrease work-family conflict, including job autonomy, supportive work-family culture, telecommuting, work flexibility (flextime and flexplace) and so on (e.g. Premeaux et al. 2007; Kossek et al. 2006; Shockley and Allen, 2007; Hobson, 2014). By providing employees with valuable resources, workfamily balance practices are intended to reduce work-family conflict. However, these practices often have mixed effects on work-family conflict, which are often influenced by family characteristics or individual differences—such as family support, the number or age of children (e.g. Premeaux et al., 2007; Drobnič and León, 2014), and individual differences such as extraversion (Grzywacz and Marks, 2000). Existing studies of work-family balance practices are mostly focused on workplace flexibility (e.g. telecommuting, flextime and flexplace); however, inconsistent results have been reported in the research environment of the impact of working hours/ time autonomy on work-family conflict. Some results admit that work flexibility practices are negatively related to work-family conflict (Byron, 2005; Gajendran and Harrison, 2007; Shockley and Allen, 2007). However, there is also evidence from several previous studies that suggests that flexibility in working times that allows for autonomy and control over one's pace of work does not necessarily enhance the quality of one's personal life (Lee and McCann, 2006; Smith et al., 2008; Hobson and Fahlen, 2009; Hobson, 2014). Similarly, the effect of family-friendly benefits (e.g. parental leave of absence, dependent childcare) on work-family conflict were also mixed. For example, Kossek and Ozeki (1998) did not find the expected impact that dependent care benefits exert on work-family conflict, while Goff et al. (1990) found that on-site childcare lowered work-family conflict among working parents (Anderson et al. 2002). Except for the above studies focusing on a specific practice, other researchers treat work-family balance practices as a bundle for testing their impacts on firm productivity or Chang et al. Frontiers of Business Research in China (2017) 11:8 Page 4 of 22 organizational performance (de Bloom et al., 2010; Konrad and Mangel, 2000; PerrySmith and Blum, 2000). were advanced and used by many researchers (e.g. Friedman, 1990; Friedman and Galinsiky, 1992; Kraut, 1990; Lewis, 1992; Thompson et al. 1992) which mainly consist of flextime, a compressed work week, job sharing, child care assistance, work at home, and reduced work hours. These items are largely consistent with previous research on dependent care benefits and work flexibility.

CONCLUSION

Work and family are most important parts in human life that are not easily separated. When trying to balance between the work and family, the employees often ended with conflict and dilemma in giving priority to both career and family. The incompatible of demand between career and family seemed to create a personal pressure to the employees. More often than not, conflict tends to create pressure to the employees as they try to balance the two roles that need to be performed simultaneously.

In conclusion, work – family conflict is a predictor to job stress. Administrative employees from a semi-government organization in the present study appear to experience low level of job stress and work – family conflict. The findings indicate that when the work family conflict level is low, the employees will experience low level of job stress.

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