



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN BUSINESS & SOCIAL SCIENCES



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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v8-i14/5217>

DOI: 10.6007/IJARBSS/v8-i14/5217

Received: 27 Sept 2018, Revised: 19 Oct 2018, Accepted: 30 Nov 2018

Published Online: 17 Dec 2018

In-Text Citation: (Latip, Tak, Rahaman, & Abdul Kohar, 2018)

To Cite this Article: Latip, H. A., Tak, A. H., Rahaman, M. M., & Abdul Kohar, U. H. (2018). Managing Work-Life-Family Demands towards Job Satisfaction among Family Business Entrepreneurs. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 8(14), 187–199.

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Special Issue: Transforming Community Towards a Sustainable and Globalized Society, 2018, Pg. 187 - 199

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Managing Work-Life-Family Demands towards Job Satisfaction among Family Business Entrepreneurs

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between work-life-family demands and entrepreneurs' job satisfaction in family businesses. Cross-sectional data were collected from 220 staff members, who involve in family business sector in Malaysia. In this study, the major demands in individuals are classified into three major components to be balanced by individuals, i.e., work, life, and family (WLF). The work element taking into account of standard working hours, work pressure and conditions, co-worker relationships, and promotional opportunities. The life component was represented by living standard, level of self-motivation fulfillment, achievement of individual targets, self-compassion, self-care and health, and community development. The last part which is the family component represented another segmentation of responsibility and demands for specific role, which relates to family tasks, collective/familiness targets, family involvement and mutual understanding. The empirical results indicated that work-related demands determine entrepreneurs' job satisfaction, then followed by family-related and life-related (personal) demands. Interestingly, as this study was confined to the micro businesses under the family business sector, this provides valuable findings by uncovering the differences among the antecedents due to the reasoning of work

culture and business management practices. The insights gained from this study could facilitate business strategies and effective human resource policies for business and community sustainable development.

Keywords: Entrepreneurs, Family Business, Family Demands, Job Satisfaction, Work-Life Balance

Introduction

The growth of work demands and difficult personal limitations as well as family situation has led to individual demands conflicts. It is prevalent for organizations, especially in business, to manage as they struggle to help employees overcome work-life- family balance problems. It is interesting that the individual demands might vary in their own context due to generational and life-cycle concepts. Hence, a sequence of life cycles that shapes the changing demands should be considered as a primary marker variable for individual performance and job satisfaction.

Work-life balance is an issue of strategic importance to organizations and having significance to employees especially for family businesses, where employer and employee share and maintain manifold roles in personal, business and family relations. Thus, organizational awareness and management support with respect to implementing work-life balance strategies hinges on an organization's need to enhance work performance that leads to the sustainability of family business.

Haque and Ahmed (2016) highlighted that the existence of work-life balance in itself does not create difficulties and offense within organizations. However, in situations where there are already excessive workloads, under-staffing, and unpredicted tasks, the existence of work-life balance is likely to exacerbate the situations. Therefore, it is significant to understand the factors related to work-life balance in the specific context of family business.

This study focuses on the relationship between work-life balance and priority importance in family businesses. This research explores the affecting factors associated to work-life balance that lead to work performance in family business. It also focuses on certain criteria such as working hours of employees, time spending with family, attitudes towards work-life balance, workload, stress management, job description, motivational aspects, etc.

Literature Review

In recent years, work-life balance has become one of the main interesting topics at the academic, business, political and social level (Grady & McCarthy, 2008; Haar, Russo, Suñe & Ollier-Malaterre, 2014). This phenomenon emerges as a response to demographic, economic and cultural changes such as the multitudes of dual-earner families in the workforce, the transformation of family structures as well as population ageing, technological advances, the growing value of flexibility in time and space at work, various forms of alternative work arrangements and the need to improve human capital management.

Work life balance incorporates an individual ability to manage the multifaceted targets in life. Grady & McCarthy (2008, p.601) defined work-life integration or balance as a process for reconciliation of work, family and individual self-demands and time. The ability to balance the related demands gives

personal satisfaction that mostly transpired in sustainable emotional stability and consistent job performance (Judge & Bono, 2001; Ebie & Alajemba, 2016). Joshi et al. (2002) highlighted that work-life balance is a meaningful achievement and source of enjoyment in people daily life.

It is evident that work-life balance is one of important area to focus on. Previous research suggests that employee well-being impacts not only one's quality of life, but also important organizational outcomes such as job performance, absenteeism, turnover intentions, punctuality and helpful behavior towards co-workers (Judge & Bono, 2001; Goh, Ilies & Wilson, 2015). Considering the degree of competitiveness at the workplace, changes in the market and industry, customer expectations and competitions, the demands of individual is constantly escalating (Guest, 2002; Goh, Ilies & Wilson, 2015). Furthermore, balancing business responsibilities with social life is challenging to most adult phase as they are entangled in sufficing the needs of different ties of network by one single, limited self at a time. Imbalance work and life can lead to a disaster in individual's life (Guest, 2002).

In particular, the theory explains, individuals aim to acquire and maintain resources such as objects (e.g., food), personal characteristics (e.g., self-esteem), conditions (e.g., promotion) and energies (e.g., time). When these resources are threatened or lost, individuals experience stress (Hobfoll, 2001; Goh, Ilies & Wilson, 2015). An increase in specific demands translates into additional resources being required or consumed by the other sphere of domain. Since resources are finite, this leaves fewer resources available to fulfill demands in the other domains. The scenario was explained in Goh, Ilies & Wilson, 2015 that the more time one spends at work, the less time one has to fulfill home demands, and vice versa. Hence, the conflict of roles may be created between the the domains as a result of insufficient resources being available to fulfill demands in both roles.

Expectancy-Value (EV) model and social support literature to guide our theorizing. According to the EV model, expectancy and value for engaging to the commitment are the two components in promoting overall motivation for achieving individual aims. The EV model also posits that expectancy and value are shaped over time by individual and contextual factors (Barron & Hulleman, 2015). These factors may include personal demographics (e.g., gender, culture, education), past experiences of success and failure, an individual's goals and self-concept, and the influence of different socializing agents (e.g., networks).

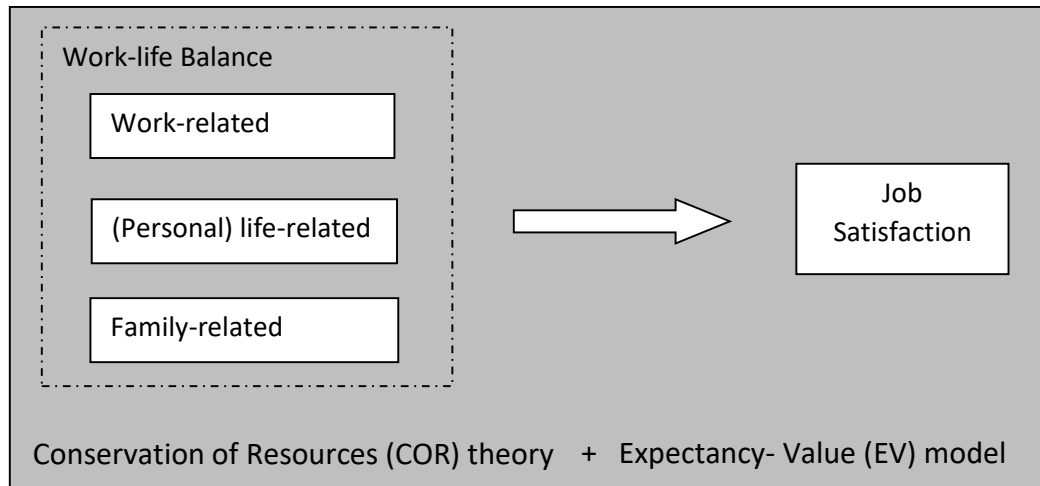


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

Most researchers traditionally classified work-life as two distinct domains that are easily segmentable and non-overlapping in nature (Guest, 2002). However, the contemporary perspective presents a multilevel approach that uncover day-to-day variations in workload may create work-family conflict as well as daily interference between work and family (Goh, Ilies & Wilson, 2015). In this study, it is interestingly within the specific context of family business separable domains to be explored between family and self-demands that explains individual career decision, family business commitment and involvement, governance and succession. Therefore, three factors that contribute to the balance of roles and responsibility are stated as work-related, family-related, and individual-related.

In this study, the major demands in individuals are classified into three categories, i.e., work, life, and family. The work component was measured in terms of standard working hours, work pressure and conditions, co-worker relationships, and promotional opportunities. The life component was represented by living standard, level of self-motivation fulfilment, achievement of individual targets, self-compassion, self-care and health, and community development. The family component represented another segmentation of responsibility and demands for specific role, which relates to family tasks, collective/familiness targets, family involvement and mutual understanding.

Work Demands

In this study, the term work demand is specifically used instead of job demands as the scope is not merely on job or task given. It is more on the individual needs and perspective, related to work performance. Standard working hour may give different work demand in business sector (Johnson & Lipscomb, 2006). At the same time, work pressure and condition can also be among the factors that lead to staff members' comfort and focusing responsively on their work. Tabanelli, et. al., (2008) specified the factors as temporal aspects of employment and the work itself, aspects of work content, work-group, supervision, organizational conditions. Role overload or heavy job demands lead to work pressure that affect employee's physical health as well as psychological well-being (Protas & Thompson, 2006). In addition, co-worker relationships may contribute to work-demand to

individuals (Shahidan et. al. 2016; Au & Leung, 2016). Lastly, the promotional opportunities are seen as individual demand on his/her job as career path (Ramlall, 2014). This specific work-related need will motivate for satisfaction of individual worker.

Life Demands

The life component was represented by living standard, level of self-motivation fulfilment, achievement of individual targets, self-compassion, self-care and health, and community development. As underpinned by the EV model, this domain is based on individual expectancy and value that are developed and may change over time by individual and contextual factors.

In light to the quality of life, it is worth for a research to distinguish the effects of both individual (micro) and group (molar) influences (Zhu, Gardner, & Chen, 2018) stimulated from different domains. In significance to self-attainment, working in family-owned business can be a particularly feasible strategy to flexibility and lifestyle motive. Interestingly, this clarity will promote understanding on the dynamics of individuals' dedication towards their career paths. Hence, it is evident to the call for more research on the interaction of the social context (work/family) and individual differences. In this study, the (personal) life demand is examined by considering individual differences and self-oriented behavior, that lead to self-value and motivation as a foundation.

Family Demands

It is argued that those family businesses that are able to channel family members' commitment toward accomplishing the family firms' goals will experience the greatest growth and entrepreneurship. Especially in family business, norms associated with the family and business systems often compete which can affect family members' commitment to the firm and willingness to cooperate (Eddleston, Morgan, & Pieper, 2014).

The family component represented another segmentation of responsibility and demands for specific role, which relates to family tasks, collective/familiness targets (Eddleston & Morgan, 2014; Frank et. al. 2017; Monroy, Solís & Rodríguez-Aceves, 2015) family involvement (Sharma, 2004) and mutual supportive relationships (Van Auken, & Werbel, 2006).

Job Satisfaction

Expectancy-based theories of motivation generally stipulate that satisfaction follows from the rewards produced by performance (Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001). The logical explanation of the effect of performance on job satisfaction is that of success—performance is satisfying because it brings success in the form of value as perceived by individuals. Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, (2001, p. 392) stated that success and achievement are primary causes of life satisfaction, and so should they be of job satisfaction. In this context, the positive work outcome with personal and family goal attainments will lead to individual satisfaction. In line with Tang, Siu & Cheung (2014), this study examined job satisfaction as dependent to the work-life factors.

The previous research shown that if effective job performance promotes achievement of major goals in work and life, individuals should be more satisfied with their jobs as a result in which progress

toward one's goals is predictive of subjective well-being. Susi (2010) indicated individual job satisfaction due to work-life balance normally shows more psychological effects such as less work-family conflict, less stress at work, and longer tenure of work in specific organization. It is important for businesses to take care of the work-family-life related factors that leads to job satisfaction among the members of business entity.

Work-Life Balance in Family Business

The family-controlled firm or family ownership is the most common form of business organization in the world. Nowadays, family businesses have become a significant element in the corporate economy due to long-term business establishment and high performance track records (Ibrahim & Abdul Samad, 2010). The following characteristics describe in essence what makes family firms distinctive (Hassan, 2014), i.e., the presence of family members; the overlap of family, management and ownership which, in the absence of growth, may render family businesses particularly vulnerable during succession; the unique sources of competitive advantage (like a long-term investment horizon) derived from the interaction between family, management and ownership, especially when family unity is high; the owner's dream of keeping the business in the family (the objective being to ensure business continuity from generation to generation).

One of the advantages of family firms is the sense of being in control of the decision-making. Family owner-managers may also have various views towards their stakeholders, including employees and customers that may affect the quality of their product. The family culture will very much determine the attitudes, values and norms in the related company. The values that family members carry reflect a common purpose for employees and help to establish a sense of identification and commitment (Ibrahim & Abdul Samad, 2010).

Family businesses are unique due to the embeddedness of family relationships within the business (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003). This leads to relationship issues in the family domain, both positive and negative, that affect relationships at work, and vice versa. In terms of work pressure, the stressor emanating from the physical as well as psychological demands of work is likely to be higher for business owners compared to independents and employees (Prottas & Thompson, 2006). It is most likely due to the greater demands on the owner to maintain the organization, they likely feel pressured to work harder than others, especially given the high failure rates of small businesses. In fact, Rahim (1996) found that owners of businesses reported a greater number of stressors, such as role overload, than organizationally-employed managers. In this study, the stressor and work pressure are expected among the members of business entity as the results from familiness and sense of ownership on the family business.

A balanced involvement in work and life roles may reduce continuing work and family conflict (Greenhaus et al., 2003). Interestingly in family business, balanced individuals are fully engaged in both roles (i.e., entrepreneur/business manager, family member) that differ their priorities on work performance. Dhas & Karthikeyan (2015) illustrated their findings saying that, the meaning of work/life balance has chameleon characteristics. It means different things to different groups, and the meaning often depends on the context of the situational urgencies and contextual viewpoint. Hence, the resultant magnitude of role overload is pretty intriguing.

Method

The questionnaire for this study included two main sections. The first section of the questionnaire was designed to elicit demographic and general business information about the respondents. The second of the questionnaire consisted of 23 domain-related needs, for which business members were asked to indicate the perceived importance of the factors. These 23 itemized questions were identified based on a review of relevant literature and two focus group discussions. The questionnaire was structured so that each attribute was rated using a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1, least important to 5, most important, in the Importance part, and from 1, strongly disagree, to 5, strongly agree. Prior to the main survey, a pilot study, consisting of 30 small-medium business owners was conducted. Several items were reworded after the pilot exercise to improve the comprehensibility and clarity of the questionnaire instrument. Using a purposive sampling approach, members of family businesses were approached and given a questionnaire for self-completion.

Table 1. Reliability test

Variables	No. of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Work	7	.935
Life	6	.911
Family	5	.836
Job Satisfaction	5	.891

To assess the reliability of the measures, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated to test the stability of variables retained in each factor, and as shown in Table 1, all the four segment were considered acceptable and a good indication of construct reliability.

Analysis

A total of 220 out of 350 respondents completed the questionnaire in one-month survey period (January 2018), representing a response rate of 62.8 per cent. Of this 220 respondents, 142 (64.5 per cent) were Malaysian and 78 (35.5 per cent) were Malaysian residents, joint-venturer and investors/business owners. Table 2 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of respondents

For All Respondents (N = 220)							
Variables	Items	Frequency	Percent (%)	Variables	Items	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	160	72.7	Nationality	Malaysian	142	64.5
	Female	60	27.3		Others	78	35.5
Age	21-30 years old	130	59.1	Monthly Income	Less than RM 1,000	38	17.3
	31-40 years old	76	34.5		RM 1001- RM5000	158	71.8
	41-50 years old	12	5.5		RM5,001 – RM 10,000	19	8.6
	51 years old & above	2	0.9		More than RM10,001	5	2.3
Marital Status	Single	114	51.8	Number of children	None	152	69.1
	Married	100	45.5		1	30	13.6
	Others	6	2.7		2	26	11.8
					3	12	5.5
Race	Malay	60	27.3				
	Chinese	69	31.4				
	Bumiputera (sons of native)	20	9.1				
	Indian	20	9.1				
	Asian	51	23.2				
Highest Education Level	SPM & Below	46	20.9	Job Description	Staff	26	11.8
	Diploma	84	38.2		Employee	38	17.3
	Undergraduate degree	27	12.3		Management	12	5.5
	Graduate degree	7	3.2		Supervisor	102	46.4
	Post Graduate	5	2.3		Sales and Marketing	24	10.9
	Others	51	23.2		R&D	18	8.2
Length of Service	1-5 years.	144	65.5	Working Hour/Day	8 Hours	90	40.9
	6 years and above	76	34.5		12 Hours	130	59.1
Total		220	100.0	Total		220	100.0

The basic statistics and intercorrelations appear in Table 3. As expected, the correlation scores show significant relationships between the three domain factors with job satisfaction. The results revealed that family-related demands ($r = .972, p = 0.01$) determine entrepreneurs' job satisfaction, then followed by work-related ($r = .967, p = 0.01$) and life-related (personal) demands ($r = .947, p = 0.01$).

Table 3. Correlations for WLF Factors Affecting Job Satisfaction in Family Business

Variables	Work	Life	Family	Job Satisfaction
Work	1			
Life	.923**	1		
Family	.951**	.943**	1	
Job Satisfaction	.967**	.947**	.972**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Findings and Discussion

Our results suggest the significant perceptions of family business members that they are more satisfied at work when the family-related factors are satisfied. It may be due to the nature of family business, which intricately linked family and business reputations. In line with Binz et al. (2017, p.36) family firms simultaneously pursue goals pertaining to both the family and the business system. Family goals are seen as goals the family needs to achieve by itself, as a family. Business-centred goals are goals the family achieves through the business. However, in our study these differences were small in magnitude and in many cases attributable to demographic and family business characteristics, rather than the work arrangements themselves. For example, the majority of respondents are younger than 40 year-old and more likely to be the younger family members or at the early phase of business career development, characteristics associated with family- and work-related factors.

Our findings with respect to work characteristics are consistent with prior research (e.g., Tang, Siu & Cheung 2014): supported the relationship between work-to-family enrichment and job satisfaction. Interestingly, in family business context, the life-related (personal) arrangements and needs diminished or to lessen once the work- and family-domains were considered. Although it is interesting that many of the differences among work arrangements moderated for family business, what is more interesting is that (personal) life factors (i.e., personal living standard, self-motivation fulfilment, achievement of individual targets, self-care and health, and community development) were less related to the outcomes than work- and family- arrangement.

Implications and Conclusion

The management of family businesses should align the three WLF factors in planning career development and advancement programs, management and allocation of human resources and related capitals, and strengthening organizational capacities. The important aspects to be considered by the organization is management of human resources, comprising of members who have their own family life that will lead to be more significant for human resource allocation and planning. Hence, it is in line with utility perspective from social support theory, social support is important as well as the organizational support that are perceived as useful to deal with the WLF challenges.

Considering limitation of resources and opportunities in the developing countries, priority setting with specific focus to Malaysian family business may contribute to capacity building in the community. This study is relevant to fostering sustainable entrepreneurial development, particularly

among the family businesses in Malaysia. Factors that contribute to work-life balance will be identified, therefore provides an insight to design proper guidelines and managerial practices for improving work performance. Future studies can be extended from three-dimensional domains, that may visualize the complicated work-life imbalances in the family business sectors.

Acknowledgement

This work was supported by Universiti Malaysia Sarawak under grant: F01/SpGS/1560/2017.

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