Job-Demand Resources Model to Explain the Relationship among Work-Family Conflict, Burnout, Social Support and Turnover Intention: A Conceptual Review

R. A. Hamid*1,a and U. N. K. Ungku Ahmadb

Faculty of Management, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, 81310 Skudai, Johor Bahru, Malaysia
*aahrozanti@gmail.com, b m-nkamar@utm.my

Abstract – This paper reviews the conceptualization and relationship among work-family conflict, burnout, social support and turnover intention using Job Demand Resources (JD-R) model. From the theoretical framework of JD-R model, there is a relationship between job demand and resources that gives impact to organization outcome. In addition, empirical evidence also shows that a relationship exists between the above variables. Organization should address proactively how job demand and resources influence each other that lead to organization outcome. Comprehensive understanding regarding the above matter gives opportunity for organizations to take reasonable action to ensure employees well-being and give benefit to the organizations themselves. Copyright © 2014 Penerbit Akademia Baru - All rights reserved.

Keywords: JD-R Model, Work-Family Conflict, Burnout, Social Support and Turnover Intention

1.0 INTRODUCTION

There is an increasing number of women participating in the workforce due to socio-economic development, and results in a big impact to work and family institution. Failure to meet demand for both work and family may lead to work-family conflict, which gives negative consequences on work and family. An example of major work-related outcome is turnover intention. Evidence from past research also shows that work-family conflict can contribute to burnout. Apart from that, it is also found that social support has a relationship with work-family conflict and burnout. The relationship between work-family conflict, burnout and turnover intention can be explained using Job Demand Resources (JD-R) model. In addition, JD-R model can also demonstrate the buffering effect of social support in moderating the relationship between work-family conflict and burnout.

2.0 JOB DEMAND RESOURCES MODEL (JD-R MODEL)

A number of studies used Job Demand Resources model (JD-R model) regarding work-family conflict issues. JD-R model can be used to investigate work-family conflict and its consequences. This model focuses on the impact of job demand and job resources on employee outcomes [1]. There are two main assumption underlying JD-R model, where in the first
assumption according to this model, all job characteristic within the work environment can be grouped into two, which are job demand and job resources [2,3].

The second assumption postulates that JD-R model contains dual psychological processes that may result to either job strain or motivation [4]. The first process is related to excessive job demand that depletes one’s resources and leads to strain [2], while the second process involves job resources that can contribute to potential motivation that leads to positive consequences such as increase job satisfaction and employee engagement [4]. The interaction between job demand and resources is important as it will give impact to employee job strain and motivation.

According to Voydanoff [5], demands refer to structural and psychological claims associated with role requirements, expectations and norms, which individuals are required to respond by utilizing physical and mental aspect of an individual. Meanwhile, resource refers to structure and psychology assets that are used to promote performance, reduce demand or produce more resources. In the research regarding work-family conflict, demand and resources come from both work and family related domain. Job demand includes anything pertaining to the physical, psychosocial or aspects of the work in an organization that requires mental and physical effort and at the same time related to the cost associated with physiological and and/or psychological costs [6]. Examples of job demand include time pressure, psychical and psychological demand that is related to individual responsibility for certain job, role overload and unfavourable environmental conditions [4].

Job resources are the aspects related to work in order to meet the work goal and reduce job demand, which may reduce the associated costs and at the same time stimulate the development and growth of individuals [4,6]. Job resources can also be a motivational agent for employee to complete the task that has been entrusted with. Job resource includes social support, autonomy, control, job security, team climate, and role clarity.

Job demand is not necessarily negative. Nevertheless, job demand can change to job stressor when high effort is needed to meet job demand and employee fails to meet the demand [7]. This will lead to a negative outcome such as work-family conflict, job strain, burnout, and turnover intention, while sufficient job resources lead to positive consequences, for example work-family enrichment and engagement. According JD-R model, job resources act as a buffer agent on the effect of job demand on job strain.

JD-R model can be used in the relationship between work-family conflict, social support burnout and also its consequences that can contribute to turnover intention. Past studies categorized work-family conflict as job demand [3,8]. According to Mauno et al., [3] JD-R model has been enhanced by adding work-family conflict as job demand that can deplete resources, for example time, energy and emotion that are needed to perform the family role. Excessive job demands lead to strain reaction, for example burnout and stress which result in increasing number of absenteeism and turnover intention. Pathway that is connected between work-family conflict and turnover intention via emotional exhaustion is known as energetic pathway.

Formal support from workplace and informal support from both work and family are considered as job resources. Social support acts to assist individual to accomplish certain task and goals. In addition, it functions as a motivational factor that can enhance positive attitude, for example job satisfaction and organizational commitment and help to reduce withdrawal behaviour such as absenteeism and turnover. This type of pathway is known as motivational
pathway [4]. It functions to provide a buffering effect in the stress-strain relationship (e.g. work-family conflict and burnout). Social support received by an employee especially in managing work-family issue helps to reduce work-family conflict and burnout.

3.0 CONCEPTUALIZING WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT

Work-family conflict is rooted from role theory [9,10]. Conflict between work and family is considered as inter-role conflict where pressure from role at workplace and family are mutually incompatible [11]. Based on role theory, role demand from work and family with limited energy and resources leads to strain from competition from each role.

Three forms of conflict are time-based conflict, strain-based conflict and behavioural-based conflict [11]. Time-based conflict refers to the time that has been reduced to perform another role due to one role that has to be accomplished or time pressure to meet the demand or time pressure to meet the demand of one role while struggling to meet the demand of the other role [11,12].

According to Pleck et al., [13], strain-based conflict is consistent with fatigue when strain or irritability dimension exists when the strain in one role gives impact to the performance in another role. The forms of strain include anxiety, tension, fatigue, irritability, depression, low energy or apathy [11,12,14].

Behaviour-based conflict occurs when one domain impacts inappropriately towards another domain. Specific pattern in role behaviour may be incompatible with the expectation regarding behaviour in another role. For example, high pressure environment in the workplace will lead to inappropriate behaviour at home. Halbesleben et al. [15] suggested that most of the working employees with family responsibilities experienced the strain-based work-family conflict.

All three types of conflicts have a direct influence towards the employees. Conflict between work and family is linked to negative consequences related to performance, satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover intention [16,17,18].

4.0 CONCEPTUALIZING BURNOUT

Burnout is a term used in psychological that explains about long-term exhaustion and loss of interest in work. It is an extreme form of stress [19]. Maslach and Jackson [20] classified burnout as a three-dimensional syndrome that includes emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal accomplishment.

Emotional exhaustion or overwhelming exhaustion refers to the feeling of being overextended and drained resulted from one’s contact with other people. It is considered as a central characteristic of burnout and manifested by feeling of tension, anxiety and insomnia [21].

Depersonalization is defined as unfeeling and callous response towards those people who are usually the recipients of one’s service or care. According to Maslach et al. [22], it is related to negative attitudes such as frustration, disillusion, and mistrust towards organizations, people and group.
Finally, reduced personal accomplishment is a behaviour that decreases one’s feeling towards competence and successful achievement in one’s work in dealing with people. It is associated with a sense of ineffectiveness, low efficacy, lack of accomplishment and productivity incompetence, and consequently reduces motivation [23].

Maslach and Leiter [24] reconceptualised the new concept on burnout with new measure known as Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey (MBI-GS) that focuses on other working context apart from doing “people’s work”. The three dimensions of burnout change its terminology to exhaustion, cynicism and professional efficacy.

This research will utilise Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey (MBI-GS) as a tool to measure burnout as it is suitable for occupation that is not people-oriented. Burnout according to Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey (MBI-GS) refers to the crisis that occurs in one’s relationship with work rather than towards the recipient of one’s service, which is the early concept of burnout.

In Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), emotional exhaustion refers to the depletion of emotional energy and fatigue, and the direction of the source of feeling is directed to people. Meanwhile, in Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey (MBI-GS), exhaustion refers to feeling towards one’s job at workplace. In Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI-GS), cynicism replaces the term depersonalization. Cynicism refers to an indifferent attitude towards one’s job at workplace rather that the feeling of insensitive and unfeeling for others. Professional efficacy focuses more on direct expectation at work. This includes one’s expectation of long-term effectiveness at work.

Antecedents of burnout include work overload [25,26], role conflict and role ambiguity [27,28,29], lack of autonomy [28,30] and lack of rewards [28]. Work-family conflict is believed to be associated with burnout [31].

Consequences of burnout include reduce job satisfaction [32], reduce organizational commitment [25,29], higher turnover and turnover intention [25,33,34].

5.0 CONCEPTUALIZING SOCIAL SUPPORT

According to Van Daalen et al. [35], social support is the exchange of resources between at least two persons with the goal of helping the person who receives the support. In general, social support helps individuals to retain existing resources and gain new resources [36]. For example, according to Grzywacs and Marks [37], social support from either work or family generates a positive effect in the source domain and increases the quality of life in the other domain. The primary functions of social support are emotional and instrumental supports [38]. Emotional support includes behaviour that provides encouragement, understanding and attention, while instrumental support includes behaviour such as assisting in problem solving and any kind of assistance with the aim to facilitate an individual’s participation in the other domain [39]. Both types of social support can give a positive effect that helps an individual with work domain [40].

In the literature, the role of social support has been emerging systematically as an important factor that positively influences work-family conflict and work-family enrichment. Enhanced resource and confidence that are linked to work and personal-based social support will lead an individual to be able to perform and feel more satisfied in all aspects of their lives. Social
support may come from work-related and family-related domains. Work support includes support from supervisor, co-workers and management [41].

6.0 CONCEPTUALIZING TURNOVER INTENTION

Turnover can be divided into two categories, which are voluntary turnover and involuntary turnover. Voluntary turnover refers to an employee decision to leave the organization by their own choice while involuntary turnover is when the decision is made by the organization to dismiss their employee [42]. It is due to the combination of many factors including low job satisfaction, limited growth opportunities, low salaries and conflicting demand between work and family.

Turnover intention refers to one’s intention to disengage from work and seriously considering for actual turnover. Turnover intention model is based from the theory of planned behaviour [43]. According to this theory, an individual belief is rooted from his/her attitude and will finally lead to actual behaviour. It is supported by Richer et al. [44] in the research from motivational theory, which stated that turnover intention is directly linked to actual turnover behaviour. For an organization, turnover intention rate gives more important information than actual turnover so that early steps can be done in order to avoid actual turnover.

An organization has to bear indirect cost in dealing with employee turnover, for example to recruit new workers and give training. Turnover is linked to the loss of human capital and corporate knowledge [45]. At the same time, competitor may gain from this valuable “assets” [46]. Overall turnover gives negative consequences to the organization due to its indirect cost that is related to its operational cost, which is also linked to business profit [45].

7.0 RELATIONSHIP AMONG WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT, BURNOUT AND TURNOVER INTENTION

According to JD-R model, work-family conflict is considered as work demand or stressor that can result in strain for example burnout and is also related to organization outcome such as turnover intention.

In Allen et al. [47], a review regarding the consequences of work-family conflict and turnover intention is the mostly related with work-family conflict in the category of work related outcomes. It is supported by Howard et al., [48] where work-family conflict is considered as an important factor in the process of turnover. Several empirical evidence highlight that work-family conflict has a positive relationship with turnover intention [49,50,51,52].

In addition, burnout is an important consequence of work-family conflict. The existence of work-family conflict leads to energetic process of job demand resources model, which can contribute to two dimensions of burnout; emotional exhaustion and cynicism. Furthermore, this will lead to reduced personal accomplishment and result in negative organizational outcome such as turnover intention. It is supported by previous research findings which conclude that work-family conflict is positively associated to burnout [53,54,55,56,57,58].

Furthermore, burnout phenomenon is associated with several work-related outcomes including turnover intention. It has been stated that the first reaction of an individual in facing burnout is that they may consider in changing their job [59]. Individuals tend to look around their
organization to see if there is something else they could do in order to escape from the problem of which they are facing now. Other than that, they may also consider for a new position in other organization [33]. Previous research also reported that individuals experiencing burnout are expected to have a greater intention to quit from their current organization [60,61,62,63,64].

8.0 RELATIONSHIP AMONG WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT, BURNOUT AND SOCIAL SUPPORT

In JD-R model, social support as a job resources functions to reduce the effect of work-family conflict on burnout. In addition, it is supported by most of the work stress theories which explain that psychological resources play a role to change the strength or direction of a relationship. Resources can moderate the effect of stress-strain relationship. Thus, it is believed that social support can buffer the relationship between the stressor and its strain outcome. According to JD-R model, excessive work demand with limited resources can contribute to burnout. With the availability of adequate resources, energetic process can be reduced and at the same time increase motivational process that leads to of the increase of personal accomplishment/professional efficacy.

Past studies show ample of evidence regarding the relationship between social support and burnout. A number of studies show that social support is linked negatively with burnout [65,66,67,68].

Apart from that, social support from work and family can be utilised to reduce work-family conflict where support from work and family in terms of instrumental and emotional may assist employee in struggling between high work and family demand. Results from past research indicate that social support influences and has a negative relationship with work family conflict [69,70,71,72]. In addition, it is supported from a study done by Lingard and Francis [73] regarding the moderating effect of burnout in the relationship between work-family conflict and turnover intention among construction workers. It is reported that perceived organization support and practical support have a moderating effect on work-family conflict and turnover intention. Overall, it can be summarized that the absence of social support is linked to work stress and may end with chronic job stress that leads to burnout, which may influence employee’s turnover intention. It is proposed that social support moderates the relationship between work-family conflict and turnover intention.

9.0 CONCLUSION

By understanding the overall concept of JD-R model, it broadens the understanding on how work-family conflict, burnout, social support and turnover intention are inter-related. Turnover intention is a critical issue for an organization involving huge cost and gives an impact to the organization’s overall performance. Organization can move forward to implement a new intervention to address this issue in order to ensure organization’s well-being. Organization should implement the policy that will consider both work and family demand to help employee balance between work and family. Work environment must be family-friendly and supportive so that it can motivate employee to remain in the organization and achieve good performance. Organization must give support and give training to supervisor and co-worker in providing instrumental and emotional support to employee in order to reduce work-family conflict and burnout. On the other hand, employee must be encouraged to utilise existing resources provided
by an organization to assist them in meeting the demand from both work and family domains, thus reducing burnout and prevent them from leaving the organization.

REFERENCES


