

The Relationship of Work-Family Conflict to Job Burnout and Job Satisfaction in Information Technology Employees in Korea: The Moderating Effects of Spousal Support

Xiu Jin*

**Department of Business, Soongsil University,
369Sangdo-Ro, Dongjak-Gu, Baird Hall 101-1, Seoul, Korea.*

Abstract

This article argues that work-family conflict (WFC) can drive negative factors experienced by employees such as low levels of job satisfaction (JS) and high levels of job burnout (JB). In order to decrease levels of JB and enhance JS, this article focuses on spousal support (SS) and examined its influence on JS and JB. Furthermore, the article examined the effects of WFC on SS, JB, and JS. The article also examined the moderating effects of SS. Data were collected from employees from Information Technology (IT) companies in Korea. According to the empirical analysis, WFC was positively related to JB and negatively related to JS and SS. Further, SS negatively moderated the relationship between WFC and JB, but did not moderate the relationship between WFC and JS. The findings of this article indicate that SS plays a key role among IT employees' families in Korea and it emphasizes that SS should be enhanced. Furthermore, the article sets out the ways to enhance JS.

Keywords: work-family conflict, job satisfaction, job burnout, spousal support, information technology

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, both academic publications and the popular press have a passionate concern for the topic of work-family conflict (WFC). Indeed WFC has become a common and much discussed topic [1]. Due to the impact of constantly developing technologies, highly turbulent economics, and intense global competitive pressures, the demands placed by many organizations on their employees, such as overtime and irregular hours, have become excessive. Many employees find themselves working late or even working at home. Resultantly, many employees struggle to properly perform their familial roles or responsibilities. Ultimately, the incompatibility of work and family roles leads to high levels of WFC [2]. WFC occurs when workplace demands make it difficult for employees to properly fulfill their responsibilities or roles in their families. As levels of WFC increase, it becomes linked with a number of undesirable effects such as low levels of job satisfaction (JS) and high levels of job burnout (JB). Accordingly, it is so important to find ways to decrease or eliminate levels of JB and enhance levels of JS even as

employees experience WFC. Spousal support (SS) may play a key role in this area. Increased SS has been shown to be correlated to lower levels of WFC [3, 4] and SS could function as an extra-work resource to assist employees in achieving desirable levels of work performance [5]. The aims of the current paper are threefold. First, this paper focuses on information technology (IT) employees in Korea and emphasizes the negative aspects of WFC by examining its impact on two dependent variables, JS and JB. Furthermore, it tries to confirm possible linkages between WFC to JS, JB, and SS. Secondly, it examines the implication of [6], SS has a role as a possible variable in the WFC and JS relationship. The role of SS in decreasing stress is examined and explained. Specifically, the article is to examine the moderating effect of SS between WFC and both of the dependent variables. Thirdly, the article sets out ways to increase JS and decrease WFC and JB in IT companies in Korea.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Work-family conflict

One main outcome that makes the demands of work and family unbalanced is work-family conflict (WFC) [7]. WFC has been defined as "Work-family conflict is offered: a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from 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." [8: p.77]. WFC refers to the situation where family demands are made more difficult by demands in the workplace [1]. According to Ford et al [9], variables such as job involvement, job stress, and work hours are positively related to WFC. However, work support is negatively related to WFC. The concepts of WFC include three major forms of conflict, namely time-based, behavior-based, and strain-based conflict [8]. Time-based conflict arises when time spent on various activities within one role typically means that not enough time can be devoted to various activities within another role [8]. It is consistent with schedule conflict dimensions and excessive work time [8, 10]. Behavior-based conflict occurs when a person cannot adjust behavior to respect the expectations of dissimilar roles. Hence, he or she may experience conflict between those roles [8]. Strain-based

conflict occurs when stress from one role is carried into another role. Extensive travel, long work hours, and inflexible work could indirectly develop strain-based conflict [8]. In short, WFC results from the stress of interaction between workplace and family domains [11].

Job burnout

Burnout refers to the phenomenon when feelings, emotions, and behaviors are exhausted by the intensification of the negative state caused by various conflicts and contradictions in the interaction of interpersonal processes [12]. Job burnout (JB) is regarded as a syndrome of cynicism and emotional exhaustion and it occurs among people who do 'people-work' [13]. JB has been divided into three dimensions. The dimensions include depersonalization, reduced personal accomplishment, and emotional exhaustion. Emotional Exhaustion refers to feelings of being exhausted and emotionally overextended by one's works. Depersonalization refers to impersonal responses and a lack of feeling towards recipients of one's service or care. Reduced personal accomplishment refers to feelings that a worker has less than successful accomplishment and competence in one's work [13]. Researchers [14] have suggested that role overload, role ambiguity, and role conflict have been associated with burnout. People who report higher levels of these factors also report higher levels of burnout, and people who report higher levels of burnout were more likely to leave their jobs. Burnout is also associated with an intention to leave a job and poorer job preparation [14, 15]. As such, JB may have negative influence on individuals' work outcomes.

Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction (JS) and job dissatisfaction have been respectively defined as "Job satisfaction is the pleasurable emotional state resulting from appraisal of one's job as achieving or facilitating one's job values. Job dissatisfaction is the unpleasant emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job as frustrating or blocking the attainment of one's values." [16: p.317]. Researchers [17] have suggested two common approaches to measure JS, the global approach and facet approach. The global approach appraises JS based on a person's overall emotional response to his or her own job. On the other hand, the facet approach investigate the pattern of attitudes an individual holds regarding a diversity of job related factors such as fringe benefits, coworkers, procedures and policies, supervision, pay, and the nature of the work itself. When an employee says that he or she is satisfied with his or her job, this tends to mean that they are also satisfied with the results of the job. Therefore, path-goal theory predicts that high levels of job satisfaction will lead to low levels of absenteeism and turnover. Moreover, satisfied employees are motivated to go to their work places [18].

Spousal support

Spousal support (SS) refers to direct and indirect encouragement, which is received from a partner/spouse or significant other [6]. Researchers [4] have suggested that SS includes the advice, understanding, and help that spouses can provide for one another. Hence, SS is defined as the amount of emotional concern, instrumental aid, informational functions, and appraisal functions from a spouse [19]. Adams et al [20] recognize two forms of SS: emotional support and instrumental support [4, 20]. Emotional support includes affirmation of affection, advice, emphatic understanding and listening, and honest concern for the well-being of the partner. Instrumental support is positive help from a partner in childcare and household chores [4, 20]. SS can protect spouses from experiencing each other's afflictions [21]. Thus, it may reduce the overall worries and burdens of families and may improve life satisfaction. Additionally, it may play a positive role in reducing levels of other negative aspects such as stress in the workplace. The reason for this is that a spouse may help and encourage his or her spouse in difficult situations and such behaviors may lead to positive outcomes. Therefore, SS may reduce various negative outcomes, and it can be regarded as a highly salient resource for employees [22].

The relationship of WFC to SS, JB and JB

Research [23] focused on police officers found that higher levels of WFC were related to more alienation and psychological burnout and less JS [20]. Work interfering with family conflict was positively related to health complaints and depression, and negatively related to JS [24]. Another research [25] focused on engineers and nurses indicated that work interfering with family was related to burnout and lower JS. The authors of research [25] have suggested that work-based role conflict was a salient antecedent of work-home conflict and that increased burnout is a salient direct outcome of work-home conflict. In other words, as people experience more work family conflict, they may experience higher levels of JB and lower levels of JS. This is because WFC may lead to increased stress in the family or the workplace and lose interest in their jobs. In regards to the role of support in the stress process, research [3] has found that SS and work family conflict had a negative relationship. The authors of research [3] have emphasized that role overload on inter-role conflict is buffered by SS. Therefore, this research sets up following hypotheses.

H1: WFC will positively relate to JB.

H2: WFC will negatively relate to JS.

H3: WFC will negatively relate to SS.

The relationship of SS to JB and JS

If individuals recognize conflicts at work but experience social support from coworkers, strain experienced from role conflict will not occur. Similarly, even if people have high levels of family time demands, SS could attenuate the influence of strain arising from this [26]. Research [27] has suggested that SS can reduce the levels of work stress for men and women. Also, SS and JS have a significant and positive relationship [5]. Results from research [28] have shown that burnout and social support have a negative relationship. Thus social support such as SS may be negatively correlated to JB. The findings of empirical research by [6] have shown that SS was positively related to JS (internal JS, external JS, and overall JS) and negatively related to WFC (time-based conflict and behavior-based conflict). Hence, the behavior of a spouse may help his or her spouse overcome difficulties by facing them together. Additionally, such support may reduce job exhaustion, and even if levels of JS are low, the support of a spouse may increase the amount of enthusiasm a worker has for their job, which will increase levels of JS. Therefore, this article proposes the following hypotheses.

H4: SS will negatively relate to JB.

H5: SS will positively relate to JS.

The moderating effect of SS

According to empirical research [29], the findings showed that support of leisure activities with a spouse moderated the conflicting effects of work on families and leisure activities proceed [30]. The findings of [6] show that if the level of JS is higher, the level of WFC is lower, that if the level of SS is higher, the level of WFC is lower, and that if the level of SS is higher, the level of JS is higher. Research [4] suggested that increased levels of SS are associated with higher levels of psychological well-being [31] and life satisfaction [32], and lower levels of WFC [3, 33, 34, 35]. SS may relieve family burdens, and even if an individual cannot faithfully implement their role in the family due to long hours of work, they may feel psychologically stable with fewer or no complaints. SS may also improve an individual's spouse's self-efficacy by encouraging and motivating their spouse to do better. In short, if the levels of spouse support are high, levels of job exhaustion may decrease and the levels of job satisfaction may be higher. Therefore, this article proposes the following hypotheses.

H6: SS will negatively moderate the relationship between WFC and JB.

H7: SS will positively moderate the relationship between WFC and JS.

METHODS

Participants

Survey data were gathered from 152 employees of IT companies in Korea. The survey data was collected from July 28 ~ August 7 in 2017. The researcher directly delivered the questionnaire to 52 of the participants and used the Google survey system for 100 participants. 12 questionnaires responded inappropriately or insincerely and were not selected, thus, a total of 140 questionnaires were used in the empirical analysis.

Of the participants 87 (62.1%) were male and 53 (37.9%) were female. In the regards to the participants age, 59 (42.1%) were in their 20s, 74 (52.9%) were in their 30s, 7 (5.0%) were in their 40s. 33 (23.6%) of the participants finished work before 6PM, 74 (52.9%) of the participants finished work between 6PM ~ 8PM, 29 (20.7%) of the participants quit work between 8PM ~ 10PM, 4 (2.8%) of the participants quit work after 10PM. Finally, 80 (57.1%) participants had worked for between 1 ~ 3 years at their current workplace, 46 (32.9%) had worked between 3 ~ 5 years, and 14 (10.0%) had worked for 5 ~ 10 years.

Measurement

For measuring WFC, this article used family interference with work following [36] which includes 4 items. For example "I'm often too tired at work because of the things I have to do at home". JB was measured by 16 items [37]. Sample items included "I feel emotionally drained from my work". JS was measured by 10 items [38]. Sample items included "I feel good about my job". SS was measured using 4 items of a measure developed by [39]. Sample items included "How much emotional help does your spouse give you in regard to your work". In this article, all the items were measured by a 7 point Likert-type scale. The ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

ANALYSIS

According to the results of confirmatory factor analysis, all variables of average variance extraction were higher than 0.5 (WFC= .613, JB= .704, JS= .562, and SS= .713), and all variables of composite reliability were higher than 0.7 (WFC=.725, JB=.954, JS=.877, and SS=.851). For index, the results showed that absolute fit index was ($\chi^2(p)=954.413$, $\chi^2/df=1.871$, RMSEA=.079), incremental fit index was (TLI=.904, CFI=.913, IFI=.914), and parsimonious fit index was (PNFI=.756, PGFI=.624). Therefore, all indexes were adopted so that measurements have significant validity. Table 1 displays the results of Cronbach's Alpha for reliability and correlation analysis. Researcher [40] suggested that alpha of .70 is a good cutoff value and it is acceptable. Hence, all values of Cronbach's Alpha are all above .70 (WFC= .944,

JB= .932, JS= .944, and SS= .936). These results show that the reliability of this article is acceptable. Further, the results display high reliability. The results of the correlation analysis showed that WFC was positively related to JB ($r=.331$) and

negatively related to SS ($r=-.303$) and JS ($r=-.319$). SS was negatively related to JB ($r=-.593$) and positively related to JS ($r=.690$). Hence, hypothesis 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 was accepted.

Table 1. Reliability, descriptive statistics, and correlation analysis

	Cronbach's Alpha	Mean	Std. Deviation	WFC	SS	JB	JS
WFC	.944	4.738	1.756	-			
SS	.936	4.750	1.419	-.303***	-		
JB	.932	4.277	1.128	.331***	-.593***	-	
JS	.944	4.442	1.179	-.319***	.690***	-.390***	-

***= $p<.001$ **= $p<.01$ *= $p<.05$ †= $p<.1$

(WFC=work-family conflict, SS=spousal support, JB=job burnout, JS=job satisfaction)

Table 2. The moderating effect of SS between WFC and JB

Dependent: JB							
	step 1		step 2		step 3		
	β	t	β	t	β	t	VIF
WFC	.331***	4.123	.167*	2.362	.248**	3.310	1.290
SS			-.542***	-7.660	-.451***	-5.897	1.347
moderate					-.211**	-2.803	1.305
R^2 (Adjusted R^2)	.110 (.103)		.377 (.368)		.411 (.398)		
ΔR^2 (Δ Adjusted R^2)			.267 (.265)		.034 (.030)		
F	17.002***		41.391***		31.594***		

***= $p<.001$ **= $p<.01$ *= $p<.05$ †= $p<.1$

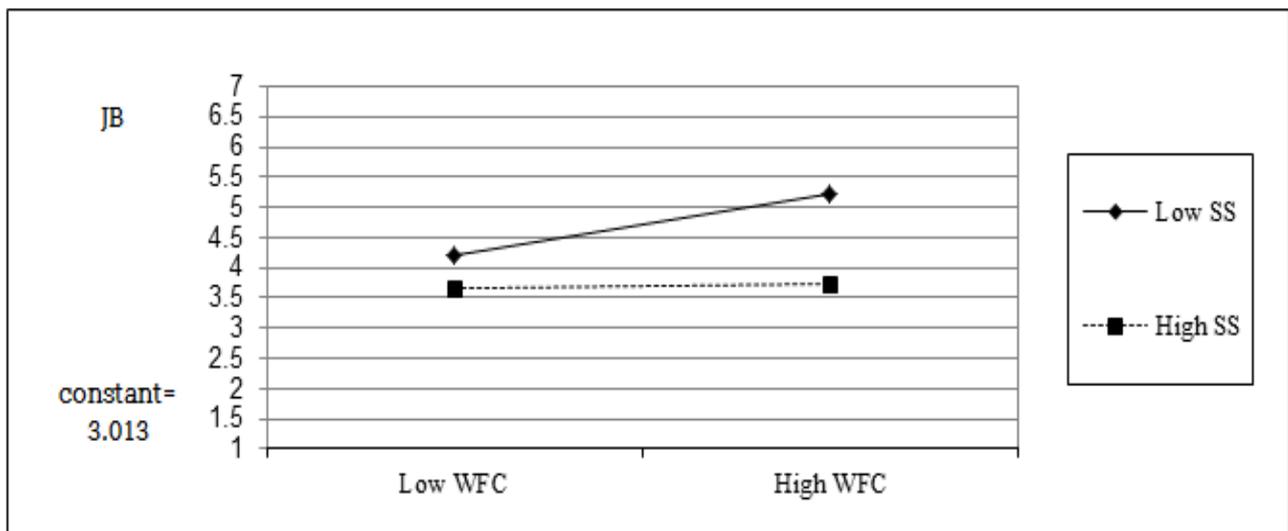


Figure 1. The moderating effect of SS

Table 3. The moderating effect of SS between WFC and JS

Dependant: JS							
	step 1		step 2		step 3		VIF
	β	<i>t</i>	β	<i>t</i>	β	<i>t</i>	
WFC	-.319***	-3.949	-.121	-1.888	-.129	-1.861	1.290
SS			.654***	10.208	.644***	9.060	1.347
moderate					.022	.321	1.305
R^2 (Adjusted R^2)	.102 (.095)		.490 (.482)		.490 (.479)		
ΔR^2 (Δ Adjusted R^2)			.388 (.387)		.000 (-.003)		
<i>F</i>	15.597***		65.728***		43.566***		

***= $p < .001$ **= $p < .01$ *= $p < .05$ †= $p < .1$

Table 2 and 3 indicate the results of regression analysis. Table 2 displays the moderating effect of SS between WFC and JB. The result showed that SS negatively moderated between WFC and JB ($\beta = -.211$, sig=.006). Hence, hypothesis 6 was accepted.

JB increases when employees experience higher levels of WFC. And the moderating effect of SS is verified. Fig 1 shows such simple relationships. If the level of SS is low, JB increases when WFC increases. Interestingly, if the level of SS is high, although WFC increases, the level of JB does not increase substantially and it does not decrease. Therefore, a high level of SS can restrain JB even if WFC is high.

Table 3 displays the moderating effect of SS between WFC and JS. The result showed that SS could not positively moderate between WFC and JS ($\beta = .022$, sig=.749). The result shows that the moderating effect of SS between WFC and JS is insignificant. Thus, hypothesis 7 was rejected.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion and implications

According to the results of empirical analysis, WFC was positively related to JB. In addition, it was negatively related to JS and SS. SS negatively moderated the relationship between WFC and JB, but did not moderate the relationship between WFC and JS. These findings suggest that WFC can lead to negative aspects for employees at IT companies in Korea. In 2007, the International Labor Organization (ILO) reported that many workers in developed countries worked long hours [41]. Excessive work hours and frequent overtime means that many people cannot properly perform their roles or responsibilities. Work and family domain incompatibility ultimately leads to high levels of WFC [42]. Thus, to decrease

WFC, IT companies should reduce overtime work and pay more attention to their employees' well-being. This article emphasizes the importance of SS. This article showed that SS can negatively moderate between WFC and JB. JB increased when employees experienced increased WFC. Levels of JB are higher while employees have lower level of SS rather than they have higher level of SS. If levels of SS are high, even when WFC increases, JB does not increase substantially and it does not decrease. These results suggest that high levels of SS can restrain JB even if WFC is high. Thus, this article emphasizes that SS is an essential factor between WFC and JB. Interestingly, although SS was negatively related to WFC and positively related to JS, the moderating effect of SS between WFC and JS was insignificant. However, [43] suggested that greater JS appears to be related to more significant, varied tasks, to more challenging work, to higher pay, to shared values, and to greater amounts of involvement and participation. Thus, such factors may have a moderating effect between WFC and JS. In order to increase JS, this article suggests that IT companies in Korea should enhance the relationship between supervisors and workers. Further, it is important for employees to share information and enhance their self-efficacy. This article suggests that SS decreases negative factors such as JS even when people have WFC. However, decreased WFC does not appear to enhance JS as JS is more correlated to other factors such wages, self-efficacy, and person-organization fit.

Limitations and future study

In this article, only IT employees in Korea were surveyed and empirically studied. Thus, future research should also be conducted on employees in IT companies in other countries and cross country comparisons of results should also be

undertaken. The article focused only on the moderating effect of SS. Future research should focus on other moderating factors such as communication by IT, overtime work, organizational support, and leader support. Furthermore, research should examine moderating effects between WFC and employee's job or life satisfaction. In this article, only conflict was selected as an independent variable and its influence was examined. Future studies should examine other independent variables. In order to decrease WFC, it is necessary to investigate the antecedents of WFC. Therefore, it would be valuable to investigate the factors leading to and reducing conflict.

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* Corresponding Author: soohua1122@126.com
Soongsil University