THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERSONALITY, EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS AND WORK-FAMILY SPILLOVER

NURHAMIZA BINTI MUMIN @ OSMAN

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Penyelia
PROF. DR. SYED AZIZI WAFA SYED KHALID WAFA
Profesor
Sekolah Perniagaan & Ekonomi
Universiti Malaysia Sabah

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I hereby declare that the material on this thesis is my own except for quotations, equations, summaries, and references, which have been duly acknowledged.

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Nurhamiza Binti Mumin @ Osman
DB1221004T

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NAME	:	**NURHAMIZA BINTI MUMIN @ OSMAN**
MATRIK NO.	:	**DB1221004T**
TITLE	:	**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERSONALITY, EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS AND WORK-FAMILY SPILLOVER**
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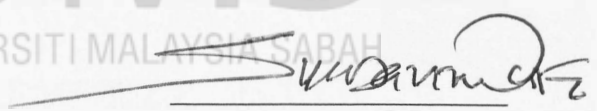
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PROF. DR. SYED AZIZI WAFA SYED KHALID WAFA
Profesor
Sekolah Perniagaan & Ekonomi
Universiti Malaysia Sabah

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ABSTRACT

Individuals respond differently when occupying multiple social roles. Some tend to report positive experiences, whereas others fail to balance work and family responsibilities. This study examined the effects of personality, emotional intelligence (EI) and socio-demographic background on work-family spillover. Service industry employees in five major cities were recruited via e-mail and social media. Questionnaires were distributed to banks, schools, and private and public health care providers. Service companies in Kota Kinabalu, Kuala Lumpur, Shah Alam, Klang and Kuching were included in this survey and data from 531 respondents was collected. Personality and EI effects were analysed using SmartPLS. Regression-based analysis was used to examine the role of socio-demographic background on work-family spillover. Personality was found to be a significant factor in the work-family conflict, but only neuroticism had significant effects on family-to-work enrichment (FWE). Managing one's own emotions, managing others' emotions, and utilizing emotions were shown to be key EI abilities that determine work-family spillover. Socio-demographic factors, such as age, gender, ethnicity, and length of service strongly influenced the family-to-work conflict (FWC). Ethnicity and the level of education further contributed to work-family enrichment. Moreover, ethnicity was shown to play a significant role in the work-to-family conflict (WFC). The findings of this study indicate that ethnicity contributes to different magnitude of work-family experience in multicultural countries, such as Malaysia. Overall, the present work provided empirical data to describe how personality and EI contributed to a positive or a negative work-family spillover experience. It offered a better understanding of the interactions between selected personal and professional characteristics, and work-family conflict and work-family enrichment. The present findings may serve to develop better work arrangements and policies to allow workers to accommodate their multiple social responsibilities.

ABSTRAK

HUBUNGAN DI ANTARA PERSONALITI, KECERDASAN EMOSI, FAKTOR-FAKTOR SOSIODEMOGRAFI DAN LIMPAHAN KERJA-KELUARGA

Individu bertindak balas secara berbeza apabila berhadapan dengan peranan sosial berganda. Setengah-setengah cenderung untuk melaporkan pengalaman yang positif, manakala yang lain gagal untuk mengimbangi tanggungjawab kerja dan keluarga. Kajian ini mengkaji kesan-kesan personaliti, kecerdasan emosi (EI) dan latar belakang sosio-demografi terhadap limpahan kerja-keluarga. Pekerja-pekerja daripada industri perkhidmatan di lima bandar utama direkrut melalui e-mel dan media sosial. Soal-selidik telah diedarkan kepada bank, sekolah, dan pusat penjagaan kesihatan swasta dan awam. Syarikat-syarikat perkhidmatan di Kota Kinabalu, Kuala Lumpur, Shah Alam, Klang dan Kuching terlibat dalam kajian ini dan data daripada 531 responden telah dikumpulkan. Kesan personaliti dan kecerdasan emosi telah dianalisis menggunakan SmartPLS. Analisis berasaskan regresi telah digunakan untuk mengkaji peranan latar belakang sosio-demografi terhadap limpahan kerja-keluarga. Personaliti merupakan faktor penting dalam konflik kerja-keluarga, namun hanya neurositisme mempunyai kesan yang signifikan terhadap pengayaan keluarga menerusi kerja (FWE). Menguruskan emosi sendiri, mengurus emosi orang lain, dan menggunakan emosi didapati merupakan keupayaan EI utama yang menentukan tahap limpahan kerja-keluarga. Faktor socio-demografi seperti umur, jantina, ethnik dan tempoh perkhidmatan mempunyai pengaruh yang kuat terhadap konflik keluarga-kerja (FWC). Etnik dan tahap pendidikan turut menyumbang kepada pengayaan kerja-keluarga. Selain daripada itu, etnik juga memainkan peranan penting dalam konflik kerja-keluarga (WFC). Hasil kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa etnik menyumbang kepada magnitud pengalaman kerja-keluarga yang berbeza di negara pelbagai budaya seperti Malaysia. Secara keseluruhan, kajian ini menyediakan data empirikal yang menggambarkan bagaimana personaliti dan EI menyumbang kepada pengalaman limpahan kerja-keluarga yang positif ataupun negatif. Ia menawarkan pemahaman yang lebih baik berkenaan interaksi di antara ciri-ciri peribadi dan professional yang terpilih serta konflik dan pengayaan kerja-keluarga. Penemuan kajian ini boleh membantu membangunkan aturan dan dasar kerja yang lebih baik bagi membolehkan pekerja mengurus tanggungjawab sosial berganda mereka.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AES	Assessing Emotions Scale
ANOVA	Analysis of variance
BFI	Big Five Inventory
EI	Emotional Intelligence
FFM	Five-Factor Model
FIW	Family-interfering-work
FRWD	Family-relatedness of work decision model
FWC	Family-to-work conflict
FWE	Family-to-work enrichment
FWI	Family-work interference
FWS	Family-work spillover
GDP	Gross domestic product
HWI	Home-work interference
ILO	International Labor Organization
MIDUS	Midlife in United State Scale
MOE	The ability to manage own emotions
MOsE	The ability to manage others' emotions
MSCEIT	Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test
MSIC	Malaysia Standard Industry Classification
NEO-PI-R	Revised NEO personality inventory
OCB	Organizational citizenship behavior
PE	The ability to perceive emotions
PLS-SEM	Partial Least Squares – Structural Equation Modelling

SEM	Structural Equations Modelling
SPM	Malaysian Certificate of Education
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
STPM	Higher School Certificate
UE	The ability to utilize emotions
VIF	Variance inflation factor
WFC	Work-to-family conflict
WFE	Work-to-family enrichment
WFI	Work-family interference
WFS	Work-family spillover
WHI	Work-home interference
WIF	Work-interfering-family
WLEIS	Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale
WW II	World War Two

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Malaysia has undergone radical post-independence economic transitions during the past century. The economic structure evolved from commodity-based economy in the 1950s to industry-based economy in the 1970s and 1980s (Maimunah Aminuddin, 2008). Since the 1990s till recently, Malaysia's economic growth has been driven by the service sector, which has benefited from the earliest economic foundations laid down by the agriculture and the manufacturing industries (Economic Planning Unit, 2015). In 2015, the majority of the Malaysian workforce, 60.9 percent (8.4 million) was in the service industry, which is projected to grow even further to include 62.5 percent (9.55 million) of the workforce by 2020 (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2015). The service industry contributed 54.07 percent to the GDP in 2014, becoming the dominating industry in Malaysia (Annual National Report, 2015). The Eleventh Malaysia Plan (RMK-11) targeted a GDP annual growth of 5 to 6 percent to be driven mainly by the service and the manufacturing sectors (Economic Planning Unit, 2015).

In the recent years, there has been a growing interest in the linkage between work and the family domain, fueled by the increase in market competition, advances in information technology and dramatic demographic changes in the labor force worldwide. Technological advancements have enabled people to be constantly and feasibly connected. The blurred boundaries between work and the family domain can either breed conflict (Olson-Buchanan and Boswell, 2006) or contribute

to optimal work-family integration (Kreiner, Hollensbe, and Sheep, 2009). Today's high-paced lifestyle and increased work demands may force one to disrupt these boundaries (Tennakoon, da Silviera, and Taras, 2013).

Higher numbers of women in the workforce have resulted in more dual-earner couples and rendered the traditional gender-based roles in the household obsolete (Edwards and Rothbard, 2000). In the 1970s, the worsening financial situation and the introduction of birth control paved the way for women to join the workforce with less criticism. Between the year 2000 and 2014, the number of female employees in the service industry surged from 1.85 million to 3.6 million (International Labor Organization, 2015). This led to heated discussion on the issue of reconciliation between work and family life around the world. Early research on work-family conflict assumed that it was exclusively a women's issue. The assumption stemmed from the Male Breadwinner Theory, according to which men had to assume the breadwinning role in the family while women handled other household responsibilities (Pichler, 2009; Quick and Nelson, 2009). Women do generally experience more work-family conflict compared to men (Mennino, Rubin, and Brayfield, 2005), but juggling multiple social roles is rather cumbersome to men too.

Work-family balance has been the subject of scholarly debates in various fields since the 1960s. In the late 1980s and the early 1990s, working women were portrayed as bedraggled and bug-eyed because of their struggle in managing work and household responsibilities (Smith, 2000). However, it is noteworthy that it is also hard for men to find the balance between work and family life. Social norms, career expectations and the responsibilities conferred by an organization create much pressure that it becomes difficult to manage multiple social roles effectively. When it comes to career and family, many prioritize household and childrearing responsibilities. Some delay marriage altogether. To achieve career success, some women even opt out of motherhood. The way people manage multiple life role responsibilities depends on how differently they prioritize work and family demands (Kossek, Ruderman, Braddy, and Hannum, 2012).

Multiple roles can be a source of strain, present an opportunity for growth, or hinder work-family balance. Previous reports have shown conflicting findings on the issue of multiple roles and their impact on· personal and professional life. The multiple role theory proposes that assuming multiple roles either leads to spending (Goode, 1960) or to expansion (Sieber, 1974). The spending hypothesis argues that assuming multiple roles forces these roles to compete for one's limited time and energy, consequently inciting stress and conflict. This concept posits the idea that the demands of different roles are incompatible with one another, hence causing conflict with one another (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985). In contrast, the expansion hypothesis posits that multiple roles generate more energy by enhancing one's self-esteem (Marks, 1977).

Thus, depending on how one perceives multiple roles, the interaction between work and family demands can be detrimental or enriching. Those with a more positive outlook on life might view multiple roles as a challenge or an opportunity for self-development, whereas those with a more negative outlook might experience more strains as they perceive multiple roles as hurdles that disrupt the balance in their lives. One's attributes are stable and proactively shape his/her perceptions and the way he/she interprets the surrounding environment (Parasuraman and Greenhaus, 2002). Personal preferences determine role salience and the extent of engagement in multiple roles. When a role in one domain is perceived as more salient than another, it should have a more significant effect on the conflict and the satisfaction in that specific domain (Perrewe' and Hochwarter, 2001). Conflict occurs due to incongruence among the values held by an individual, pivotal family members and an organization (Perrewe and Hochwarter, 2001). Discrepancies between work and family life are mainly due to one's personal characteristics and preferences and are not a product of the need for recognition or the boundaries created by social norms (Jackson and Carter, 2007).

1.2   Problem Statement

Workplace challenges have been augmented in the recent years due to rapid changes in the demographics of the labor force, the vanishing of gender-based roles, family pattern alteration and changes in career expectations among the employees. However, the most dramatic change of all has been the increase in the number of dual-earners in the workforce (Barnett, 1999). Individuals are now occupied with multiple social roles which often spill over from one domain into another. Individuals are often engaged in multiple roles to receive social support and resources (Nordenmark, 2004). To undertake more roles signals that an individual has evolved into a more complex semi-permenant organized being (Thoits, 1983). However, each role comes with a different set of responsibilities, which can be taxing or gratifying.

Role conflict is one of the most debated issues in the field of work-family interaction (Byron, 2005; Eby, Wendy, Lockwood, Bordeaux and Brinley, 2005; Grotto and Lyness, 2010). Managing multiple roles has remained in the center of discussion of work-family issues since the 1970s (Thompson and Beauvais, 2000). Studies have mainly focused on the factors of the work–family conflict, such as time pressure; work- and family-related strains; psychological immersion; cognitive preoccupation with work/family roles; and job-related variables like flexibility and work pace (Adams, King, and King, 1996; Boyar and Mosley Jr., 2007; Eby *et al.*, 2005; Frone, Yardley, and Markel, 1997; Ilies, Ryan, Huth and Dimotakis, 2015). The significance of work-family interface on job performance has instigated organizations to initiate employee-assistance programs to ease the struggles that arise when attempting to juggle work and family responsibilities (Thompson, Beauvais, and Lyness, 1999; Haun, Steinmetz and Dormann, 2011). Unfortunately, to place a demarcation between work and family domain is a very difficult task.

Multiple roles can be a source of strain, present an opportunity for growth, or hinder work-family balance. Previous reports have shown conflicting findings on the issue of multiple roles and their impact on personal and professional life (Steinmetz, Frese and Schmidt, 2008). The multiple role theory proposes that

assuming multiple roles leads either to spending (Goode, 1960) or to expansion (Sieber, 1974). The spending hypothesis argues that assuming multiple roles forces these roles to compete for one's limited time and energy, consequently inciting stress and conflict (Goode, 1960). This concept posits the idea that the demands of different roles are incompatible with one another, hence causing conflict with one another (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985). In contrast, the expansion hypothesis posits that multiple roles generate more energy by enhancing one's self-esteem (Marks, 1977). The growing appreciation of both positive and negative aspect of work-family interface have expended and attained degree of visibility that is hard to ignore. Therefore, the incorporation of work-family conflict and work-family enrichment in this study covered both negative and positive possibility of work-family interface.

Work-family interface varies in essence depending on an individual's characteristics and preferences. Some tend to report positive experience, while others fail to manage their work and family responsibilities effectively. Individuals differ in the way they perceive things, situations, and people. They value work and family differently, which, in turn, determines whether a work-family spillover experience is positive or negative (Cohen, 2009; Tschopp, Keller and Stalder, 2015). The discrepancy of the physical concept between work and family is mainly a product of personal characteristics and preferences; and it is not generated by the recognition of others or by the boundaries created by the norms of the society (Jackson and Carter, 2007). Therefore, the role of individual differences in shaping the work-family experience should not be disregarded lightly.

Previous studies were more concerned with situational factors, such as work-related factors (i.e., work demands, job autonomy, and inflexible work schedules) and family-related factors (i.e., household responsibilities and the number of children) (Boyar and Mosley Jr., 2007; Eby *et al.*, 2005; Steinmetz *et al.*, 2008). However, when approaching work-family issues, only a handful of researchers have considered the impact of individual differences on work-family spillover (Allen, Johnson, Saboe, Choe, Dumani and Evan, 2012; Cho, Tay, Allen and Stark, 2013; Michel, Clark and Jaramillo, 2011). Among the individual

differences, the demographic factors have been extensively scrutinized, including gender, marital status and type of occupation (Eby *et al.*, 2005; Powell and Greenhaus, 2010). In the recent years, there has been an increasing interest in the effects of the dispositional variables on work-family interface (Andreassi and Thompson, 2007; Baltes, Zhdanova and Clark, 2011). Yet, the efforts have rather been inadequate to allow for a better understanding of the mechanisms whereby individual differences determine the depleting and enriching outcomes of work-family interface.

In the 1980s, the majority of work-family studies highlighted the depleting aspect of work-family interface (Frone and Rice, 1987; Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985). However, several reports have demonstrated that skills, affect, and behaviors acquired in one role could foster enhancement in another role (Grzywacz and Marks, 2000; Masuda, McNall, Allen and Nicklin, 2012; Mishra, Gupta, and Bhatnagar, 2014). Recently, research has adopted a different perspective of work-family interface as researchers have started to investigate the enriching potential of work-family interface to deduce strategies that achieve a better work-family balance. Despite of broader coverage from the increasing number of multidisciplinary work-family research, issues pertaining to work and family interface are still not well understood. Consequently, the implementation of work-family policies has been ineffective in terms of ameliorating the conflict experienced by those who juggle multiple social responsibilities.

Employees in service industry were employed as respondents of this study since they represent 60.9 percent of the Malaysian workforce (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2015). Working in the service industry has often been associated with emotional labor (Wharton, 1999). They are vulnerable to strain due to excessive, continuous surface acting, which has been found to contribute to energy depletion, emotional fatigue and depersonalization (Grandey, 2000). Service industry employees are trained to manage their emotions and respond positively to off-putting reactions. However, abiding by corporate regulations of the sort on a daily basis can lead to emotional dissonance and work-related maladjustment,