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Role of Supply Chain Management on the Job Control and Social Support for Relationship between Work-Family Conflict and Job Satisfaction

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Abstract- The present study investigates the relationship between work-family conflict and job satisfaction of Malaysian workers (N = 1125) based on the supply chain management. It examines the direct and moderating effects of job control and social support on work-family conflict and job satisfaction relationship. The current study examines the Job Demand-Control (JDC) [1] and Job Demand-Control-Support (JDCS) [2] models which are under research in the work-family conflict. Hierarchical regression analyses in the study reveal that work to family conflict (WFC), family to work conflict (FWC) and social support have a direct effect on job satisfaction. However, the result reveals that employees' job control was not the primary predictor of their job satisfaction. Contrary to the prediction of the JDCS model, the moderating effects of job control and social support on the relationship between work-family conflict and job satisfaction are not found. Implications regarding the importance of the main effect of social support and supply chain management on understanding job satisfaction in Malaysian society and other possible moderators are discussed.

Keywords- Job Control, Social Support, supply chain management, Work-Family Conflict, Job Satisfaction.

1. An overview of work-family conflict literature

Work-family conflict defined as a form of inter-role conflict, which occurs when an individual has to face incompatible role pressures from work and family [3]. There are two types of work-family conflict, which differ according to the direction of conflict:

work interfering with family (WIF) conflict, and family interfering with work (FIW). [4] defines WIF conflict as occurring when work-related activities interfere with family responsibilities including when an employee tries to complete his/her office tasks at home, during the time in which he/she should be with their family. FIW conflict occurs in the opposite direction, such as when an employee needs to cancel a meeting due to child illness, thus disturbing the smooth execution of work demands. Nonetheless, it is common to see other terms used to explain the two types of work-family conflict in the work-family literature. The interchangeable terms often used by scholars include work to family conflict (WFC) and family to work conflict (FWC) [5,6], work interference with family (WIF) and family interference with work [7, 8], work home conflict [9] and work-family spillover and family-work spillover [10]. From this pool of interchangeable terms, the terms chosen for the current study are work to family conflict (WFC) to illustrate work interfering with family and family to work conflict (FWC) to illustrate family is interfering with work. WFC and FWC are widely used in the work-family literature and are more direct and explicitly show the direction of conflicts. The impact of WFC issues on employees, family members and organisations have widely researched in developed countries including the United States [11, 12, 13], the United Kingdom [9], Australia and New Zealand [14, 15, 5] and Finland [16, 17]. Little, however, has been discussed in developing countries, particularly in Asia [18].

Although there is agreement on the adverse impact of WFC on employee wellbeing (mainly focused on job satisfaction) in most East Asian studies, a few studies revealed contradictory findings. For example, [19] surveyed 207 dual-earner couples, and their results indicated that there was a non-significant correlation between WFC and career satisfaction. Similarly, a later study [20] found that a non significant relationship existed between WFC and job satisfaction. Both studies were conducted involving Hong Kong employees. The inconsistencies in the findings might be due to cultural differences in the workers' perceptions of work and family matters [20]. Thus, ref. [21] stated that it is crucial to investigate WFC and FWC in non-western societies, as this will significantly enrich cross-cultural literature on work-family conflict. In summary, troubled work-family relationships are a severe work stressor that affects employee wellbeing, and therefore, requires more attention [22, 18]. In summary, the present study aims to test the JDCS model in the context of Malaysian workers. Also, the study employs the JDCS model with work-family conflict as a stressor. More specifically, there are six hypotheses in this study which are:

H1: Work to family conflict (WFC) is negatively related to job satisfaction

H2: Family to work conflict (FWC) is negatively related to job satisfaction

H3: Job control is positively related to job satisfaction

H4: Social support is positively related to job satisfaction

H5: Job control buffers the negative effect of work to family conflict (WFC) on job satisfaction

H6: Social support buffers the negative effect of work to family conflict (WFC) on job satisfaction

H7: Job control buffers the negative effect of the family to work conflict (FWC) on job satisfaction

H8: Social support buffers the negative effect of the family to work conflict (FWC)

H9: Social support moderates the effects of high work to family conflict (WFC) and low levels of job control on job satisfaction

H10: Social support moderates the effects of the high family to work conflict (FWC), and low levels of job control on job satisfaction

2. Methodology

2.1 Sample and Procedures

Approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee, Victoria University was obtained. The researcher sought permission from human resource officers in twelve companies for permission to distribute surveys by considering the supply chain management. Eight of these twelve companies are situated on the west coast of the Malaysian Peninsula, where the majority of manufacturing companies are located. The other four companies are situated on the east coast of Malaysia; these selected as few studies have involved the workers in this region. Out of 1950 surveys circulated, 1220 surveys were returned. Out of the returned survey, 1125 useable surveys obtained after removing incomplete questionnaires outliers. A sample of 1125 Malaysian manufacturing workers, consisting of 536 men (47.6%) and 589 women (52.4%) aged from 18 to 59 years participated in the study. Majority of the respondents are from Malay ethnic (83.8%) followed by Indian (8.2%) and Chinese (7.2%).

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2.2 Measurement Instruments

The questionnaire used in this study was translated from English to Malay. The translated questionnaire was then translated back into English by independent researchers. The translation and back-translation were carried out in consultation with University Malaysia Terengganu staff, (one from the Department of Psychology and Counselling, and one from the English Department). Also, the researcher worked with staff from Learning Support Services, Victoria University, to check the compatibility of the original items with the back-translation version. The items were measured by reference to scales in the literature, as follows:

2.2.1 Work-family conflict

Work-family conflict was measured using the Work-Family Conflict Scale [23]. The scale consists of two subscales: work to family conflict (WFC) and family to work conflict (FWC). 10 (ten) items were measuring general demand, time and strain conflict. Respondents were asked to rate their responses to questions on seven scales ranging from 1= Strongly Disagree to 7= Strongly Agree. A total score for each subscale ranged between 5 and 35, where the higher scores reflect a greater perception of conflict. For the

current sample, Cronbach's alpha was .92 for both WFC and FWC.

2.2.2 Job control and social support

Nine items of job control and eight items of social support measures were derived from the Job Content Questionnaire (JCQ) [24]. Items on the JCQ were scored on a 4 point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1= Strongly Disagree to 4=Strongly Agree. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha was .60 for job control and .84 for social support.

2.2.3 Job Satisfaction

In this study, the 36 items of the Job Satisfaction Scale (JSS) [25] were used to assess total job satisfaction, using 9 subscales (each consisting of 4 items). The nine subscales were pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, operating conditions, co-workers, nature of work and communication. Respondents rated the favourable and unfavourable aspects of their jobs using a 6 point Likert-type scale ranging from 1= Disagree Very Much to 6=Agree Very Much with high scores on the JSS indicating high levels of job satisfaction. In the current study, Cronbach's alpha was 0.84.

2.3 Data Analysis

Hierarchical regression analysis [26] was conducted to test the direct effect and moderating effect hypotheses. The independent variables were entered into the equation in four successive steps. In the first step, the demographic variables of gender, age, ethnicity and marital status were employed as control variables. With regards to the direct effect, this study

tested the effects of work to family conflict (WFC), family to work conflict (FWC), job control and social support in predicting job satisfaction (H1-H4). Thus, these four variables were entered into the model in the second step. In the third step, the two-way interaction terms were entered into the equation. Interaction terms were created by standardising the variables before multiplying the variables together as this technique is recommended to reduce the risk of multi collinearity [27, 28]. In this study, the standardised predictor was multiplied with the moderator variable to examine the effects on the levels of employee wellbeing (e.g. standardised WFC x standardised job control, and standardised WFC x standardised social support) (H5-H8). Finally, three interaction terms were entered into the model to complete the equation. The three interaction terms were created from standardised predictor variables (e.g. standardised WFC x standardised job control x standardised social support, and standardised FWC x standardised job control x standardised social support) (H9-H10). Statistical significance of the term indicates evidence for the moderation effect.

3. Results

All data entry and analyses were performed using SPSS Version 23. The result shows that all independent variables were correlated with job satisfaction in the expected direction. A summary of the means, standard deviations and correlations between predictor variables and job satisfaction is set out in Table 1.

Table1. Means, standard deviations and	1 correlations between j	predictor variables and j	ob satisfaction ($N = 1125$)

Variables	М	SD	1	2	3	4	5
Work to family conflict (WFC)	18.32	7.38	1.000				
Family to work conflict (FWC)	15.43	6.60	0.55**	1.000			
Job control	37.81	4.74	-0.06	-0.05	1.000		
Social support	23.37	3.33	-0.22**	-0.17**	0.26**	1.000	
Job satisfaction	132.66	19.5	-0.37**	-0.27**	0.11**	0.43**	1.000

Note: ** Sig. at the level 5%

WFC and FWC were negatively correlated with job satisfaction at r = -0.37 and r = -0.27, respectively. In contrast, job control and social support were positive predictors of employee wellbeing (r = 0.17 and 0.36,

respectively). In order to test the main effects and moderating effects hypotheses, we were carried out the hierarchical regression analysis as summarised in Table 2.

Table 2. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis predicting job satisfaction from work family conflict (WFC), family work conflict (FWC), job control and social support

		Standardised	Coefficient (β)		
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	
	Additive Model		Interactive Model		
	Control '	Variables			
Gender	-0.039	-0.059*	-0.055*	-0.054*	
Age	0.028	0.064*	0.069*	0.070*	
Ethnic	-0.120**	-0.098**	-0.100**	-0.102**	
Marital Status	-0.041	-0.023	-0.024	-0.023	
	Predictor	Variables			
Work to Family Conflict		-0.244**	-0.245**	-0.248**	
Family to Work Conflict		-0.068*	-0.070*	-0.064*	
Job Control		0.005	-0.006	-0.015	
Social Support		0.366**	0.374**	0.377**	
	Two-way	interaction			
WFC X JC			-0.021	-0.022	
WFC X SS			-0.007	0.004	
FWC X JC			0.036	0.020	
FWC X SS			-0.046	-0.032	
	Three-Way	Interaction			
WFC X JC X SS	•			0.016	
FWC X JC X SS				-0.072	
R2	0.019	0.282	0.292	0.295	
ΔR2	0.019***	0.263***	0.009**	0.003	
F change	5.51***	102.34***	3.66**	2.15	
df	4,1120	4,1116	4,1112	2,1110	

Note: **, * sig. at the level 1%, 5%

4. Discussion and conclusions

As hypothesised, both WFC and FWC were negative predictors of employee wellbeing in this study. These findings corroborate earlier research [29, 12, 15, 30]. The results suggest that work-family conflict was a significant stressor to Malaysian as well as to Western workers. In the current study, the majority of respondents were married or had children who raised the responsibility for juggling the demands from both family and work domains regardless of gender. Employees in the current study might feel some conflict between work and family duties such as managing their work demands while feeling guilty for not spending more time with their families, and vice versa -thus affecting their wellbeing. Although an earlier study in Malaysia by found that women are primarily responsible for household chores, the available evidence in the current study shows that work-family conflict is an issue of concern to both men and women. It may indicate that changes in

attitude occurring are endorsed by young workers with secondary education as well. The negative association between work-family conflict and job satisfaction found in the current study is consistent with the role theory [31]. Malaysian employees engage in different roles in the workplace as well as at home (e.g. husband, wife, parent, son and daughter), exhibiting their capabilities at performing another role, resulting in conflict, and therefore affecting their job satisfaction. A constraint of time and energy due to performing dual roles has a detrimental effect on individuals' work wellbeing. In conclusion, there is agreement on the adverse impact of work-family conflict on employee job satisfaction in both the current study and most of the studies in Eastern settings [32, 20]. In particular, the findings indicated that social support was associated with work job satisfaction which is consistent with previous studies in Western contexts such as [33] and [34]. However, in the Malaysian workplace, it

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appears that job control plays a lesser role in predicting work satisfaction. [35] Advocate investigation of the relationship between the JDCS variables, and wellness and health in non-European countries (e.g., African, Latin American or Asian workplaces) where concepts such as control or social support have very different connotations. Western studies established that job control (the extent to which employees can control their work environment according to their work demands, abilities, needs and circumstances) associated with employee wellbeing [36, 37]. Contrary to these Western studies, the current findings showed that job control did not predict job satisfaction. These may imply that there is a different conception of job control in Asian cultures. As a few studies have found that the lack of job control did not affect individuals in collectivistic societies (such as, for instance, the Chinese) as much as it affected those in individualistic society (e.g. the US) [38,39, 40]. Job control is the commonly investigated job resource in occupational stress studies and is limited in work-family conflict research. Moreover, the current findings have been unable to demonstrate a significant moderating effect of job control in the relationship between workfamily conflict and job satisfaction. It is consistent with [41] who investigated the moderating role of control on the experience of work-family conflict. However, the current findings did not offer further support for the findings who found that job control moderates the adverse impact of work-family conflict on wellbeing outcomes. A possible explanation for the inconsistency of the findings might have been due to the strict nature of Malaysian organisations' practices regarding working hours, particularly in the study organisations investigated in this study. These practices hindered the possibility of testing a more specific form of job control. A recent study by the [42] found that a specific control (schedule control – over when and where to work) is a significant form of control that benefits employees and their families. However, this is not applicable in the context of the current study in which schedule control is almost impossible, and employees must abide by the working hours imposed by the employer. It is further supported who point out that Malaysian organisations do not commonly offer flexible work options. Social support was not found to moderate the relationship between WFC and FWC and job satisfaction in the

current study. Although this differs from the findings of some published studies [5, 30], it is consistent with the findings of [43]. These results offer inconsistent findings to demonstrate the effects of cultural differences on the importance and availability of social support. It seems possible that these contradictory findings related to the moderating role of social support might be attributed to cultural differences. stated that the structure of the social support network might vary from one culture to another, and found that the social support network was highly interconnected in collectivist societies. In the current study, the focus of social support was on the workplace (supervisor and co-workers) and not expanded outside the workplace (e.g. to include family, friends and neighbours) which is another important social network in the collectivist culture of Malaysia, thereby creating a significant main impact of social support on job satisfaction rather than a moderating effect. In conclusion, the findings have implications for human resource management practices. It is mainly so as social support was found to be the dominant predictor of job satisfaction. In Malaysia, a relationship-oriented society, loyalty, trust and a sense of belonging are highly valued. Thus, managers must cultivate personalised relationships with their subordinates, especially in work-related factors. Ref. [44] suggested that employers should organise regular work unit meetings to enable the delivery of constructive feedback. For example, team leaders or supervisors can regularly give information related to the job and discuss realistic workloads to reduce job stressors, particularly job demands. Implicated organisations could consider providing training for team leaders or supervisors to equip them with the capability to provide feedback, support and coaching. Furthermore, managers could expand social support so that it is not only confined to job-related issues but non-job matters. Issues such as work-family conflict experienced by employees must be severely dealt with as they affect the wellbeing of workers. For example, found that non-job-related communication between supervisors and subordinates was significant in dealing with stress, which indicated that the different levels of staff know and are concerned about each other. As Love, reported, support at work, particularly supervisor concern about work and family issues, was a crucial need among blue collar

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workers. Again, the roles of knowledgeable counsellors, psychologists and human resource managers are essential in assisting employees in achieving a work-life balance. As the seventh challenge of Vision 2020 stated, to be a developed country, Malaysians need "to establish a fully caring society and a caring culture, a social system in which society will come before self, in which the welfare of the people will revolve not around the state or the individual but a strong and resilient family system".

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