

Predicting work-family interface from cultural orientations in Malaysia:

A longitudinal study

Zaiton Hassan

Universiti Malaysia Sarawak

Despite growing research on work-family conflict and enrichment in Western countries, issues of work-family conflict and enrichment in Eastern countries are understudied. In addition, most studies assume the cultural orientations of the respondents, without empirically assessing them. Using a sample of 296 employees from public and private sectors, this study examined the relationship of cultural orientations (measured at individual level), namely gender role ideology and polychronic time orientation to work-family conflict and enrichment over a 3-month period in Malaysia, a collectivist Eastern society. It was found that traditional gender role ideology predicted work-family conflict and family-work conflict positively. Traditional gender role ideology predicted work-family enrichment and family-work enrichment negatively. Polychronic time orientation predicted work-family enrichment and family-work enrichment positively. In short, participating in both work and family brings more enrichment than conflict and this interaction is unquestionably influenced by cultural orientations. Therefore it is critical for human resource development practitioners to understand the local culture before implementing work-life balance strategies.

Keywords: Work-family conflict, work-family enrichment, traditional gender role ideology, polychronic time orientation, Malaysia

Paper presented at The 12th International Conference of the Asia Chapter of AHRD and the 11th International Conference on Human Resource Development, 7-8 November 2013, Taipei, Taiwan