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A Study on the Relationship between Work-Family Conflicts and the Job Satisfaction of Tour Leaders

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Abstract

Many tour leaders have to work and bear family responsibilities at the same time. With limited time and effort, a question of concern is whether they have work-family conflict. Therefore, this study aims to explore the relationships between work-family conflict and the job satisfaction of tour leaders. A self-administered questionnaire was designed to collect empirical data from tour leaders, and 233 valid questionnaires were collected. The study results indicate that when tour leaders' work interferes with their family life, it has no impact on their job satisfaction. On the contrary, when the tour leaders' family life interferes with their work, it has a negative impact on their job satisfaction. Finally, the study discusses managerial implications and research limitations, and proposes suggestions for future studies.

JEL Classifications: J24, J28, J81, O15

Keywords: work-family conflicts, job satisfaction, tour leaders

1. Introduction

As travelling abroad has become more and more popular, the demands for tour leaders increase daily. Therefore, there are more people joining the industry and becoming tour leaders. For the whole journey, the tour leader is the leader of the tour, a coordinator at the destination and a friend to tour members (Heung, 2008). A tour leader can also be called a tour manager or a tour escort and may sometimes need to undertake the tasks of a tour guide/tourist guide (Luoh & Tsaur, 2014). Tour leaders are the soul of a group package tour. They can cause a tour to succeed or fail and directly influences the company reputation, customer loyalty, and word-of-mouth (Mossberg, 1995). In addition, tour leaders are the main form of contact between the tourism destinations and the tourists, and are the key employees that influence customer satisfaction (Wong & Wang, 2009).

People are envious of the work of tour leaders, and believe that their work leading tourist groups abroad enables them to taste delicious food and appreciate beautiful scenery all around the world. However, their work is characterized by long working hours, being easily influenced by slack and busy seasons, and a long time away from families and friends. Past studies have already pointed out that as front-line employees, tour leaders may not be able to maintain normal social relationships

with families or friends; and it is difficult for them to give consideration to their roles both at work and at home (Karatepe & Baddar, 2006; Tsaur & Lin, 2014).

Apparently, tour leaders experience conflicts in the work-family interface. Karatepe and Baddar (2006) defined that there were two types of tension sources in work-family interactions, namely work to family conflict and family to work conflict. Work to family conflict occurs because the demands from the job interfere with an individual's performance of their family responsibilities (for example, long working hours may prevent an individual taking part in a special family gathering). Alternatively, family to work conflict occurs when familial responsibility interferes with the implementation of job duties (for example, a meeting with a child's teacher may prevent an individual from performing his duty at work). Karatepe and Uludag (2008) confirmed that when family conflicts with work, marriage satisfaction decreases, and the intention to quit from work increases.

Job satisfaction is an important variable that is often discussed during studies on organizational behavior (Lu, Barriball, Zhang, & While, 2012). Job satisfaction refers to the satisfaction level given by various demands, such as the growth, health, esteem, safety, and relationships that an individual can obtain from their work (Dessler & Huat, 2006). Güleryüz, Güney, Aydın, and Aşan (2008) pointed out that job satisfaction is the employees' feeling of whether the work provided by an organization has positive emotion. From the perspective of the enterprises, the job satisfaction of employees is beneficial for their work performance, and creating good employee performance will create profits for the enterprises.

Some past studies have confirmed that conflict between employees' work and their family life will negatively influence their job satisfaction, such as front-line employees in the catering and tourism industries (Namasivayam & Zhao, 2007), health care workers (Boyar, & Mosley Jr., 2007), and ordinary employees (Michel & Clark, 2009). However, there are few studies on the influences of work-family conflict on the job satisfaction of tour leaders. Therefore, this research aims to discuss the relationship between work-family conflict and job satisfaction.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Work-Family Conflicts

The concept of work-family conflict was first proposed by Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, and Rosenthal (1964). It was defined to be the role that conflict and pressure caused due to incompatibility at some level between the aspects of work and family. Frone, Russell, and Cooper (1992) pointed out that work-family conflict was a bi-directional concept, and could be divided into two situations which are either work that interfered with family or family that interfered with work. When family problems and duties interfere with job tasks, the unfinished job tasks will, in return, interfere with family life. On the contrary, when the problems and duties from work interfere with the implementation of family responsibilities, these family responsibilities will, in return, interfere with the work. Netemeyer, Boles, and McMurrian (1996) pointed out that one source of the work-family conflict is that the time and content of the work of the workers could not be coordinated, then tensions would occur. This would make it impossible to perform normal family responsibilities, and thus role conflict would occur. Therefore, the role conflict between the family role and the job role are assumed to be incompatible in work-family conflicts.

Kahn *et al*. (1964) defined work-family conflict as "the pressure coming from the roles in family and work, and being unable to fulfill the demands of both roles". In other words, the participation in work/family makes it impossible to fulfill the demands from the family/work. Work-family conflicts can be divided into three categories: 1. time-based conflict, 2. strain-based conflict, and 3. behavior-based conflict.

2.1.1. *Time-Based Conflict*

When an individual undertakes several roles simultaneously, he will allocate his time, and if too much time is allocated to one role, the time for other roles will be reduced. Pleck, Staines, and Lang (1980) defined work-family conflict as overtime at work and incompatible work plans. Kahn *et al.* (1964) defined that work-family conflict was caused by an over-load of the roles. Time-based conflict mainly describes the above two aspects: a. An individual's time strain in one role makes it impossible for him to fulfill the demands of another role; b. The time strain in one role may influence, in advance, the fulfillment of the requirements of another role (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

2.1.2. *Strain-Based Conflict*

The second type of work-family conflict is due to the conflict caused by the tensions of a role. Many researches have pointed out that work pressures may cause the symptoms of tension and stress, such as frustration, anxiety, fatigue, anger, indifference, and irritation (Brief, Schuler, & Van Sell, 1981). Strain-based conflict occurs due to fatigue or anxiety and means that the anxiety occurring in one field influences the role implementation in another field (Pleck *et al*., 1980). Therefore, any tension caused due to the roles at work or at home will produce work-family conflicts.

2.1.3. *Behavior-Based Conflict*

This means that the behavior pattern of a role may not be compatible with the behavior of another role. Family members may need warm and emotional interaction from the worker, but when he/her is unable to satisfy the expectations of the different roles, conflict between these roles may occur. Burke, Weir, and DuWors (1980) proposed that the behavior patterns of male workers (such as logical, objective, dominant, and authoritative patterns) may not be able to satisfy the behavior demands from his children. Similarly, Bartolome (1972) believed that many young managers experienced two aspects that could not be coordinated with each other, namely the expectations from their families and predictable emotion at work. It can be difficult to give consideration to both aspects at the same time.

2.2. Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is an important variable that is often discussed in studies on organizational behavior (Lu *et al*., 2012). Hartline and Ferrell (1996) believed that job satisfaction was an employee's subjective feeling of satisfaction from the perspectives of psychology and physiology towards their working environment and the work itself. Brief (1998) pointed out that job satisfaction referred to an employee's emotional responses or feelings towards the role he played in organization. Dessler and Huat (2006) indicated that job satisfaction referred to the level of satisfaction with regards to personal safety, health, relationships, growth, and esteem, etc., that could be obtained from the work experience. Downes, Thomas, and Singley (2002) defined job satisfaction as an individual's overall feelings and cognitive level of towards the job itself and their working environment.

Many researches have defined job satisfaction from different perspectives, such as emotional and cognitive perspectives, and a comprehensive or partial view. Hartline and Ferrell (1996) defined job satisfaction to be an emotional state in which an individual could evaluate his own job. Brief (1998) combined the views of emotion and cognition, and defined job satisfaction to be "a state of mind displayed with some level of like or dislike by the self-evaluation of one's job from emotional and/or cognitive perspectives" (p.86). On the other hand, job satisfaction can be evaluated from the perspectives of globalism or multiple dimensions. Tett and Meyer (1993) believed that job satisfaction could be defined as an emotional attachment to the whole job (overall satisfaction) or a certain part of the job (multi-dimensional satisfaction) of an individual.

As different researches have defined job satisfaction, so too have there been different methods of measurement. Most researchers adopted a comprehensive evaluation method to understand the antecedents of job satisfaction and their relationships (Adams, King, & King, 1996; Anderson, Coffey, & Byerly, 2002; Hackman & Oldham, 1975). For example, "on the whole, I am satisfied with my current job", or "my current job is meaningful to me". In addition, some researches carried out satisfaction evaluations from various dimensions, including colleagues, supervisors, company policies, salary, working environment, promotion opportunities, and company support, etc. (Karatepe & Kilic, 2007; Lu *et al*., 2012). Lu *et al*. (2012) pointed out that when an individual was interested in discussing their overall attitude towards their work, they would adopt a comprehensive evaluation method. On the contrary, when an individual wanted to discuss his satisfaction or dissatisfaction towards some part of his job, he would adopt a multi-dimensional evaluation method.

2.3. Relationships between Work-Family Conflicts and Job Satisfaction

Work and family roles are indispensable for people nowadays. Once an individual experiences a high level of work and family conflict, it will definitely influence his job satisfaction. When a work role conflicts with a non-work role, it will reduce the role satisfaction (Boyar, Maertz Jr., Pearson, & Keough, 2003; Zhao & Namasivayam, 2012). Zhao and Namasivayam (2012) demonstrated that when a hotel employee felt that his job interfered with his role at home, his job satisfaction reduced. In addition, Boyar *et al*. (2003) also pointed out that when an individual experienced their work interfering with non-work, it would reduce job evaluation, and result in the reduction of job satisfaction. In other words, when family roles which do not belong to the range of work roles are influenced by the job, it may lead to the reduction in job satisfaction. Some work arrangements, such as shift work, overtime, and working on holidays can reduce or deprive an individual's family time or deprive them of the opportunity to be with their family (Tsaur, Liang, & Hsu, 2012). As a consequence, employees may feel dissatisfied with their work because aspects of their work factor make it impossible for them to fulfill their familial demands.

On the other hand, some researches have also proved that non-work role aspects interfering with work role could also reduce job satisfaction. Zhao and Namasivayam (2012) pointed out that when the requirements of the family role of an employee made him unable to effectively achieve his job objectives, he would become frustrated, and thus feel dissatisfied. In addition, Boyar *et al*. (2003) believed that when a non-work role interfered with a work role, an individual would blame the company system for causing such uncomfortable feelings, and the individual's job satisfaction would be reduced. In other words, when the work role is interfered with by the family role, i.e. when the family interferes with the work, it will also reduce the employee's job satisfaction. When an individual spends more time and effort in his family role, it will definitely reduce the time and effort he invests in his work (Tsaur *et al*., 2012). Therefore, an individual may not be able to obtain the expected feedbacks and respect from his work, and will gradually become dissatisfied with his job.

3. Methods

3.1. Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

Based on the above mentioned literature and discussion on hypotheses, this study has established a conceptual framework, shown in Figure 1, and proposed hypothesis 1 and hypothesis 2:

Hypothesis 1: work to family conflict has a negative influence on job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2: family to work conflict has a negative influence on job satisfaction.

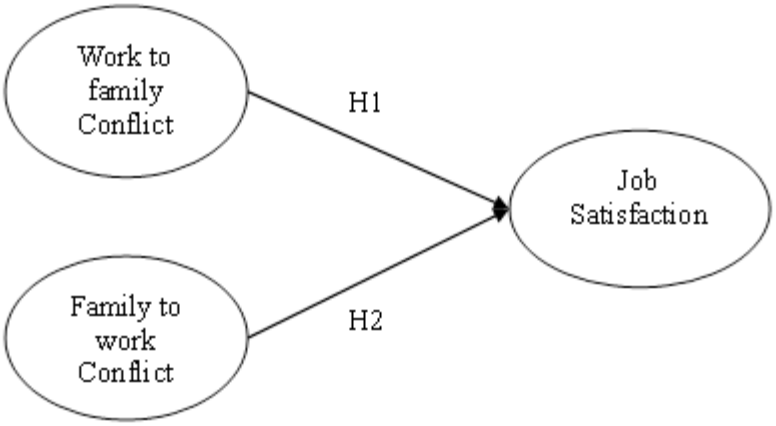

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

3.2. Data Collection

The tour leader who had a valid practicing certificate, and who were either formally employed in the tourism industry or temporarily employed by tourism associations to implement the task of leading a tourist group travelling abroad were selected as sample. Judgment sampling was adopted, and tour leaders who met the previously mentioned requirements were asked whether they would be willing to participate in a questionnaire investigation. The questionnaires were distributed in four ways: via the social network of the researcher, travel agencies, the tour leader association, and network communities. The researcher first contacted tour leaders who comply with the requirements, and sent the questionnaires by mail, e-mail, personal meeting, or webpage, whichever was convenient for the tour leaders, the respondents. A total of 233 valid questionnaires were returned.

Table 1. Sample characteristics

Variable	Sample number (%)	Variable	Sample number (%)
Gender		Years of practice	
Male	143(61.4)	5 Years or less	127(54.5)
Female	90(38.6)	6 to 10 Years	40(17.2)
Age		11 to 15 Years	22(9.4)
30 or below	11(4.7)	16 to 20 Years	23(9.9)
31 to 40	94(40.3)	21 Years or above	21(9.0)
41 to 50	103(44.2)	Main Guiding Destinations	
51 or above	26(11.2)	Northeast Asia	16(6.9)
Education		Southeast Asia	43(18.5)
High school and below	47(20.2)	Mainland China, Hong Long, and Macau	117(50.2)
University/college	152(65.2)	Europe	3(1.3)
Graduate school and above	34(14.6)	New Zealand and Australia	7(3.0)
Permanent/Freelance		The USA and Canada	47(20.2)
Permanent Tour Leader	82(35.2)		
Freelance Tour Leader	151(64.8)		

The sample comprised slightly more male respondents (61.4%) than females. The main age range is between 41 and 50, accounting for 44.2%, followed by the range between 31 and 40, which accounts for 40.3%. With respect to educational, university/college degree accounted for 65.2% of the total sample. Freelance tour leaders made up the majority, accounting for 64.8%. Most of the tour leaders had been working for less than five years, accounting for 54.5%, with the second place going to the service period of between six to ten years, accounting for 17.2%. The main guiding destinations are Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Macau, accounting for 50.2%. Details of the characteristics of the samples are shown in Table 1.

3.3. Measurement

The content of the questionnaire included three aspects, namely work-leisure conflict, job satisfaction, and personal information. All item responses were on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 for "strongly disagree" to 5 for "strongly agree." The construct of the "work-family conflict" was measured by a scale compiled by Netemeyer *et al*. (1996). Employees chose the level of agreement with the description of conflict between their job and family based on their own perception and experience. The scale has two dimensions, work to family conflict and family to work conflict, with five items for each dimension. The higher points indicate a higher perception of the conflict between work and family.

The construct of "job satisfaction" was measured referring to a scale compiled by Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, and Klesh (1979). There were a total of three items. Employees chose the level of love and satisfaction towards their jobs based on their own perception. A higher score indicated a higher level of job satisfaction.

4. Results

4.1. Measurement Model

Confirmatory factor analysis was performed to assess the overall measurement reliability and validity. Table 2 shows the details of the measurement properties. The indices for overall goodness of fit for the measurement model are as follows: χ^2=181.54, df=62, χ^2/df=2.92, SRMR=0.061, RMSEA=0.09, GFI=0.89, NFI=0.95, and CFI=0.97. The above indices show that the goodness of fit between the sample information and the model reached the acceptable standard. With respect to reliability, the squared multiple correlation (SMC) of some of the observable variables should at least be larger than 0.20, and the composite reliability (CR) of the potential variables should be higher than 0.60 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1989). The SMC values of the variables of this research were between 0.55 and 0.90, and the composite reliability of the latent variables was between 0.92 and 0.93, indicating that the scales generally had good reliability.

With respect to the validity, all items are tested to be significant (p<0.01), meaning that the all the items can present the meaning of the construct accurately. And the path coefficients vary from 0.74 to 0.95 (refer to Table 1 for details). The factor loading of all observable variables reached a significant level (t>1.96, p<0.05), and was higher than the criterion of 0.40 (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998). Significant factor loading indicates that both of the scales adopted have convergent validity (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). If the average variance extracted (AVE) of the latent variables reaches 0.5 or above, it indicates good convergent validity. The AVE values for the dimensions of each construct in this research were between 0.69 and 0.80, indicating that the scales have acceptable convergent validity. The criterion for the verification of discriminant validity is that the square root of each dimension of constructs should be larger than the correlation coefficient between one dimension and another dimension (Hair *et al*., 1998). According to Table 3, the square root of the AVE for each dimension varied from 0.83 to 0.89, all larger than the correlation

coefficient of the dimensions, indicating that the scales adopted by this research have good discriminant validity.

Table 2. Measurement model results

Scale items	M.	SFL	t-values	SMC	CR	AVE
Work-family conflict (WFC)	3.11				0.92	0.69
The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life. (WFC1)	3.23	0.81	14.58	0.65		
The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfill family responsibilities. (WFC2)	3.06	0.83	15.25	0.69		
Things I want to do at home do not get done because of the demands my job put on me. (WFC3)	3.11	0.88	16.57	0.77		
My job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfill my family duties. (WFC4)	3.08	0.88	16.75	0.78		
Due to work-related duties, I have to make changes to my plans for family activities. (WFC5)	3.05	0.74	12.94	0.55		
Family-work conflict (FWC)	3.14				0.93	0.72
The demands of my family or spouse/partner interfere with my work-related activities. (FWC1)	3.17	0.80	14.43	0.63		
I have to put off doing things at work because of the demands on my time at home. (FWC2)	3.21	0.89	17.06	0.78		
Things I want to do at work do not get done because of the demands of my family or spouse/partner. (FWC3)	3.02	0.77	13.74	0.59		
My home life interferes with my responsibilities at work, such as getting to work on time, accomplishing daily tasks, and working overtime. (FWC4)	3.15	0.95	19.15	0.90		
Family-related strain interferes with my ability to perform job-related duties. (FWC5)	3.13	0.81	14.86	0.66		
Job satisfaction (JS)	2.98				0.93	0.80
Overall, I am satisfied with my job. (JS1)	3.01	0.86	16.03	0.73		
In general, I do not like my job. (JS2)	2.92	0.93	18.35	0.86		
In general, I like working here. (JS3)	3.00	0.89	17.08	0.79		

Note: M., mean; SFL, standardized factor loading; CR, composite reliability; AVE, average variance extracted.

Table 3. Discriminant validity

	Work-family conflict	Family-work conflict	Job satisfaction
Work-family conflict	*0.83*		
Family-work conflict	0.05	*0.85*	
Job satisfaction	-0.03	-0.74**	*0.89*

Note: The diagonal elements are the squared roots of the AVE. The off-diagonal elements are the correlations between the constructs; all correlation coefficients achieve significant level ($p < 0.01$).

4.2. Structural Model and Test of Hypotheses

The study takes the simultaneous maximum likelihood estimation procedures to examine the hypothesized relationships among work to family conflicts, family to work conflicts and job satisfaction. Figure 2 reports the the goodness of fit of the final estimated structural model. The chi-square statistic ($\chi2$ = 386.24, d.f. = 87, $\chi2$/d.f. = 4.43) is significant; other fit indices, including GFI =0.90, SRMR=0.061, RMSEA=0.091, NFI= 0.95, and CFI = 0.91, indicate that the structural model has a reasonable explanation of the observed covariance among the constructs of interest.

The empirical results of the hypotheses are shown in Table 4. The overall structural model is shown as Figure 2. It was found that one hypothesis path of the model reached the significant level ($p < 0.05$), and the other did not reach the significant level. The analysis is as follows:

4.2.1. *The Relationship between Work to Family Conflict and Job Satisfaction*

The research examined the influences of work to family conflict on job satisfaction. The result shows that the standardized estimation coefficient is -0.06 ($p>0.05$). However, it doesn't reach the significant level, and thus hypothesis 1 is not supported. Specifically, when an individual feels that the job interferes with their family role, it does not affect their job satisfaction.

4.2.2. *Relationship between Family to Work Conflict and Job Satisfaction*

The research examined the influences of family to work conflict on job satisfaction. The result shows that the standardized estimation coefficient is -0.80 ($p<0.01$). It has reached the significant level, and thus hypothesis 2 is supported. Specifically, when an individual feels that their family role interferes with their job role, it will reduce their job satisfaction.

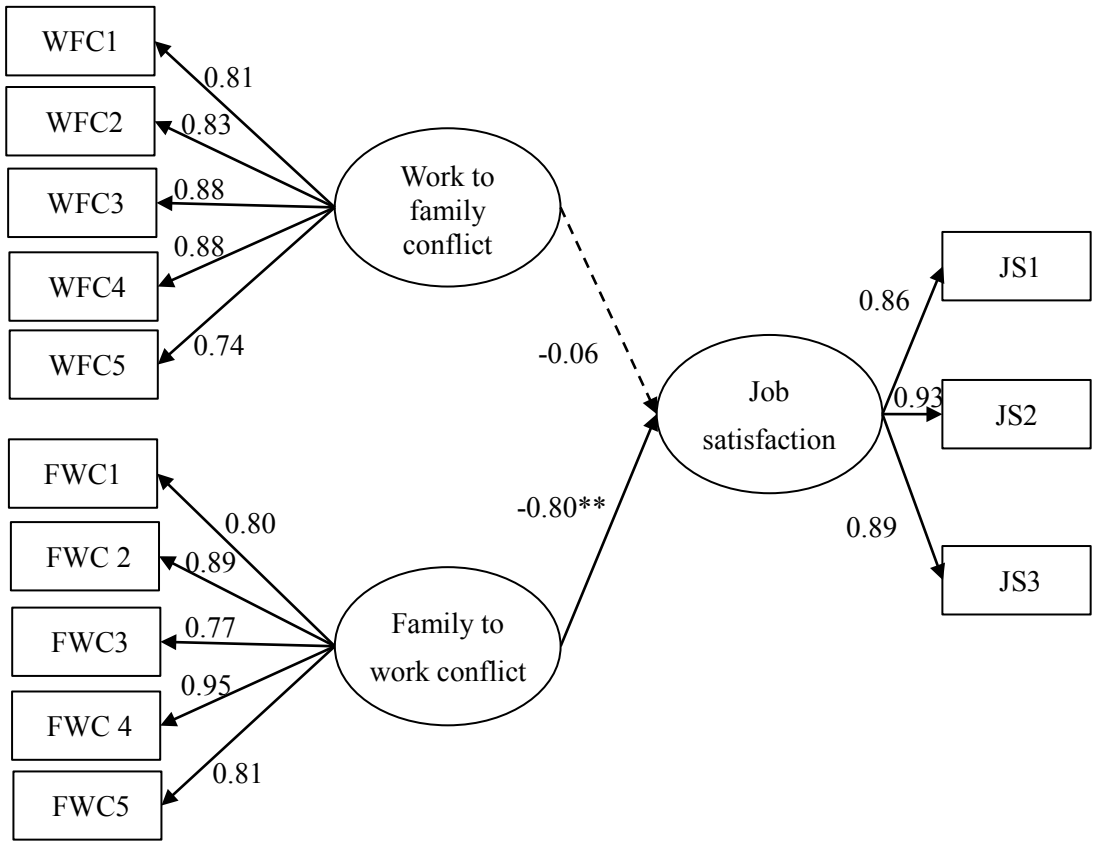

Figure 2. Structural model

Table 4. Paths analysis of research framework

Hypotheses	Path	Standardized coefficient	t-value	Support or not
H1	Work-family conflict → job satisfaction	-0.06	1.24	False
H2	Family-work conflict → job satisfaction	-0.80	-12.18**	True

Note: ** means p< 0.01

5. Discussion and Conclusions

5.1. Discussion

By targeting tour leaders, this research discussed the influence of work-family conflict on job satisfaction. The research discovered that work to family conflict would not cause a negative influence on job satisfaction. In other words, when a tour leader perceives that the work interferes with their family life (for example, "I feel very tired mentally when I come home after finishing a tour group" or "my job takes me away from my family"), it will not reduce their job satisfaction. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is not supported. The reason may be that job satisfaction mostly results from work-related factors, such as support from the supervisor (Karatepe & Kilic, 2007). As a consequence, the influence of work on family actually means that it is family life that is interfered with, rather than the job that is interfered with. Therefore, there is no significant negative influence on job satisfaction. This result conforms to the result of a previous study. Karatepe and Bekteshi (2008) pointed out that the conflict from work to the families of employees in the catering and tourism industries would not influence their job performance and satisfaction with life.

However, this research discovered that family to work conflict would have a negatively significant influence on the job satisfaction of tour leaders. In other words, when a tour leader perceives that "I am worried about whether I should reduce my working hours, and spend more time with my family" or "when I am working, I need to spend a lot of effort on family affairs", it will reduce their job satisfaction. Therefore, hypothesis 2 is supported. When the work of a tour leader is influenced by family factors (for example, the tour leader has to reduce the amount of time they work tour leading, or cannot concentrate on their work because of family factors), he will feel dissatisfied with the job. This result conforms to the result of a previous study. Lapierre *et al*. (2008) confirmed that strain-based and behavior-based family-work conflict would negatively influence job satisfaction.

5.2. Management Implication and Suggestions

The research indicates that when a tour leader's family-work conflict was generated and has influenced his work, his job satisfaction will be reduced. From the perspective of managers, it is crucial factor for the survival of an enterprise to allow its employees to feel satisfied with their job. Satisfied employees bring about satisfied customers, and thus bring about success for the enterprise. The work as a tour leader will keep them away from home for days at a time. Consequently, their family responsibilities are different from those of ordinary employees. Supervisors should provide resources at work to reduce the influence on work caused by the family issues of the tour leaders. For example, a company could give an allowance to tour leaders that enable them to contact their family free of charge when they are abroad, thus reducing family-work conflict. To summarize, if a tour leader can handle his family and work relationship well, it is beneficial for the enterprise. Enterprises can generate policies to improve the family life of their tour leaders so that any conflict will not influence their work, thus creating a win-win situation.

The research results have the following limitations, and some suggestions are proposed. Firstly, this research used self-administered questionnaires to collect information. The results can be easily influenced by common method variance. It is suggested that multiple data sources should be used to reduce the problem of common method variance. Secondly, many factors can influence job satisfaction, but this research only discussed the influences of work-family conflicts. Consequently, not all influencing factors were included. It is suggested that subsequent studies should add more variables for discussion to determine their relationships. Thirdly, the features of the tour leaders (such as working experience) may cause variances in the results of the model. It is suggested that subsequent studies should further discuss the features of tour leaders and their influence on the model.

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