

WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT, WORK-FAMILY FACILITATION AND JOB SATISFACTION: CONSIDERING THE ROLE OF GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES

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Abstract: *This study investigates the relation between work-family conflict, work-family facilitation and job satisfaction among the three different generations at an Enforcement Agency in Malaysia. The term work-family conflict includes both work to family conflict and family to work conflict; whereas work-family facilitation refers to both work to family facilitation and family to work facilitation. Using questionnaire adopted from Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), Wayne, Musisca, and Fleeson (2004) and Spector (1985)'s Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS), data was collected from 300 employees at its Sarawak office. Analyses showed that Gen X reported higher job satisfaction, Gen Y reported higher work-family, while Baby Boomer reported higher work-family conflict. Pearson correlation analysis showed that work-family conflict was negatively related to job satisfaction while work-family facilitation was positively related to job satisfaction for all three generations. When these relations were examined by cohorts, the findings showed different level of strength and significance. The study contributed towards understanding that managers need to consider generational differences in designing work-family programs, to reduce work-family conflict as well as to enhance work-family facilitation, as these are directly related to job satisfaction.*

Keywords: *Generational Differences, Work-Family Conflict, Family-Work Conflict, Work-Family Facilitation, Family-Work Facilitation, Baby Boomer, Gen X, Gen Y.*

Introduction

The interest to research employees from different generational groups has grown by leaps and bounds in the recent decades. This is compounded by the notion that generational groups are different with regards to their values, motivations, interests, live and organizational experiences. With these differences, it is posited that they may also display variation in terms of work-family conflict, work-family facilitation and job satisfaction.

In the current study, work-family conflict refers to both work-to-family conflict and family to work conflict, while work-family facilitation includes both work to family facilitation and family to work facilitation. Greenhouse and Beutell (1985) define the concept of work-family conflict as a form of role conflict caused by taking on responsibilities beyond one's ability to handle, and this interferes with role at home. Tones of research has been carried out to investigate its causes and consequences (Byron, 2005). While the research into work-family conflict was gaining momentum, some other researchers started investigating the potential benefits for the linkage between work and family life (Grzywacz, 2000). Finally, a new concept - work-family facilitation to explain the positive interaction between work and family has emerged (Voydanoff, 2004). Work-family conflict and work-family facilitation are two conceptually and empirically distinct constructs (Carlson, Kacmar, Wayne, and Grzywacz, 2010). They could appear simultaneously in individuals. As a result of this new concept, researchers have designed research models that include both work-family conflict and work-family facilitation where antecedents and the consequences of each was tested (e.g. Boyer & Mosley, 2007; Karatepe, 2010). Among the consequences is job satisfaction. Job satisfaction can be classified as the extent people like or dislike their job (Spector et al., 1997). Job satisfaction is positively related to many organizational and familial outcomes. Among them are higher organizational commitment, higher productivity, lower absenteeism as well as higher life satisfaction.

Beutell (2013) looked into work-family conflict and synergy among four different generations. Prior to that, Beutell and Wittig-Berman (2008) investigated generational differences, predictors and satisfaction outcomes among three generations. Many researchers (eg. Wayne, Musisca & Fleeson, 2004; Bruck, Allen & Spector, 2002; Ng, Ahmad & Omar, 2015) have looked into similar issues in different countries using different measurement scales. Even though many of the potential effects of work-family conflict and work-family facilitation on employees' work and family lives have been explored, less is known about the relation between work-family conflict and job satisfaction, work-family facilitation and job satisfaction among the different generations in Malaysia. The purpose of this paper is to determine the relation between work-family conflict and job satisfaction, work-family facilitation and job satisfaction among the various generational cohorts.

Much research has shown that job satisfaction influences service quality (eg. Bowen & Schneider 1985, Hartline & Ferrell 1996). The argument that employee satisfaction improves service quality is grounded on the theory of equity in social exchanges (Gouldner 1960, Homans 1961, Blau 1964, Organ 1977). Although there are various views on social exchange theory, theorists generally agree that social exchange includes a series of interactions to generate unspecific obligations (Emerson 1976, Cropanzano & Mitchell 2005). In the context of social exchange theory, when favourable working conditions are offered that make its employees satisfied, the latter will in return tend to display higher organizational commitment (Wayne et al., 1997; Flynn 2005), leading to a higher level of service quality.

Literature Review

Work to Family Conflict and Family to Work Conflict

Juggling between the needs of work and family are a common experience for many employees. Although engaging in both work and family roles can have positive effects for individuals, if workers are unable to balance the responsibilities associated with both roles, the potential for conflicts between roles increases (Frone, 2003). Greenhaus & Beutell (1985) define work-family conflict as "a form of interrole conflict in which the role pressures from the work and

family domains are mutually incompatible. That is, participation in the work(family) role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in family (work) role” (p. 77). They also proposed that conflict occurs in such a way that work-family conflict is the negative interference from one work role to his or her family role. Family-work conflict is the negative interference from one’s family role to his or her work role.

Work to Family Facilitation and Family to Work Facilitation

At its essence, work-family facilitation is the notion that work and family are interdependent and complementary (Werbel & Walter, 2002). Involvement in one domain can positively and beneficially influence functioning of the other domain. Based on Resource-Gain-Development Perspective (Wayne, Gyzywacs, Carlson & Kacmar, 2007), work-family facilitation is defined as the extent to which an individual's engagement in one life domain (work/family) provides gains (developmental, affective, capital, or efficiency) which contribute to enhance functioning of another life domain (family/work). Work-family facilitation can occur in both direction, where work can provide gains that enhance functioning of the family domain (work-to-family facilitation) or family can provide gains that enhance functioning of the work domain (family-to-work facilitation). Henceforth, the term “facilitation” is used to refer to the overall phenomenon, including both of its directions.

Work-family Conflict and Job Satisfaction

In line with Role Theory, job satisfaction is expected to decrease when there is an increase in work-family conflict and family-work conflict (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964). Numerous studies (eg. Allen, Herst, Brunk & Sutton, 2000; Beutell 2013; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998; Wayne, Musisca & Fleeson, 2004) confirmed this through their findings. Bruck, Allen and Spector (2002) had also pointed out that work interfering with one’s family commitments can actually take away an individual’s satisfaction in his or her work. Irrespective of cultural background, strain-based work and family tensions have been found to result in reduced job satisfaction (Spector et al., 2007).

Work-family Facilitation and Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction of employees is important for an organization in order to reduce or avoid employees from leaving their jobs (Clark, 2001). Adams, King & King (1996) in their study, showed that one’s work and family relationship has a significant effect on his or her levels of job satisfaction. These researchers also concluded that family support can reduce family interfering with one’s work. Koys (2001) also points to the importance of maintaining employee’s job satisfaction because a satisfied worker is more likely to be productive than dissatisfied ones. Apart from that, job satisfaction has been shown to be important for employees to maintain a good emotional health and overall satisfaction in their work domain (Faragher, Cass, & Cooper, 2005).

Generational Groups – Baby Boomer, Gen X and Gen Y

The concept of generational groups was conceived by Mannheim (1952). Generations are referred to as groups of people who share significant experiences that have a deep and lasting impact throughout their lives. Eyerman and Turner (1998) proposed a modification to the original concept by Mannheim to “cohorts of people passing through time who come to share a common habitus, hexis and culture, a function of which is to provided them with a collective that serves to integrate the cohort” (p.91). This suggests that generation means being born at a specific time that is shaped by major developmental events.

A search revealed very limited scholarly studies on these three generations in Malaysia. As such data from other countries is used as reference points. The word “Baby Boomer” was coined as baby population exploded after World War II in Japan, China and United States. In Malaysia, Baby Boomers born between 1946 to 1960 are the “Merdeka babies”. There was also no phenomenon of a baby boom during those years. In the current study, they are the respondents 57 years old and above. They are also the most senior workforce in this organization in terms of age. Some of them have experienced colonialism while growing up, underwent English medium of education and witnessed Malaysia gained independence. In Malaysian Public sector, the retirement age can be either 56, 58 or 60. As such, this cohort has started retiring since a few years ago and there are not many of them left in this organization. Gen X or Generation X represent groups of people who were born between 1961 up to 1980. During these years, Malaysia has indeed saw a “baby boom”. They are the respondents between 37 to 56 years old in this study. The “X” in Gen X according to Couplan (1991) refers to a nameless group that was overshadowed by Boomers, despite being aware of their own existence. In Malaysia, this group makes up about 40% of the workforce (Malaysian Statistics Department, 2018). They are regarded as the pillar holders of Malaysian corporates. They have learnt the work-hard values from the previous generations. On the other hand, Gen Y or the Millennials are the cohorts born between the 1981 to 1999, they are between 21 to 36 years old in 2017. This group has created a phenomenal change to the technology and internet landscape. They are the fastest growing workforce segment with potential emerging leaders. They are often categorised as having a strong desire for work-life balance, fast-track career movement, and has no interest in portraying long-term loyalty to organizations. Malaysian Gen Y are observed to have unrealistic expected salary among the fresh graduates. This could be due to the fact that they are living in a generation where living costs has increased exponentially. As our society becomes more affluent, Gen Y invest in lifestyle. Work and play must be integrated, and work must be flexible (Lau, 2014). There are currently more than 50% of Gen Y in the workforce (Malaysian Statistics Department, 2018).

Hypotheses Development

Based on the review of literature on work-family facilitation, work-family conflict and their relation to job satisfaction above, therefore, in this study, it is hypothesised that:

H1a : There is a significant, negative relation between family to work conflict and job satisfaction

H1b : There is a significant, negative relation between work to family conflict and job satisfaction

H1c : There is a significant, positive relation between work to family facilitation and job satisfaction

H1d: There is a significant, positive relation between family to work facilitation and job satisfaction

From the review of generational groups discussed above, it can be concluded that Baby Boomer, Gen X and Gen Y are different in terms of their personal values, life experiences, work values and life style. Some research showed that there are generational differences between work-family conflict and synergy and job satisfaction (eg. Beutell & Wittig-Berman, 2008; Beutell, 2013). Previous studies have employed multiple operationalisations of work-family conflict, work-family facilitation and job satisfaction. Due to the lack of studies using the measurement proposed in this study to investigate this phenomenon, therefore the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H2a : There is a significant, negative relation between family to work conflict and job satisfaction for Baby Boomer
- H2b : There is a significant, negative relation between work to family conflict and job satisfaction for Baby Boomer
- H2c : There is a significant, positive relation between work to family facilitation and job satisfaction for Baby Boomer
- H2d: There is a significant, positive relation between family to work facilitation and job satisfaction for Baby Boomer
- H3a : There is a significant, negative relation between family to work conflict and job satisfaction for Gen X
- H3b : There is a significant, negative relation between work to family conflict and job satisfaction for Gen X
- H3c : There is a significant, positive relation between work to family facilitation and job satisfaction for Gen X
- H3d: There is a significant, positive relation between family to work facilitation and job satisfaction for Gen X
- H4a : There is a significant, negative relation between family to work conflict and job satisfaction for Gen Y
- H4b : There is a significant, negative relation between work to family conflict and job satisfaction for Gen Y
- H4c : There is a significant, positive relation between work to family facilitation and job satisfaction for Gen Y
- H4d: There is a significant, positive relation between family to work facilitation and job satisfaction for Gen Y

Based on the discussion of hypotheses above, the conceptual framework of the current paper is depicted as follows.

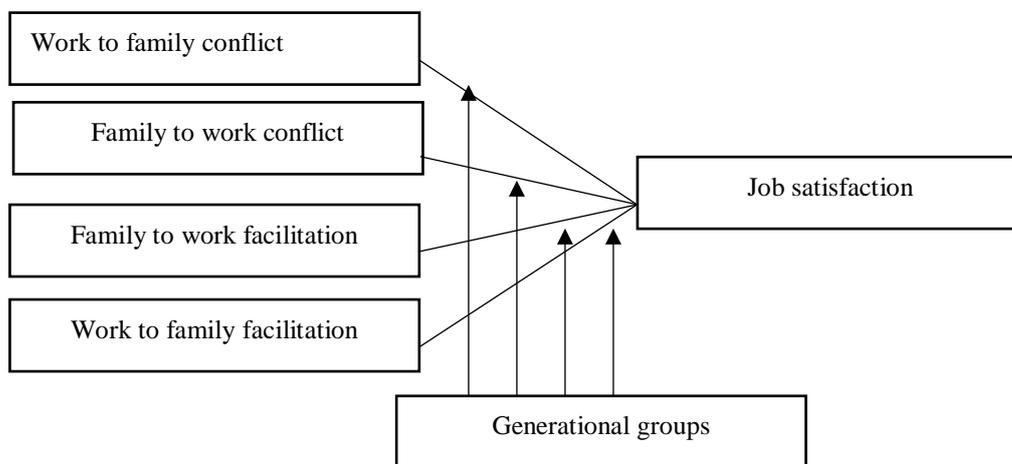


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Scope of Research

This study was carried out at a Malaysia Enforcement Agency in its Sarawak Branch. It was confined to investigating the relation between work to family conflict and satisfaction, family

to work conflict and job satisfaction, family to work facilitation and job satisfaction, work to family facilitation and job satisfaction among Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y.

Methodology

The aim of the study is to determine the correlation between work to family conflict and job satisfaction, family to work conflict and job satisfaction, work to family facilitation and job satisfaction, family to work facilitation and job satisfaction among the different generational groups. Since the main analysis method is Pearson correlation, the aim is to get significant result ($p < 0.05$) with sufficient power (90%) to detect at least correlation coefficient of 0.3 which is considered as sizable effect size (Cohen, 1992). Therefore, the minimum required sample size for this study is 112. The formula for calculation is based on two-tailed test (Guenther, 1977). A stratified sampling method was employed to collect data from an Enforcement Agency in Sarawak in 2017. This method is simple to use and it ensures representation of individuals across the entire population. Each Section is considered as a stratum. Samples were then drawn randomly from each stratum. A set of questionnaires was then distributed via direct administration method after permission was obtained from the top management. In order to ensure high response rate, a total of 312 sets of questionnaires were administered. After these responses were checked for completeness, there were 300 usable responses. Respondents' backgrounds are depicted in Table 1.

Table 1: Respondents' background

	Baby Boomer n = 17		Gen X n= 136		Gen Y n= 147	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Gender						
Male	9	52	75	55.1	56	38.1
Female	8	47	61	44.9	91	61.9
Marital status						
Single	4	23.5	21	15.4	50	34
Married	13	76.5	115	84.6	97	66
Year of Service						
5 and below	0		1	0.7	52	35.4
6 to 10	0		20	14.7	72	49
11 to 15	0		36	26.5	21	14.3
16 to 20	0		52	38.2	2	1.4
Above 21	17	100	0	0	0	0
No of Children						
None	0	0	16	25.8	65	44.2
1 to 2	6	35.3	45	53.0	67	45.6
More than 3	11	64.7	65	21.2	15	9.7
Sections						
Management	6	35.3	21	15.4	10	6.8
Prevention & Enforcement	3	17.6	42	30.9	34	23.3
Goods and Service Tax	1	5.9	12	8.8	25	17.1
Technical Service	1	5.9	8	5.9	9	6.2
Customs	6	35.3	53	39.0	68	46.6

Measures

Work-family conflict and family-work conflict were measured using eight items. These measures capture conflict created by two forms of role pressures incompatibility proposed by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985): time and strain. Work to family conflict (WFC; $\alpha = 0.91$) was measured using four items (eg. “Stress at work makes you irritable at home”). Family to work conflict (FWC; $\alpha = 0.88$) also has four items (eg. “Stress at home makes you irritable at work”). Another eight items used to measure work-family facilitation and family-work facilitation were adopted from Wayne, Musisca, and Fleeson (2004). Work to family facilitation (WFF; $\alpha = 0.85$) has four items (eg. “The things you do at work help you deal with personal and practical issues at home”). Finally, family to work facilitation (FWF; $\alpha = 0.91$) also consisted of four items (eg. “Your home life helps you to relax and feel ready for the next day’s work”). These items were measured on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being *strongly disagree* and 4 being *strongly agree*. As for Job satisfaction, this variable was measured using Spector’s (1985) Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS). Job satisfaction in this study (Job satisfaction $\alpha = 0.83$), has 28 items with two items each to measure each facet: policy, relationships, pay, job security, job status, supervision, work condition, growth, advancement, autonomy, achievement, recognition, responsibility and job itself. These items were measured on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being *strongly disagree* and 4 being *strongly agree*. Section C has ten items on respondents’ background.

Results and Discussions

Prior to testing the hypotheses, a descriptive analysis was carried out to gain a clearer understanding of respondents' job satisfaction, work-family conflicts and work-family facilitation, as shown in Table 2. Gen X have reported higher level of job satisfaction and work-family facilitation compare to the other two groups. This group also showed lower family-work conflict. This is contrary to findings by Beutell (2013) where Gen X in his study had significantly higher level of work to family conflict than the other generational groups. This could be perhaps Gen X in this study are made up of more male (55%) and in Malaysia, the household chores are mostly carried out by the wives, domestic helper, or relatives. Thus family-work conflict is lower than other cohorts. Also, up to 85% of this cohort are in non-managerial positions, thus allowing many of them to have more time to be with their family. Baby Boomers reported higher level of family to work conflict and work to family conflict than the other two groups. This is also not supported by Beutell (2013) where Baby Boomers had reported lower family to work conflict in his study. This could be attributed to the fact that many of them are in the Management level and much of their time are spent solving issues facing the organisation, making decision and leading the organisation, this affecting their role in family. More than 93% of Gen Y in this study are in non-managerial position, one third of this group are single and more than 40% of them has no children yet. These factors could have contributed to Gen Y in this study to have has a lower level of work to family conflict and higher level of family to work facilitation compare to the other groups.

Table 2: Mean analysis for Job satisfaction, family-work conflict and facilitation among Baby Boomer, Gen X and Gen Y

	Baby Boomer n = 17		n X n = 136		Gen Y n = 147	
	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev
Job satisfaction	3.28	.375	3.30	.504	3.23	.465
Family to Work Conflict	2.34	.637	2.02	.786	2.05	.676
Work to Family Conflict	2.22	.483	2.17	.723	2.02	.763
Work to Family Facilitation	2.78	.649	2.87	.558	2.84	.585
Family to Work Facilitation	3.10	.656	3.05	.568	3.15	.693

Pearson correlation analysis was employed to test the associations between work-family conflict and job satisfaction, work-family facilitation and job satisfaction among the three generational groups. The results in Table 3 showed that there was a weak, negative but significant relation between family to work conflict and job satisfaction in general among all the cohorts. This hypothesis was supported by the result of analysis, where $r = -.177$, $p < .05$. Similarly, the data also showed a weak, negative but significant relation between work-family conflict and job satisfaction ($r = -.244$, $p < .01$). These are in line with findings by Bruck, Allen and Spector (2002) and Spector et al. (2007). Apart from that, there is also evidence for a moderate, positive and significant relation between work to family facilitation and job satisfaction ($r = .413$, $p < .01$) and a similar relation between family to work facilitation and job satisfaction where $r = .303$, $p < 0.1$. These are supported by Adams, King and King (1996), Clark (2001), Koys (2001), Faragher, Cass, and Cooper (2005). Therefore, it can be concluded that there was evidence to support Hypotheses 1a, 1b, 1c and 1d.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Analysis between Family-work Conflict and Work- family facilitation and Job Satisfaction by Generational Groups

	Job Satisfaction for all three Generations	Baby Boomer Job Satisfaction	Gen X Job satisfaction	Gen Y Job Satisfaction
Family-Work Conflict	-.177*	-.400*	-.206*	-.125
Work-Family Conflict	-.224**	-.524*	-.300**	-.134
Work-Family Facilitation	.413**	.368*	.530**	.310**
Family-Work Facilitation	.303**	.324*	.511**	.150

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

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As for Hypothesis 2a, the findings in this study provided evidence to support such hypothesis (there is a significant, negative relation between family to work conflict and job satisfaction among Baby Boomer), as seen in Table 3, where $r = -.400$, $p < .05$. Likewise, there was evidence to support hypothesis 2b that there is a moderate, negative and significant relation between work to family conflict, where $r = -.524$, $p < .05$. This is also supported by Beutell (2013). Hypothesis 2c and 2d were also supported whereby $r = .368$, $p < .05$ and $r = .324$, $p < .05$, respectively.

Correlation results for Gen X in Table 3 also showed that $r = -.206$, $p < .05$, thus this supported Hypothesis 3a that there is a weak, negative but significant between family to work conflict and job satisfaction among Gen X. Likewise for Hypothesis 3b, there was evidence to support the notion that there is a moderate, negative but significant relation between work to family conflict

and job satisfaction, where $r = -.300$, $p < .01$. As for Hypothesis 3c and 3d, the findings also provided evidence that there is moderate, positive and significant relation between work to family facilitation and job satisfaction among Gen X ($r = .530$, $p < .01$). and between family to work facilitation and job satisfaction ($r = .511$, $p < .01$).

As for Hypothesis 4a, it was not supported by the analysis shown in Table 3, where $r = -.125$, $p > .05$. Likewise, for Hypothesis 4b, the data also did not find evidence to support the notion that there is a significant, negative relation between work to family conflict and job satisfaction, where $r = -.134$, $p > .05$. As for Hypothesis 4c, the findings provided evidence to support that there is moderate, positive and significant relation between work to family facilitation and job satisfaction among Gen Y ($r = .310$, $p < .05$). As for hypothesis 4d, results did not support this hypothesis with $r = .150$, $p > .05$.

From the analysis above, Baby Boomers showed stronger negative correlations between family to work conflict and job satisfaction compare to the other two groups. The finding was as such due to the fact that as they inch closer to retirement, their family commitment has increased as well. Family to work conflict is higher due to involvement with children and grandchildren, or lifestyle issues. In Malaysia, it is common for grandparents to share child-minding responsibilities with their adult children. Gen X showed stronger correlations between all work-family conflict and work-family facilitation and job satisfaction compare to the three generational groups. For this group, their relation between work-family conflict and facilitation and job satisfaction were as hypothesised. They showed significant, positive relation between work to family facilitation and job satisfaction, compare to Gen Y and Baby Boomer. This is most likely because Gen X are in their prime in both career and family life. As such, these two areas are enhancing each other. Gen Y had shown weaker negative correlation between family to work conflict, work to family conflict, family to work facilitation, work to family facilitation and job satisfaction, compare to Gen X and Baby Boomer. Gen Y, who are the youngest generation in the current study, the findings were somewhat different from what was initially hypothesised. Although there was a negative correlation between work to family conflict and job satisfaction, family to work conflict and job satisfaction, these correlations were not statistically significant. This could be explained by the Gen Y's more diverse backgrounds. More than one third of them are single, and 44% of them do not have any children. These conditions most likely would reduce family to work conflict. Apart from that, more than a third of them have 5 years or less work experience, and close to half them have 10 years or less work experience, and most of them are still in lower positions (not shown in Table 1) in the organisational hierarchy, as such work to family conflict would be relatively low.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The present study adds to the literature by finding generational differences between work-family conflict and facilitation and job satisfaction in Malaysia. In this study, the relation between work to family conflict and facilitation and job satisfaction were examined. First of all, findings revealed Gen X has a higher level of job satisfaction and work to family facilitation among the three cohorts. Baby Boomer has recorded a higher level for family to work conflict and work to family conflict while Gen Y has a higher level of family to work facilitation. Findings also suggest that across the three cohorts in this Enforcement Agency, work to family conflict and family to work conflict negative relation with job satisfaction regardless of respondents' generational groups, although some of these correlations were not statistically significant.

Evidence showed that there were relations between work to family conflict and job satisfaction, work to family facilitation and job satisfaction, across all the generational groups. The findings have implication on human resource management since there are differences in employees from different generational groups in terms of their work-family conflict and work-family facilitation and job satisfaction. This suggests that human resource managers need to be aware of factors that can affect work-family conflict and job satisfaction among the different cohorts. It is also important for organizations to keep in mind that it is not just enough to reduce work and family conflict, but it is also equally important to find ways to increase facilitation between the work and family lives of their employees. Such initiatives should include family friendly policies that are suitable to employees of a specific organization, and a specific generational cohort. This will more likely to ensure that employees experience lower conflict, higher facilitation, which, in turn, can bring about outcomes that are of organizational interest. This will indirectly result in better service quality delivery to their clients. Also, with the latest announcement that the Malaysian Goods and Service Tax will be reduced from the exiting 6% to 0% effective 1 June 2018, it is very likely there will be some changes to the man power arrangement in this Enforcement Agency, either through transfer, retraining, redeployment or termination of expiring contract staff. All this change will indirectly affect work-family conflict, work-family facilitation and job satisfaction. As such, the Management need to manage this delicate issue with extreme care.

This study is not without limitation. First of all, the respondents for Baby Boomer were limited to only less than 6 percent of the total respondents. This was such as the group of employees have retired since a few year ago. Next, although this study has identified quantitative difference for work to family conflict and facilitation, future research could explore the qualitative effects of conflicts, how such conflicts are experienced by the generational cohorts. This may provide insights into the way in which family and career stages are actually experienced by the respondents. Life stage and family stage differed for generational groups and this could be explored in subsequent research. Also, longitudinal studies that trace the generational cohorts over time would be particularly valuable to see the changes among the different generational cohorts.

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