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WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT AND EMPLOYEE JOB SATISFACTION: A COMPARISON OF STATE-OWNED AND FOREIGN-INVESTED ENTERPRISES IN VIETNAM



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ABSTRACT

Work and family issues have been long discussed in academic and practices. Work affects family and personal life and vice versa. The relationship of work and family could lead to positive consequences (e.g. Improved skills, morale) or negative consequences (e.g. Conflict, strain, exhaustion) to employees. The aims of this paper is to investigate the effects of work-family conflict on job satisfaction and compare the differences between employees working in State-owned enterprises (SOEs) and Foreign-invested enterprises (FIEs) in Vietnam. Respondents for this study were obtained from 49 employees from SOEs and 35 employees from FIEs in Vietnam. Descriptive analysis, independent-sample t-test and hierarchical regression analysis were conducted to analyse the data. The results of the study reveal that job satisfaction were found to be significantly different, but work-tofamily conflict and family-to-work conflict were not significantly differ between the employees from SOEs and FIEs. Moreover, work-tofamily conflict (WIF) and family-to-work (FIW) conflict are not the significant predictors for employee job satisfaction in both enterprises. The findings suggest that cultural value affects the link between workfamily conflict and job satisfaction to some extent. Research limitation and recommendation for future research on this topic were discussed.

1. INTRODUCTION

Human Capital Theory (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2011) stated that employee is a vital asset for an organisation where "*employees own knowledge, skills and capabilities and companies do not own them.*" Employees with low job satisfaction will lead to various detriments effects on their performance as well as the organisation performance (Davar & Bala, 2012). Therefore, it is important to identify precursors of employees' job satisfaction in order to achieve the goals of the high performance

organisation and one of the main factors influence employee satisfaction is work-family conflict (Rathi & Barath, 2013). Work and family issues have been long discussed in academic and practices where work is expected to affect family and personal life and vice versa. The conflict of work and family could lead to positive or negative consequences to employees such as satisfaction (Rathi & Barath, 2013), turnover intentions (Panatik *et al.*, 2011), emotional exhaustion (Zhang *et al.*, 2012), and mental health (Panatik *et al.*, 2011). Moreover, the issue of work-family conflict being more complicated owing to changes in economic, globalisation and equal employment opportunities (Hughes & Bozionelos, 2007). In addition, most of the researches on work-life balance toward employee job satisfaction were done in a Western context, and limited research in this field of study found in transitional economy context in Asian countries. Thus, it is critical to formulate an effective theoretical framework in the study of work-life balance in the context of developing countries, specifically in Vietnam.

Vietnam economy grows tremendously and became one of the fastest developing countries in South East Asia owing to the economic reformation called "Doi moi" or renovation policy introduced in 1986 (Fukase, 2014). The government of Vietnam practiced restructuring of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and promoting foreign invested enterprises (FIEs) in Vietnam. There are about 2.7 million Vietnamese works in Foreign investment sector in 2013, accounting for 25 percent of total labour force, whilst the number of those in SOEs is about 1.6 million people, representing 15 percent of the labour force in 2013 (Vietnam, General Statistic Office, 2013). This research focuses on analysing the different experience of employees from SOEs and FIEs on work-family conflict and job satisfaction in Vietnam. Furthermore, the current research also examines the relationship between the two constructs of work-family conflict (work-family conflict and family-work conflict) on employee job satisfaction in both enterprises. Most of the research found that work-family conflicts significantly associated with job related behaviours such as stress, struggles, tensions (Amstad et al., 2011) and emotional exhaustion (Zhang et al., 2012). However, up to date, there is limited study examining the association between work-family conflict and job satisfaction in the context of Vietnam. Therefore, this research is aim to fill the gap by studying the work-family conflict in Vietnamese context. Difference in job satisfaction and its predictors between workers in SOEs and FIEs in Vietnam has been discussed in literature recently (Nguyen, 2011; Wang et al., 2015), nevertheless, most of the studies concentrated on workplace variables (Wang et al., 2015) rather than individual's work-family conflict. Thus, this research fills this gap by examining whether individual work-family conflict might impede satisfactory to the job or if there any differences in the level of work-family conflict and job satisfaction between SOEs' and FIEs' employees.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Work-family conflict

Greenhaus & Beutell (1985) define work-family conflict as "a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures of 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". Some researchers (Allen, 2012; Netemeyer et al., 1996) suggested that work-family conflict consists of two constructs, work-family conflict (WIF) and family-wok conflict (FIW). Netemeyer et al.,(1996) state that work-family conflict (WIF) is a form of inter-role conflict in which general demands of, time devoted to, and strain created by the job interfere with performing family-related responsibilities. It is believed that viewing work-family conflict as the one-dimensional concept might be insufficient (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985) as empirical evidences have shown each dimension has different precursors and consequences. Scholars in this field of study hold different point of view on the importance of each dimension (Kinnunen et al., 2010; Zhao and Namasivayam, 2012). Hence, it is critical to distinguish WIF and FIW as two distinct facets and this research study the different impact of both constructs independently.

2.1.1. Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction defines as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences" (Locke, 1976). Happiness at work or feeling satisfied with work is crucial for employees and organisations. A recent meta-analysis found that higher employee job satisfaction relates to higher customer satisfaction (Mendoza & Maldonado, 2014). Employees with more job satisfaction also perform better at work (Davar & Bala, 2012), have more organisational commitments (Magnini *et al.*, 2011), less likelihood of turnover intention (Chen *et al.*, 2015), and positively link to perceived organisational value (Edmans, 2012). Furthermore, higher job satisfaction is involved in lower work-to-family conflict (Chen *et al.*, 2015), more subjective wellbeing like life satisfaction, happiness (Halkos & Bousinakis, 2010). Hence, employees with higher job satisfaction will produce various benefits to their own performance as well as contributing to the organisation's performance.

2.1.2. The relationship between work-family conflict and job satisfaction

The linkage between work-family interferes and job satisfaction can be explained by the role theory and the scarcity theory. The role theory proposed that people hold multiple roles, in which "work and family roles are the two most important life roles for most people" (Grandey et al., 2005). However, these roles are performed under limited resources and the resources spend for one role (e.g. Family rules) might be exhausted by resources assign for another role (e.g. Work roles) (Goode, 1960; Michel et al., 2011). Hence, when there is a threat to a role, people are likely to assess negatively antecedents of the threat to a role (Shockley & Singla, 2011). Furthermore, employees who experience WIF regularly could produce negative attitude or behaviour to job, resulting to lower job satisfaction and produce withdrawal behaviours like quitting job to eliminate stress (Zhao and Namasivayam, 2012). On the other hand, Nohe & Sonntag (2014) explain the significant relationship between FIW and job satisfaction, particularly, when family roles interfere with work roles (FIW), it is increasingly likelihood of unfinished work responsibilities, and then raising unfavourable feelings to organisational arrangements like the job itself which in turn creates adverse feelings to work or impedes work performance, causing lower job satisfaction. Review from literatures found that the relationship between work-family conflict and job satisfaction is frequently discussed, but there are some inconsistent with the findings on the relationship between two constructs (Choi & Kim, 2012; Rathi & Barath, 2013). Therefore, there is a need to clearly justify the contribution of both WIF and FIW toward job satisfaction, specifically in the context of Vietnamese employees.

2.2. Vietnamese state-owned enterprises (SOEs) versus foreign-invested enterprises (FIEs)

Vietnamese SOEs are highly structured and formal. Vietnamese SOEs are involved in various economic sectors such as oil and gas, financial and manufacturing sector. They are low in productivity and highly resistant to change and lacked flexibility (Schaumburg-Müller *et al.*, 2010). Moreover, standard wage applied in SOEs employees is not effectively motivated for higher work effort which decreased within-period, productivity, and lower future productivity in SOEs (Pham, 2011). On the other hand, FIEs in Vietnam play a vital role in the development of national export competitiveness. Most FIEs are involved in import substitution industries like automobile, electronics, and machinery (Schaumburg-Müller *et al.*, 2010). Fukase (2014) studied on Vietnam Household Living Standards for the years 2002 and 2004, found that FIEs' employees earned a higher salary than those in SOEs and reported a higher level of education as well as larger than the average wage premium. Most Vietnamese employees feel more interested and satisfied to work with FIE companies and they have lower intention to quit (Nguyen and Nguyen, 2011).Since both types of enterprises apply different strategies to attract and retain their employees, it is important for researchers to identify the factors that affect job satisfaction in those companies.

2.2.1. Work-family conflict and job satisfaction in Vietnam context

Economic and social transformations have led to major changes in family structure in Vietnam. The family structure has changed from extended family to nuclear family where the size of the family is getting smaller with lesser number of children in a family. In addition, the numbers of single-parent households, working females and working elder are increasing (Vietnam: General Statistics Office.

2013). Moreover, economic uncertainty, organisational restructures and increased competition result in increased work intensification and high pressure at work to employees. Vietnamese employees are expected to perform better, working for longer hours and even considered the importance of work roles over family roles which were found to be the main contributors of work-life conflicts and led to job dissatisfaction (Mai & Thuy, 2015). There are some studies on job satisfaction conducted in the Vietnamese context (Nguyen, 2011; Wang *et al.*, 2015), nevertheless, there is limited study in comparing the differences in job satisfaction level between SOEs and non-SOEs (FIEs and private enterprises) in Vietnam. This research took into consideration of the review of literature from the perspective of work-family conflict and job satisfaction in order to address the research gaps in Vietnamese context. Therefore, the following research hypotheses were proposed.

H1: The greater level of work-to-family (WIF) conflict experienced the lower job satisfaction of employees in FIEs and SOEs

H2: The greater level of family-to-work conflict (FIW) experienced the lower job satisfaction of employees in FIEs and SOEs

H3: There is a difference between the level of work-to-family conflicts experienced by the employees in FIEs and SOEs.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Participants

The population for the study comprised of Vietnamese employees working in two state-owned enterprises and two foreign-invested enterprises in Hanoi, Vietnam. In total, 84 management staff's emails were received from the Human Resource Division of the four participated companies. The stratified random sampling design was used to classify the respondent into two subgroups: SOEs staff and FIEs staff. This method is the most effective in comparison between two groups (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). Questionnaires were sent through e-mail to the 84 staff members (49 SOEs staff and 35 FIEs staff). A total of 68 (81%) returned questionnaires comprising of 36 respondents from SOEs and 32 respondents from FIEs.

3.2. Measurement

The predictor variables used in this research were work-to-family conflict (WIF) and family-towork (FIW) conflicts, whereas the dependent variable was job satisfaction. The two independent variables were measured by ten items derived from Netemeyer *et al.* (1996) study. Five items were used to measure work-to-family conflict and another five items were used to measure family-towork conflict. All items were scored by participants by using a 7-point Likert scales, which anchored from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. The dependent variable, job satisfaction was measured by thirty-six items derived from the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) (Spector,1997), which contains nine dimensions: pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, operating conditions, co-workers, nature of work and communication. All items were scored by participants by using a 6-point Likert scales, which anchored from 1 = disagree very much to 6 = agree very much.

3.3. Methods of Analysis

SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) version 22.0 was used to analyse the collected data. Descriptive and frequency analyses used to explain the distribution of respondents. The independent t - test was used to compare mean scores of research variables between two groups in order to justify the differences in research variables between SOEs staff and FIEs staff. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis was used to predict the contribution of independent variables (WIF, FIW) on job satisfaction from each type of organisation.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Profile of respondents

Participants were divided into two samples: staff in SOEs and staff in FIEs. In total, 36 staff in SOEs (52.9%) and 32 staff in FIEs (47.1%) participated. The majority of respondents is in the age range of 18-29 for both SOEs (91.7 %) and FIEs (96.9%). The proportions of female and male respondents in FIEs & SOEs are distributed equally. The highest educational qualifications of the respondents are Master degree, but the percentage of SOEs respondents holding a Master degree (13.9 %) is twice as much as FIEs respondents (6.3 %). Most respondents from SOEs are holding a Bachelor degree (80.6 %) and the minority of respondents holds a Diploma (5.6 %). Among FIEs respondents, most of them have a Bachelor degree (93.8 %). As regards to marital status, 75% of respondents from both SOEs & FIEs are single and the rest were married (SOEs: 25 %; FIEs: 21.9 %). The majority of respondents had no child (77.8 % of SOEs and 81.3 % of FIEs), except only 3.1 % of FIEs staff had 3 children while 11.1 % of SOEs staff and 12.5 % of FIEs staff had one child.

Variables	SOEs (n = 3	6)	FIEs $(n = 32)$			
Variables	Frequency	(%)	Frequency	(%)		
Age group (years)						
18-29 years	33	91.7	31	96.9		
30 - 39 years	3	8.3	1	3.1		
Gender						
Male	15	41.7	16	50		
Female	21	58.3	16	50		
Educational level	•					
Diploma	2	5.6	0	0		
Bachelor's degree	29	80.6	30	93.8		
Master's degree	5	13.9	2	6.3		
Marital status	•					
Married	9	25	7	21.9		
Single	27	75	24	75		
Number of children	•					
None	28	77.8	26	81.3		
One child	4	11.1	4	12.5		
Two children	0	0	0	0		
Three children	0	0	1	3.1		

 Table-1. Descriptive statistics of demographic information across groups

4.2. Differences between SOEs and FIEs employees on WIF, FIW and Job Satisfaction

The independent-samples T-test was used to test the mean differences in WIF, FIW and job satisfaction between staff in SOEs and FIEs.

Table-2. Difference in means of key variables of SOEs and FIEs							
Variables	Organization type	n	Μ	SD	SE	Т	Sig.
WIF	SOE	36	16.69	6.33	1.06	0 555	0.58
WIF	FIE	32	17.59	7.04	1.25	-0.555	
FIW	SOE	36	15.36	4.84	.81	-0.248	0.81
	FIE	32	15.69	6.01	1.06		
JS –	SOE	36	124.31	14.77	2.46	-3.05	0.003
	FIE	32	135.88	16.49	2.92		

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On average, greater level of WIF was experienced by employees in FIEs (M = 17.59, SE = 1.25) than employees in SOEs (M = 16.69, SE = 1.06). This difference was not significant t(66) = -0.56, p >0.05, and it presents a small-sized effect r = 0.07. In addition, greater level of FIW was

experienced by employees in FIEs (M = 15.69, SE = 1.06) than employees in SOEs (M = 15.36, SE = 0.81). This difference was not significant t(66) = -0.25, p >0.05, and it presents a small-sized effect r = 0.03. The mean differences in job satisfaction showed that greater level of job satisfaction was experienced by employees in FIEs (M = 235.88, SE = 2.92) than employees in SOEs (M = 124.31, SE = 2.46) and the difference was significant t(66) = -3.05, p <0.01, and it presents a medium-sized effect r = 0.35. Hence, in answering Hypothesis 3, researcher found that there is no difference in the levels of WIF and FIW experience of the staff in SOEs and the staff in FIEs, however, staff with FIEs experience higher level of job satisfaction in comparison with the staff in SOEs.

4.3. Hypotheses testing

Two-step hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to test hypotheses: WIF and FIW predict job satisfaction. Potential confounders (gender, age and educational level) were entered in the first step, WIF or FIW was entered in a second step. The regression statistics are shown in Table 3 and Table 4 for SOEs staff and Table 5 and Table 6 for FIEs staff.

4.3.1. Relationship between WIF and Job Satisfaction for SOEs and FIEs Employees

Variable	В	SE B	β	F	R2	ΔR2
Step 1						
Constant	151.26	20.73				
Gender	3.72	5.04	0.13	1.59	0.13	0.13
Age	-11.44	9.12	-0.22			
Educational level	-6.43	5.63	-0.19			
Step 2						
Constant	155.50	24.71				
Gender	4.14	5.28	0.14	1.10	0.10	0.00
Age	-11.33	9.26	-0.22	1.18	0.13	0.00
Educational level	-7.26	6.25	-0.22			
WIF	-0.14	0.44	-0.06			

Table-3. Regression analyses on job satisfaction &work-to-family conflict in SOEs

Notes: B - Unstandardised Coefficients; SE B - Std. Error; β - Standardised Coefficients

Results in Table 3 revealed that the combination of the demographic variables (gender, age and educational level) from SOEs employees and work-to-family conflict did not significantly predict job satisfaction [F(3,32) = 1.59, p > 0.05; F(4,31) = 1.18, p > 0.05; respectively]. The change in R² from model 1 to model 2 was 0.003, and this value was not significantly predict of job satisfaction ($\beta = -0.06$, SE B = 0.44, p > 0.05).

Table-4. Regression analyses on job satis	sfaction &work-to-family conflict in FIEs
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Variable	В	SE B	β	F	R ²	ΔR^2
Step 1						
Constant	207.30	39.69				
Gender	-10.27	5.84	-0.32	2.06	0.18	0.18
Age	-11.27	16.22	-0.12			
Educational level	-14.50	11.87	-0.22			
Step 2						
Constant	226.86	39.96				
Gender	-4.36	6.59	-0.13	0.41	0.00	0.00
Age	-17.30	16.05	-0.18	2.41	0.26	0.08
Educational level	-17.06	11.56	-0.25			
WIF	-0.82	0.47	-0.35			

Notes: B - Unstandardised Coefficients; SE B - Std. Error; β - Standardised Coefficients

Results in Table 4 revealed that the combination of the demographic variables (gender, age and educational level) from FIEs employees and work-to-family conflict did not significantly predict job satisfaction [F(3,28) = 2.06, p > 0.05; F(4,27) = 2.41, p > 0.05; respectively]. The change in R²from model 1 to model 2 was 0.082, and this value was not significant (p > 0.05). The variable of work-to-family conflict for FIEs was not a significant predictor of job satisfaction ($\beta = -0.35$, SE B = 0.47, p > 0.05).

Hypothesis one presumed that WIF will influence employee's job satisfaction for both organisations. However, the findings showed that there is no relationship between WIF and employee job satisfaction in both organisations. Therefore, the first hypothesis was not supported.

4.3.2. Relationship between FIW and job satisfaction for SOEs and FIEs employees

Variable	В	SE B	β	F	\mathbb{R}^2	ΔR^2
Step 1						
Constant	151.26	20.73				
Gender	3.72	5.04	0.13	1.59	0.13	0.13
Age	-11.44	9.12	-0.22			
Educational level	-6.43	5.63	-0.19			
Step 2						
Constant	162.38	21.86			0.18	0.05
Gender	5.44	5.11	0.18	1 70		
Age	-11.25	8.98	-0.21	1.73		
Educational level	-7.26	5.58	-0.22			
FIW	-0.73	0.51	-0.24			

Table-5. Regression analyses on job satisfaction & family-to-work conflict in SOE

Notes: B - Unstandardised Coefficients; SE B - Std. Error; β - Standardised Coefficients

Results in Table 5 revealed that the combination of the demographic variables (gender, age and educational level) from SOEs employees and family-to-work conflict did not significantly predict job satisfaction [F(3,32) = 1.59, p > 0.05; F(4,31) = 1.73, p > 0.05; respectively]. The change in R² from model 1 to model 2 was 0.053, and this value was not significant (p > 0.05). The variable of family-to-work conflict was not a significantly predictor of job satisfaction ($\beta = -0.24$, SE B = 0.51, p > 0.05).

Table-6. Regression analyses on job satisfaction & work-to-family conflict in FIEs

Variable	В	SE B	β	F	R ²	ΔR^2
Step 1						
Constant	207.30	39.69				
Gender	-10.27	5.84	-0.32	2.06	0.18	0.18
Age	-11.27	16.22	-0.12			
Educational level	-14.50	11.87	-0.22			
Step 2						
Constant	209.70	38.23				
Gender	-5.84	6.14	-0.18	0.47	0.07	0.00
Age	-14.22	15.70	-0.15	2.47	0.27	0.09
Educational level	-11.73	11.53	-0.18			
FIW	-0.92	0.52	-0.34			

Notes: B - Unstandardised Coefficients; SE B - Std. Error; β - Standardised Coefficients

Results in Table 6 revealed that the combination of the demographic variables (gender, age and educational level) from FIEs employees and family-to-work conflict did not significantly predict job satisfaction. Furthermore, this change in \mathbb{R}^2 was not significant (F(1,27) = 2.47, p > 0.05). In

addition, the variable of family-to-work conflict was not a significant predictor of job satisfaction ($\beta = -0.34$, SE B = 0.52, p > 0.05).

Hypothesis two presumed that FIW would predict employee's job satisfactions for both organisations. However, the findings showed that there is no relationship between FIW and employee job satisfaction in both organisations. Therefore, hypothesis two was not supported.

5. DISCUSSION

The objective of this study is to examine whether there is a different between employees from SOE and FIE about their experience of work-life conflict toward job satisfaction. The results obtained from this study indicated that there is no significant different between SOEs staff and FIEs staff on the level of work-family conflict and family-work conflict. Since the majority of respondents in this study were single with no children, they might experience conflict demands between work and family, but not at the highest level in comparison with employees who are married and with children. This is consistent with Huffman et al. (2013) study who found that workers at this life stage (single) just start their career and family, so they have low job responsibilities and family duties, therefore, their experience of work-family conflict are low and consistent. However, there is a difference on the job satisfaction of employees from both organisations in which SOEs staff reported lower level job satisfaction in comparison to FIEs staff. This is consistent with the finding from Nguyen (2011) which showed that employees from FIEs reported higher satisfaction than employees from SOE in Vietnam. This is due to the lack of recognition, less opportunities for promotion, lack of flexibility and higher level of resistance to change for employees in SOEs (Nguyen, 2011). Moreover, hierarchical regression conducted to justify the relationship between WIF and FIW toward job satisfaction. The results showed that both WIF and FIW are not significant influence employee's job satisfaction in both state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and foreigninvested companies (FIEs). This finding is consistent with Lu et al. (2010) study that found that "WIF may have a less damaging effect on collectivists due to their less rigid demarcation of the work/family boundary and greater tolerance of spill over between the two life domains". As the job is considered as a way to carry out family duties in collectivists (Arvee *et al.*, 1999), working long hours or bring work tasks at home are accepted when these activities contribute to family welfare.

6. LIMITATION OF RESEARCH

Generalisability of this study was restricted by occupations and characteristics of organisations which located in Hanoi, capital in the North of Vietnam. Hence, this study does not represent other companies in the Central and the South of Vietnam. This study used full quantitative approach with all variables measured by the self-reporting method. This method may involve social desirability bias that exists when participants answer questions in the manner that others prefer such as those tend to over-report attitudes and behaviours towards socially acceptable or under-report unacceptable attitudes and behaviours (Zerbe & Paulhus, 1987). It is worth noting that the Vietnamese are unfamiliar with filling surveys, so, they might report inaccurately their thoughts and opinions (Nguyen, 2011). Accordingly, it is assumed that social desirability bias may affect Vietnamese employees in this study.

7. RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study suggests examining the differences in work-family conflict, family-work conflict and job satisfaction among working adults between different types of enterprises, and the linkage between these constructs. It is recommended that future researches should duplicate this study in different samples gathered from different contexts. A similar study could be conducted in different industries in order to increase the generalisability of the results. Besides, in order to gain a better understanding, future studies may use qualitative methods like focus groups or face-to-face interviews, which can explain any doubts, misunderstandings in the questionnaire for respondents

and help better understanding both individual and organisational aspects related to the research topic (Sekaran & Boougie, 2013). Moreover, it is recommended that Hygiene factors such as pay and benefits, supervision, working conditions and job security can be used as mediators in studying the relationship between WIF and job satisfaction as well as FIW and job satisfaction since the Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory proposed that Hygiene factors have an effect on the job satisfaction.

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