Supervisory Support as a Moderator of Work-Family Demands and Life Satisfaction among Malaysian Female Academicians

Meguellati Achour, Mohd Roslan Mohd Nor and Mohd Yakub Zulkifli Mohd Yusoff

1Division of Research and Development,
2Department of Islamic History and Civilization,
3Department of Al-Quran and Al-Hadith,
Academy of Islamic Studies, University of Malaya, 50603 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Submitted: Nov 9, 2013; Accepted: Dec 16, 2013; Published: Dec 20, 2013

Abstract: The present study was conducted to examine the relationship between work-family demands and employee life satisfaction, as well as the role of supervisory support in moderating work-family demands and life satisfaction. The researchers used 300 female academic staff as respondents, working in the Research Universities of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Their ages ranged from 30 to 60 years. Findings show that the effect of work-family demands on life satisfaction is significant for female employees that the supervisory support of employees has an effect in the increase of life satisfaction of employees. Moreover, the hypothesis was proved as the supervisory support was found to moderate the relationship between work-family demands and life satisfaction.

Key words: Work-Family Demands • Work-Family Conflict • Life Satisfaction • Supervisory Support • Well-being

INTRODUCTION

Conflict between work demands and family roles has become a very serious and contentious issue in the 21st century. Work-family conflict (WFC) has been defined by Greenhaus and Beutell [1], Kahn et al. [2] as one type of inter-role conflict in which the role demands stemming from work-demands or from family roles are unsuited to the role demands originating from family, work or other domains. Work demands in this paper, mainly involves work hours, work schedule and work overload, while family demands involve caring for children for young and middle-aged employees. According to Kahn et al. [2] the role is the result of expectations of others concerning accurate behavior in a particular position. The conflict of role is effectively described as a psychological strain that is brought about by conflicting pressures exerted by the role. Role theory suggests that such a conflict occurs when individuals engage in multiple roles that are unsuited [3].

One of the most critical barriers to female academicians’ improvement is conflict between work demands and family roles. In the case of Malaysia, most administrative and leadership positions in both public and private sectors have been filled up by females, reflecting that these multiple roles can contribute towards work and family life conflict [4]. Therefore, the main sources of these conflicts come from long working hours, inflexible work schedules, office work overload, household work and issues related to children and husbands. Some studies have shown that work overload, work hours and work schedules are significant predictors of work-family conflict and are linked to lower job satisfaction, life satisfaction and family satisfaction. For example a high level work-family conflict holds a positive correlation to high working hours [5-10], high work-family conflict is positively linked to long working hours [6, 11-15], also high work-family conflict is positively linked to work schedule inflexibility [16] and work overload and irregular work schedules have a strong positive correlation to work-family conflict [17, 18].

Moreover, some studies have shown that an increased parental demand results in higher work-family conflict. Noor [19] reported that the number of children at