

Relationship between work-family conflict and work, family and community domains demands and resources: A longitudinal study

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Abstract

Shifting from Western-dominated perspectives, demands and resources from the community domain were investigated, together with work and family domains to predict work-family conflict and family-work conflict. Pearson correlation analysis was conducted on data obtained through two self-report questionnaires completed three months apart by 277 executives and non-executives from three public and private sector organizations in Sarawak, East Malaysia. After controlling for conflict at Time 1, work demands were positively related; while work resources were negatively related to work-family conflict and family work conflict at Time 2. In addition, community demands were related positively to work-family conflict and family work conflict at Time 2. This study underscores the roles of community which has been neglected in Western studies, as important in affecting work-family conflict and family-work conflict in Malaysia. Therefore, to improve our understanding on work-family conflict in a society which is predominantly collectivist, aspects of community should be included.

Keywords: *community; demands; family-work conflict; resources; work-family conflict.*

1. Introduction

The work-family interface (WFI) has been broadly examined from Western perspectives. However, the environment in non Western countries is also changing, but not in cultural values, and this tend to increase stress and work-family conflict (Joplin et al., 2003). This study, which was conducted in Malaysia, an East Asian country, set out to further our understanding of work-family conflict in a non-Western culture. Using longitudinal data at three-month intervals, the study aimed to identify work-family conflict and family-work conflict from demands and resources (support) from work and family, as well as from community domain. We believe the study will contribute significantly to the work-family literature in two aspects.

Firstly, we used longitudinal data following a call for more longitudinal designs to understand the process of the work-family interface (Poelmans et al., 2005). Steinmetz, Frese, and Schmidt in 2008 reported on 11 longitudinal studies could be located and none were from the Asian region. Moreover, some previous studies have also used a three-month period in their longitudinal design (e.g., Brough et al., 2005; Korabik et al., 2003).

Secondly, we investigated community demands and resources in relation to work-family and family-work conflict. Calls have been made for researchers to examine other life domains besides family,

such as community and leisure, to capture more comprehensively the roles played by individuals (Frone, 2003; Voydanoff, 2001). As community plays a more significant role in collectivist societies (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005), it was included in this study.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Demands and WFC and FWC

In general, antecedents of conflict tend to emerge from the same domain, that is, work-related antecedents tend affect more on WFC than on FWC, while family-related antecedents tend to affect more on FWC than on WFC (Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux, & Brinley, 2005; Frone, 2003). Community-related antecedents have weaker associations with WFC and FWC than do work and family-related antecedents (Voydanoff, 2004, 2005). Among the antecedents, demands have consistently shown a positive relationship with conflict: excessive demands at work, family and / or community lead to high levels of WFC and FWC (e.g., Gryzwacz & Marks, 2000; Voydanoff, 2004).

Byron (2005) conducted a meta-analysis of more than 60 studies and concluded that employees who had higher job involvement and longer working hours, experienced more WFC than FWC. Similarly, less supportive co-workers or supervisors, or lesser amount of flexible schedules also contribute to more WFC and FWC. Others have discovered that work overload (Aryee et al., 2005; Boyar et