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WORK-FAMILY BALANCE, EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT, AND NUMBER OF DEPENDENTS AMONG STAFF IN A MALAYSIAN TV NETWORK

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ABSTRACT

Committed employees tend to perform better as they feel having personal connection towards the organization. However, in some cases, dismissal from the organization also indicates poor job performance. Poor job performance resulted in low organizational commitment. The ability of an individual to balance between work and family depends on several factors such as the type of job, the organization that hires them, economy, social and cultural context. The emerging situation had led to overload of responsibility as people had to play the role of employees, spouses, parents, and parent's caregivers. Biased participation in one role, either work or family, will affect the other role. Work-family balance has two types of relationship. The first relationship is when work interferes with family life and the second relationship is when family life interferes with work. The main purpose of this study was to examine the effect of work-family balance towards employee commitment among TVABC (a Malaysian television network) staff, with number of dependents as moderating variable. The responses were gathered from 184 TVABC staff. Convenient sampling technique was used and hierarchical regression analysis was administered. The results indicated that work interference with family dimension did

not had any significant relationship with employee commitment. While family interference with work was proven to have a significant relationship with employee commitment among TVABC staff. The number of dependents, as the moderating variable, was found not affecting the relationship between work-family balance and employee commitment as all tests indicated insignificant relationship.

Keywords: work-family balance, employee commitment, number of dependents, work interference with family and family interference with work.

INTRODUCTION

The working pattern among Malaysians changes day after day. The years between the 1980's and the 1990's showed different working patterns as most married women were housewives. Only the husbands were the breadwinner. That trend has changed over the years as the workforce is flooded by women, today. The increased number of women employees has increased the challenges in managing work and family for both family and work (Geurts & Demerouti, 2003). The working trend in Malaysia nowadays shows that both parents are the breadwinners. This may be caused by the increasing cost of living or trying to keep up

with the living lifestyle practiced by most people.

In order for an organization to succeed, the commitment from employees plays as a main factor. Employee commitment can be seen from their productivity and quality of their service. Normally the employee will feel happy with the organization if they are satisfied with their job. Turnover will be reduced if the organizational commitment increases (DeConinck & Bachmann, 2011). Therefore, any organization should pay attention on their employees' organizational commitment.

The ability to balance the life between family and work is important to ensure the wellbeing of the family. The process of keeping the balance between career and personal life sometimes could lead to conflict. Focusing too much on career could lead to conflict in family life and vice versa. In a new organization like TVABC¹, the management and procedures might have effect on work-family balance (WFB) of employees. Not only from the organization side, but family might have effect as well. Therefore, this research has examined the relationship between WFB and employee commitment (EC) among TVABC staff. To investigate this topic, the number of dependents had been used as moderator.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee commitment implies the willingness of the employee to keep on putting effort to achieve organizational goals. Employee commitment is defined as the degree to which the employee feels devoted to his or her organization (Spector, 2000). Employee commitment includes how the employee feels towards the organization and his or her work. Committed employees are more likely to remain with the organization and strive for the organization's missions, goals and objectives. If the employee feels that his or her working environment is good and it can help them to achieve their personal goals, they will be more committed to the organization. Employee commitment can be described as the strong desire to stay in the organization (Babalola, Oladipo, & Chovwen, 2015).

On the other hand, Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979) revealed that affective commitment depends on three factors; a strong belief in and acceptance of organization's goals, the willingness to put effort for the organization; and the strong desire to maintain in the organization. Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993) indicated that employee commitment involves three types; affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment.

Relationship between Employee Commitment and Work Family Balance

There were some researches were done to study the relationship between WFB and employee commitment. Azeem and Akhtar (2014) for instance, they studied the influence of WFB and job satisfaction on EC of healthcare employees. Their finding showed a positive relationship between WFB and EC and job satisfaction among healthcare employees. The result was

¹ To protect the organization's interest, the name of the organization is undisclosed.

consistent with another research that was done also in India by Sakthivel and Jayakrishnan (2012). However, they found out that work interfering with family (WIF) is negatively related to EC, where EC was influenced by WIF. In terms of family interfering with work (FIW), they found that it has a negative relationship with EC. They concluded that WFB is important in enhancing and developing EC. This implies that when work interferes too much with family, employees would have less commitment towards the organization (Siu, 2014).

Azeem and Akhtar's (2014) results were consistent with another research done by Ch. *et al.* (2014). Ch. *et al.* (2014) found that there was a significant relationship between WFB and EC. Their research also indicated a negative relationship between WIF and FIW with EC. They concluded that both variables had a significant relationship; however, the relationship was weak. Their research included gender, marital status and designation for comparison purpose. However, the number of dependents was not included in the research.

Siu (2014) reported that strain-based and time-based WIF had a negative relationship with affective commitment. The author explained that due to the pressure from work, the employee would lose the time to be spent for family role. Therefore, the employee would try to compensate it with the time and energy available. Thus, the employee would feel less affective committed towards the organization. The author also discovered that the relationship between strain-based WIF was positively related to continuance commitment. This indicates that when the employee experience pressure from work, they felt that they have to stay in the organization as they felt that they have to ensure the welfare of the family. The idea was that when the employee experience pressure from work,

the continuance of their job is considered as a necessity instead of choice (Casper, Martin, Buffadi, & Erdwins, 2002). Surprisingly, time-based WIF was reported as having no relationship with continuance commitment. Strain-based and time-based FIW were also reported to have no relationship with affective commitment. As the author used dependents in her research, it was reported that dependents did not moderate any relationships in the study.

Malik, Awan and Qurat-ul-Ain (2015) investigated the relationship between WFB and EC. Their WFB was focusing on pay, incentives and time. Their finding also consistent with previous research (Rehman & Waheed, 2012) as the relationship was significant and negative. WFB was negatively related to affective commitment. They claimed that affective commitment was very important to any organization as the loyalty and sincerity associated to affective commitment is important to the organization. In their study, the relationship between WFB and continuance commitment was negative; however it was not significant. The last relationship tested was between WFB and normative commitment. Their finding was negative and significant relationship. In another research done by Casper *et al.* (2002), they reported the relationship between WFB and EC among employed mothers. Their research revealed that WIF had a positive relationship with continuance commitment, but not affective commitment. The relationship between WFB and affective commitment was a negative relationship. Even the author did the research on working mothers only, their result still directing to the same outcome. Therefore, the hypotheses were as follows:

H_{1a}: WIF has a relationship with affective commitment.

H_{1b}: FIW has a relationship with affective commitment.

H_{2a}: WIF has a relationship with continuance commitment.

H_{2b}: FIW has a relationship with continuance commitment.

Number of Dependents as Moderator

In this study, a moderator variable was used to test its effect on the relationship between WFB and employee commitment. The moderator variable was the number of dependents. In this study, “dependents” did not only refer to children, but also parents. For married staff, the dependents might include both children and parents. This was different for single staff as they may only have their parents and younger siblings as dependents. For married couple, their dependents might only be their children in case if their parents were deceased. Therefore, this study included dependents as moderator variable, regardless of the dependents’ age. Siu (2014) revealed that employees with dependents feel more overwhelmed at work compared to employees without dependents. Darcy and McCarthy (2007) revealed that work-family conflict increases when the responsibility of employee expands through marriage and when children are born. The main reason for this is that the employee’s responsibility increases compared to during single life. As for married couples, they have to fulfill the responsibility as partners, parents and employee.

In TVABC, based on an interview with one of HR executives, children are considered as dependents. Elderly parents are considered as immediate family members, and in some cases, as dependents. However, parents are not eligible to be covered under TVABC’s benefits like the children. When it comes to married employees, TVABC considers both biological parents and parents-in-law as the employees’ responsibility. From the

interview, he claimed that TVABC gives special leave to employees whom their parents, either their own parents or parents-in-law, passed away. This is due to the understanding that the responsibility of their employee to take care of their parents is essential. Besides that, in terms of medical coverage, TVABC medical benefit covers children of the employee up to the age of 18 years old. He said that the medical coverage does not only covers out-patient treatment, but also hospitalization bills as well. Hence, the hypotheses were as follows:

H_{4a}: Number of dependents moderates the relationship between work-family balance and affective commitment.

H_{4b}: Number of dependents moderates the relationship between work-family balance and continuance commitment.

METHODOLOGY

The research investigated the relationship between the dependent variable; employee commitment; with the independent variable which was work-family balance with number of dependents as a moderating variable which made the type of investigation for this study is correlational study. This research applied quantitative research approach as questionnaires were used to obtain the data. Convenient sampling technique was used in this study as data from the whole population cannot be obtained. Convenient sampling is the process of collecting the data from members of the population who are available to provide it (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). The researchers intended to do convenient sampling as any staff who was available to provide the data needed might do so.

For data analysis, Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) version 23.0 was administered. This study employed a

cross-sectional study and the data collected in a specific period of time. The study targeted all staff in TVABC. As data received from Human Resource Executive, the total employees in TVABC were 317 employees. This figure included permanent and contract staff. Among the 317 employees, there were 196 married staff which include staff who are married to staff. The remaining 121 staff were single staff that include staff that never married before, divorcee without children, widower, widows and single parents. The questionnaire used Google online forms and responses were sent to the researchers' e-mail for analysis.

To evaluate the results, Likert Scale was used to categorize the responses. The items used for employee commitment in this research were based on TCM Employee Commitment Survey: Academic Users Guide (Meyer & Allen, 2004). The measures that were used for work-family balance were based on items used by Carlson, Kacmar and Williams (2000). The relationship between employee commitment and work-family balance was analysed using Pearson and Multiple Linear Regression technique.

FINDINGS

Work-family balance had two (2) dimensions in this study. They were work interference with family and family interference with work. Table 1.1 and 1.2 indicate the contribution of each dimension of the work-family balance towards employee commitment dimensions, namely affective and continuance commitment.

Table 1.1:
Contribution of work-family balance dimensions towards affective commitment

Variable	R ² Δ	β	Sig.
Work			
Interference with Family	.067	.126	.116
Family			
Interference with Work		.178	.026

Table 1.1:
Contribution of work-family balance dimensions towards continuance commitment

Variable	R ² Δ	β	Sig.
Work			
Interference with Family	.045	.015	.853
Family			
Interference with Work		.206	.011

The relationship between work interference with family and affective commitment was found to be insignificant as the p-value was .116 ($p > .05$). Family interference with work on the other hand had a significant relationship where the p-value was .026 ($p < .05$). The R² change value was .067 which indicates that work-family balance affects 6.7% affective commitment. For continuance commitment, the same dimension affects continuance commitment. Work interference with family was found to be insignificant as the p-value was .853 ($p > .05$). However, family interference with work showed a significant relationship as the p-value for continuance commitment was .011 ($p < .05$). Both dimensions in work-family balance affect 4.5% of continuance commitment. Only family interference with work relationship was found to be significant with employee commitment. The result was consistent with other researches done by Azeem and Aktar (2014), Sakthivel and Jayakrishnan (2012) where work-family balance were positively correlated with affective commitment and the relationship was positive. In another study by Hatam, Jalali, Askarian and Kharazmi (2016) it was found that work-family balance was positively related with affective commitment where when the work-family conflict increases, employee commitment reduces. The results in this study also consistent with a research done by Siu (2014); which work-family conflict was negatively related to affective commitment.

For continuance commitment on the other hand, the result in this study stated that work interference with family did not have any effect on continuance commitment as the regression was insignificant. In two studies done by Malik et al. (2015), and Riaz and Hunjra (2015), it was found that the relationship between work-family conflict and continuance commitment was insignificant, consistent with this study. Nart and Batur (2014) also stated in their study that the relationship between work-family balance and continuance commitment was insignificant.

H_{4a} suggested that the number of dependents moderates the relationship between work-family balance and affective commitment. H_{4b} also suggests that the number of dependents moderates the relationship between work-family balance and continuance commitment. Hierarchical regression analysis was done and the results as shown in Table 1.3 and Table 1.4. This study applied hierarchical multiple regression as it involved three (3) variables and it was intended to measure the relationship between the variables and the effect of one variable over the others. The relationship between the work-family balance dimensions with employee commitment with number of dependents as moderating variable was analyzed. The results were as indicated by Table 1.3. The number of dependents was categorized into four (4) categories, which were; no to two (2) dependents, three (3) to five (5) dependents, six (6) to eight (8) dependents, and more than nine (9) dependents.

Table 1.2:
Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Affective Commitment.

Model	Standardized β Coefficient			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Family Interference with Work	.144	.342	.229	.230
FIWxD	.297	-.322	.023	-.250
No. of	-.339	.338	-.019	.326

Dependents				
R	.267	.266	.233	.246
R²	.071	.071	.054	.060
R² Δ	.016	.017	.000	.001
F Δ	3.118	3.260	.012	.150
Significance F Δ	.079	.073	.913	.699

***Dependent variable - Affective Commitment.
 ***FIW – Family Interference with Work.
 ***D – Dummy variable.

Table 1.4 indicates the results for hierarchical regression analysis for affective commitment. The results show that none of number of dependents moderates the relationship between work-family balance and employee commitment as the p-values for all relationships were insignificant ($p > .05$). This consistent with a study done by Siu (2014) where all of the study’s models showed insignificant moderation of number of dependent towards the relationship between family interference with work and affective commitment. This indicates that no matter how many dependents TVABC staff might have, it did not affect the relationship between work-family balance and affective commitment.

Table 1 3:
Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Continuance Commitment

Variable	Standardized β Coefficient			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Family Interference with Work	.224	.259	.177	.213
FIWxD	-.410	-.134	.210	-.948
No. of Dependents	.100	.091	-.275	.979
R	.222	.219	.246	.230
R²	.049	.048	.060	.053
R² Δ	.001	.001	.014	.007
F Δ	.265	.231	2.633	1.343
Significance F Δ	.607	.632	.106	.248

***Dependent variable – Continuance Commitment.
 ***FIWW – Family Interference with Work.
 ***D – Dummy variable.

Table 1.4 indicates the hierarchical regression analysis for continuance commitment. Based on the p-value, all four models showed insignificant values where p

>.05. It can be concluded that the number of dependents did not moderate the relationship between work-family balance and continuance commitment. This result was also consistent with Siu (2014) where the number of dependents did not moderate the relationship between work-family balance and continuance commitment. This implies that even if TVABC staff had more than nine (9) dependents, the relationship between work-family balance and continuance commitment was not affected. From the hierarchical regression analysis, it can be concluded that even when the respondents had more than nine (9) dependents, TVABC staff were still committed to their work. The regression analysis stated that family interference with work affects employee commitment. However, even if the number of dependents increases, it did not wither increase or reduce the staff' commitment towards TVABC.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Employee Commitment

Employee commitment plays an important role for any organization. In a study done by Dixit and Bhati (2012) has revealed that employee commitment may have effects on productivity, intention to leave and satisfaction level. It is important for organizations to evaluate the level of employee commitment among their employees. By doing so, the organization will be able to reduce additional cost occurring for training that resulted in training new employees. Dixit and Bhati (2012) stated committed employees tend to have higher productivity than less committed employees. This will help the organization to boost its productivity by ensuring their employees are committed to the organization.

Another implication of studying employee commitment is that the organization will be able to determine the satisfaction level of its employees. Dixit and Bhati (2012) stated that committed employees experience higher job satisfaction level and their intention to leave the organization is much lower compared to less committed employees. This would help the organization to reduce costs to hire and train new employees if the turnover rate is low. Salleh, Nair and Harun (2012) stated that there are financial consequences associated with high turnover rate due to the need of recruiting, selecting and training of new employees. Besides that, turnover may disrupt the productivity and performance of the company.

Work-Family Balance

Work-family balance has several advantages and disadvantages. One of it is to determine the job satisfaction level. Azeem and Akhtar (2014) and Sakthivel and Jayakrishnan (2012) revealed that work-family balance has a positive relationship with job satisfaction level. This indicates that the better the work-family balance, the higher the job satisfaction level.

Besides that, another advantage of work-family balance is that it can help employees to determine the best way of doing work. Ramos, Mustafa, and Chin (2012) stated that imbalance in work-family balance could lead to stress. Therefore, employees may find better ways for their workers to do their work. By evaluating work-family balance, organizations may be able to determine which domain affecting their employees the most, whether it is work or family. Amstad, Meier, Fasel, Elfering and Semmer (2011) stated that work-family balance affects several outcomes, which were work-related and family-related. Therefore, for organizations, it may be helpful for them to evaluate work-family

balance to determine the best way of doing work.

Studying the work-family balance by employees also helps organization to determine the turnover intention among its employees. After evaluating the best ways of doing work, employees may be able to reduce turnover intention among employees as the new ways of working may help in enhancing the balance between work life and family life (Xu, 2008).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The effect of work-family balance on employee commitment among TVABC staff can be evaluated from the regression analysis between both variables. The relationship between work interference with family with employee commitment was insignificant. This shows that even if work interferes with family, it did not affect the employee commitment among TVABC staff. Whenever work demands interfere with family demands, their commitment towards their work did not get affected. Even if the staff had to spend extra hours for job or had to miss their family time, their commitment towards TVABC remains the same. Even when they are at home and required to come to the office, it did not affect their work-family balance and it shows that the staff is committed to their job. However, family interference with work was found to have a significant effect on employee commitment. This indicates that whenever the employee's work was disrupted by family demands, his or her commitment towards TVABC was increased. Logically, due to the fact that when work demands interfere with family demands, the commitment towards TVABC remains the same, it shows that employees

were committed to their work and what they do. Probably that was the reason why when family demands interfere with their work; their commitment got affected because they cannot focus on their work. Thus, reduces their attention towards their work. In order to be able to finish their work, they had to be more committed by spending more hours in the office or bring the work and finish it at home.

The results indicated that even work-family balance was moderately related to employee commitment; however, the number of dependents did not moderate the relationship. The relationships were found to be insignificant. This implies that for staff that did not have any dependents or even had more than nine (9) dependents, their commitment towards TVABC remains the same. The results from the hierarchical regression analyses also imply that when the work-family balance level is high among TVABC staff, their commitment towards TVABC also increases. In a research done by Ch. et al. (2014), the relationship between work-family conflict and employee commitment was found to be significant, which was similar with this study. Perhaps due to the economy of Malaysia or employment opportunities, the staff realized that they need to remain committed towards TVABC whether they like it or not. Besides that, probably due to the fact the staff had dependents or commitments; it made them committed to work in TVABC. Probably TVABC staff put their work as the main priority. Judging from the relationship between work interference with family that did not affect employee commitment, probably the staff had support from their family to be committed to their work and offer to help with babysitting or care giving (Siu, 2014).

Recommendations

For Future Research.

This study was done by using the number of dependents as a moderating variable. The moderating variable included children, parents and siblings whom the respondents were taking care of. As in our knowledge, very few researches were done to examine the relationship between work-family balance and employee commitment with number of dependents as moderating variable. Perhaps a research done by Siu (2014) was the first research done in Malaysia to examine the relationship between work-family balance and employee commitment with number of dependents as moderating variable. Therefore, it is recommended that more researches to be done examining the same variables in Malaysia. This study was done only on TVABC staff which represented a specific and unique characteristic since all staff in TVABC were Malay and Muslims. The nature of TVABC as a broadcasting organization was also unique as no other researches was done on a such specific working nature. Other researches were done with the same concept in Malaysia; however, it involved various working natures and backgrounds such as banking, health and education (Mohammadi, Porkiani & Beheshtifar, 2014; Hatam, Jalali, Askarian & Kharazmi, 2016). Therefore, it is recommended that such research should be done that involves other broadcasting organizations in Malaysia. Perhaps different ethnicities and religions may have different effects of number of dependents on the relationship between work-family balance and employee commitment.

For TVABC: The results showed that staff were facing with disruptions in their work from family demands and it had affected their commitment towards their work. Probably it derived from the lack of understanding from family members towards the staff's responsibilities at work.

Therefore, it is suggested to TVABC management to have a "Family @ Work Day" where every employee is allowed to bring their family members to the office and see the job scope of the staff. This probably would help the family members to understand the responsibilities of the staff and they will help the staff in the future regarding their work demands and family roles. Besides that, it is recommended that TVABC management to study the main reasons that contribute to staff's tension and anxiety from family responsibilities and try to find the best ways to overcome the issues. For example, if the staff often had to leave work due to their children's health, probably TVABC could implement working flexibility where the staff is allowed to do their work at home so that the stress level that affects their performance could be reduced. Arif and Farooqi (2014) stated that when the employee is committed to his or her work, the productivity of the organization increases as well. Many researches also highlighted that work-family imbalance could lead to many negative outcomes such as burnout, job dissatisfaction, emotional exhaustion and turnover intention (Farradina & Halim, 2015; Karatepe, 2013; Juhdi, Pa'wan, & Hansaram, 2013).

Based on the results, we also would like to suggest for TVABC management to establish a nursery at the office where employees who were not able to leave their children at home due to emergencies or other reasons could bring their children to work to ensure their children were been taken care of without neglecting their work. Instead of taking an emergency leave and their colleagues had to take over their workload, some staff preferred to bring their children to work (Personal Interview, 2015). Judging from the results where the continuance commitment was higher than affective commitment, probably by having a

nursery at the office could help increase the staff affective commitment instead of having staff that work in TVABC only because they had to, not because they want to. The results indicated higher continuance commitment compared to affective commitment among TVABC staff that showed that TVABC staff lack sense of emotional attachment towards TVABC and they are forced to work in TVABC probably due to many reasons. Perhaps by paying attention to their personal needs may strengthen the emotional attachment of TVABC staff towards the company.

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