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## The Relationship Between Work and Family Conflict on Life Satisfaction and Quality of Life among Employees in the Health Sector

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### Abstract

The development of the information technology era and the development of the economic sector has improved the living standards of society today which has led to the involvement of partners as the core of a family in making a living and providing facilities to children and family members, resulting in the demand to work overtime to accommodate existing needs. The need to play a role in the family and in the workplace to achieve satisfaction ensure a good quality of life increases which requires low conflict influence. Therefore, this study was conducted to examine the relationship between life satisfaction and quality of life to work and family conflict where a total of 100 respondents with families were selected to participate in this study. The Work Family Conflict Scale (WFCS), Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), and the Quality-of-Life scale were used to see the influence of work family conflict on individual's life satisfaction and quality of life. The data were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.0. The results of the study found that there was a correlation between work family conflict and life satisfaction but not with quality of life. Further discussions on the findings are reported in the article.

**Keywords:** Work Family Conflict, Life Satisfaction, Quality of Life, Strain-Based, Time-Based

### Introduction

Employment is crucial in earning a living in order to survive and meet basic needs. Duties and workloads require a high commitment in ensuring quality and productive work, especially for those who work in the field of health, especially health workers who work regardless of time and time. The spread of epidemics and increasing cases require health workers to pay full attention and commitment to ensure that the level of public health is maximized, they have to spend so much time at home for the sake of responsibility in earning a living. Therefore, for those who have a family, they need to be wise in the division of work and family time because the two components are work and family. important things for those who hold the title of mother and father.

The burden of duties and responsibilities that need to be borne in employment to ensure economic stability and find financial resources to meet the needs of life requires those with families to go out to find work and within the scope of the actual duties of a health worker, especially for those who hold positions such as Medical Officer, Nurse, Assistant Medical Officers. They also have to work overtime if there is a shortage of manpower at that time and for those who work in shifts who work alternately within 24 hours is very limited time for those with families. While at home they have a role as mother, father, husband, wife and child, work and family are the two most important things in a person's life. Through studies in the field related to family life satisfaction shows that there is a significant negative relationship between work and family conflict with parental satisfaction (Malone, 2011), family satisfaction (Namayandeh, Yacob, & Juhari, 2011) and marital satisfaction (Ochanser, 2012).

Although Malone (2011) stated that studies identifying the relationship between work and family conflict with parental satisfaction are still lacking but Mason's (1998) study found that work-family conflict can predict parental satisfaction. This suggests that in the aspect of parental satisfaction, the higher the work and family conflict the lower one's parental satisfaction. In addition, the relationship between work and family conflict on the role of individuals in the family institution also looks a lot at life satisfaction, marital satisfaction, parenting satisfaction and family satisfaction. Past studies have found that work and family conflict are associated with low family satisfaction (Namayandeh et. Al., 2011; Bass et. al., 2009; Wang et. Al., 2010). In addition, it was found that, parental satisfaction is associated with partner support, role conflict, salary and partner employment (Warde, Moonsinghe, Allen & Gelberg, 1999). Past studies have also found that work-family conflict can predict parental satisfaction (Mason, 1998).

Thus, their failure to balance the two may lead to the existence of family-employment conflicts that will negatively affect themselves, family and the workplace in turn influencing satisfaction in life and in turn disrupting the functioning of life in daily time. Although there are many studies about the study of family work conflict on life satisfaction but only a few studies that touch on workplace conflict affect the family but do not focus on the influence on life satisfaction and the level found in their lives. (Tsiounou & Konstantopoulus, 2015). Thus this study will emphasize on the conflict aspect that arises next measures the level of satisfaction and quality in the lives of those who work in balancing these two variables.

### **Research Objectives**

- To examine the level of work and family conflict among employees
- To examine the relationship between life satisfaction and work and family conflict
- To examine the relationship between quality of life and work and family conflict

### **Literature Review**

Conflict and role are synonymous with the result of the combination of work and family, that is, work will produce work and family conflict or vice versa, that is, family and work conflict. According to the definition proposed by Carlson et al (2006) a role is an experience gained by an individual as a result of interaction between work and family that can be used by a person for self-development. Conflict on the other hand, is an overlap of roles that is the imbalance of roles between work and family (Kahn et al. 1964). This definition clearly shows that role

and conflict have two different meanings namely narrative conflict to self-improvement efforts for benefit. This statement is clarified by Carlson et al (2006) that absence interferes with the improvement process. Thus, it is assumed that conflict and role are two distinct elements based on definition and impact on individuals (Frone, 2003; Grzywacz & Bass, 2003; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006).

The statement of work-family conflict occurs because working couples perform various responsibilities such as being employees, parents and spouses where time commitment, energy is very limited (Kelly & Voydanoff, 1985). Past research state that each successful individual will give the view that the career undertaken is different according to age and job position (Viega, 1983). Previous research has found that younger parents have the tendency to sacrifice their own time to ensure their future self-improvement. However, older parents tend to emphasis on life progress and work-family balance (Gordon & Whelan-Berry, 2007). In addition, age factors may affect life satisfaction and studies have found that those who work less than 30 years old are dissatisfied with their careers and cause further stress and conflict in their employment and family due to this dissatisfaction Muzita (1986). It was also found that that individual who work past the age of 40 will achieve more satisfaction with the rewards received after getting tired at a young age (Berkowitz et. al., 1987). In terms of gender, Martins et al, (2002) found that women are more prone to stress than men after getting married. This may be due to the expectations on a woman's role or responsibilities at home after work as compared to men who has more expectations as the breadwinner Tenbrunsel et al (2002).

Stress that occurs among working parents due to time constraints and lack of commitment to family because they are more focused on work or the other way round. High stress will occur when issues that needs attending occurs at the same time which may create conflict as individuals find it hard to olay their respective roles due to the demands that cannot be met or balanced. (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Work family conflict can be viewed in two forms which are (i) Family-to-work conflict or (ii) Work-to-family conflict. The first form refers to issues related outside of work (in this case, family issues) spill over to an individual's work. For example, family pressures including caring responsibilities (children, elderly or a family member), interpersonal conflict within the family unit, lack of support from family members (Greenhaus, 2002).

Issues from home will cause the emotions of the working partner to be disturbed thus will dampen the spirit at work leading to a decrease in productivity and work satisfaction (Guitian, 2009). This could also happen the other way around which explains the second form of work family conflict. Stress at work including workload, interpersonal conflicts at work or job insecurities may affect the dynamics at home. Conflict in the roles played by employees in an organization could also be a source of stress. Usually, this role conflict arises when the job requirements are not in line with the values and expectations of employees (Najib Ahmad Marzuki, 2007). Guitian (2009) also argues that the presence of work family conflict can be due to other social problems such as financial issues which are often seen as common stressors which may affect the quality of life of a family. In addition, it also causes tension in marriage due to lack of communication due to problems experienced at work and at home.

## Research Method

### Design and Sample

The study used a quantitative approach that emphasizes on the objective phenomena which is controlled through cross-sectional data collection and analysis. Quantitative approach is used to obtain objective input (in the form of numerical data) of the study variables via instruments that are formally tested and authentic (McCusker and Gunaydin, 2015). The use of statistical tests on a study is an effort to explain or investigate the relationship between variables in a research. The questionnaires were distributed online via Google Form which consisted of validated scales that went through a back translation procedure to the Malay Language which is the native language to the respondents. Instructions were provided and individual's consent were asked at the beginning of the page. Respondents were able to fill in the questionnaire at their own pace and they were given contact details if they had any further inquiries. Respondents for this study was recruited using convenience sampling from a medical institution in Klang Valley. A total of 100 respondents volunteered were had equal percentage of male (49%) and female (51%) respondents. More than half (59%) were between age 30 to 39 years old. From the total sample, 67% were married and from that percentage, 40% had at least one child. More than half (65%) had six to ten years of work experience.

### Instrument

#### *Work Family Conflict*

Work Family Conflict was measured using 22 items from the Work Family Conflict Questionnaire (WFCQ) that was developed by Kelloway et al. (1999). The scale involved four dimensions to measure work to strain-based WIF (6 items), time-based WIF (5 items), strain-based FIW (6 items) and time-based FIW (5 items). All items were positive, and response were based on a 5-Likert scale ranging from (1) Strongly Disagree to (5) Strongly Agree. An example item of strain-based WIF is *"After work I have a little energy left for the things I need to do at home"* while time-based WIF is *"Job demands keep me from spending the amount of time I would like with my family"*. An example item of strain-based FIW is *"I spend time at work thinking about the things that I have to get done at home"* while time - based FIW is *"I spend time at work making arrangement for family members."*

#### *Life Satisfaction*

Life satisfaction was measured using five items adapted from the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) that was developed by Diener et al. (1985). All items were positive, and response were based on a 5-Likert scale ranging from (1) Strongly Disagree to (7) Strongly Agree. The range of score was between 5 – 35 with higher scores representing higher life satisfaction. An example of the items are *"In most ways my life is close to my ideal"* and *"So far I have gotten the important things I want in life"*.

#### *Quality of Life*

Quality of life was measured using 16 items adapted from the Quality of Life Scale (QOLS) originally developed by Flanagan (1978) and further improved by adding another oitem by Burckhardt et al. (1989). The scale oconsiste dof 6 higher-order domains which are (1) physical and material well-being, (2) relations with other people, (3) social, community and civic activities, (4) personal development and fulfillment, (5) recreation and (6) independence. All items were positive, and response were based on a 5-Likert scale ranging from (1) Terrible to (7) Delighted. Scores are added up ranging from 16 – 122 with higher

score representing higher quality of life. Examples of the items are “*Material well-being/financial security*” and “*Relationships with spouse or significant other*”.

### Analysis

Analysis was carried out using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) Software. Descriptive analysis was performed to look at frequencies and descriptive values while inferential statistics were used to look at correlational values between the variables in the study.

### Findings

The table describes the frequency of each sub-dimensions of work family conflict which are Work Intrudes Family (strain-based), Work Intrudes Family (time-based), Family Intrudes Work (strain-based) and Family Intrudes Work (time-based). All four variables were categorized with three levels: low, moderate and high. The results are shown in the table below:-

Table 1: Frequency Levels of the Sub-dimensions of Work Family Conflict

VARIABLE	LEVEL	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
WIF(s)	Low	12	12.0
	Moderate	29	29.0
	High	59	59.0
WIF(t)	Low	15	15.0
	Moderate	46	46.0
	High	39	39.0
FIW(t)	Low	26	26.0
	Moderate	41	41.0
	High	33	33.0
FIW(s)	Low	32	32.0
	Moderate	39	39.0
	High	29	29.0
TOTAL		292	100

Table 1 displays the frequency level of the four sub-dimensions of work family conflict among the respondents in this study. More than half (59.0%) reported having high levels of strain-based interference of work issues on their family whereby about a quarter (29.0%) were moderate leaving only 12 respondents (12.0%) with low frequency of strain-based interference WIF. Meanwhile, almost half of the respondents (46.0%) reported having moderates levels of times-based interference of work issues on their family whereby more than a quarter (39.0%) had high interference while only 15.0% reported low interference. In terms of family issues interfering their work, 41 respondents reported average scores for time- based interference while slightly more than a quarter (33.0%) experienced high time-

based strains leaving 26.0% with low time-based interference. As for strain-based FIW, the percentage breakdown were fairly equal among respondents where slightly more than a quarter reported low (32.0%) and average (39.0) strain-based interference whereas slightly less than a quarter (29.0%) experienced high strain-based interference.

The following table (Table 2) presents the result of the Pearson correlation that was used to test the relationship between presenteeism, job demand, work engagement and perceived job insecurity.

Table 2: Correlations between study variables

Dimension	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. WIFt	-					
2. WIFs	.78**	-				
3. FIWt	.65**	.87**	-			
4. FIWs	.64**	.83**	.90**	-		
5. Life Satisfaction	-.10	-.12	-.10	-.21*	-	
6. Quality of Life	-.14	-.19	-.15	-.16	.54**	-

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

Table 2 displays the correlation values between the four sub-dimensions of work family conflict with life satisfaction and quality of life. Results show that there is a positive significant relationship between all four sub-dimensions of work family conflict. Table 2 show a positive correlation between time-based WIF and strain-based WIF ( $r = .78$ ,  $p < .01$ ), time-based FIW ( $r = .65$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and strain-based FIW ( $r = .64$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Strain-based WIF was also found having strong significant correlations with time-based FIW ( $r = .87$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and strain-based FIW ( $r = .83$ ,  $p < .01$ ). As for time-based FIW, results show even stronger relationships with strain-based FIW ( $r = .90$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Among the four sub-dimensions, only strain-based FIW had a negative significant relationship with life satisfaction but not for the other sub-dimensions. All four sub-dimensions did not correlate significantly with quality of life. However, life satisfaction showed positive correlation with quality of life. These results suggest that higher strain-based interference of family issues on an individual's work would lead to lower life satisfaction. Meanwhile, the stronger the life satisfaction of an individual, the higher is the individual's perception of his/her quality of life.

## Discussion

This research found that respondents reporting high scores when it comes to strain-based interference of work with their time with family. Time-based and strain-based interference may refer to the long working hours and work intensity in which conflict could occur due to the time and quality needed in order to functions or fulfil their multiple roles (eg. employee, parents, carer) (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Conflict occurs when employees have to spend a long time to complete tasks and responsibilities in doing work, thus causing an imbalance of time with family. This statement is supported by the statement that daily work conflict causes disruption of one's role in the individual's life such as disrupting interests, family relationships, relationships with friends (Kossek, 2016).

Work family conflict has been reported to be one of the main factors that causes stress to employees due to the imbalance in time management and role in daily life, the effect of which an individual has limited time with families. (Wilson & Baumann, 2015). Previous studies have found that the improvement of living standards and family requires working parents to take more time at work to ensure the quality of a job, however sacrificing their time with families or outside of work.

The results of this study are supported by a study conducted by Wong and Lim (2009) who also showed that expectations can significantly predict individual life satisfaction. In addition, Valle, Huebner and Suldo (2006) in their study also showed similar results where expectation has a positive correlation with life satisfaction and is negatively related to life stressful events. They also found that stressful life events anticipate high levels of life satisfaction and this effect is particularly strong among individuals with low levels of expectancy.

Conflict in the roles played by employees in an organization can be a source of stress. Usually this role conflict arises when the job requirements are not in line with the values and expectations of employees (Marzuki, 2007). For example, if an officer is assigned to let subordinate employees in participating to make decisions and at the same time needs to increase organizational productivity, this will cause the officer to face conflict. Thus, conflict caused by stress (or vice versa), will cause employees to be dissatisfied in life in general. Thus, it can be seen that the existence of family work conflict may have an influence on life satisfaction. Although this conflict shows a weak influence, this would indicate a decrease in life satisfaction especially among working parents.

Life satisfaction make up an important element of individual well-being and often desired by every individual or society. A person would have various goals and these goals provide structure and assist individuals in understanding and giving purpose to life. This way, the individual sets their goal and strives to achieve it. Satisfaction in a person's life will be achieved when the desired goals are achieved such as wanting a harmonious family, achieving ambitions and earning a lucrative income. Therefore, individuals will work hard, find a way (agency thinking) and overcome obstacles by finding a way (directional thinking) to achieve goals that had been set. However, such demands may require working parents to work harder and conflicts may arise in regards to finding the perfect balance while meeting those demands.

Employers should take into account the seriousness of this issue and identify factors that could be addressed to support their employees. The employees are after all the asset to the company with serves as the foundation of an organisation in which without the commitment and engagement may lead to the deterioration in terms of work productivity and quality in the long run. Hybrid and flexible working are among the various support that could address some of the concerns of employees with dual (or more) roles such as long work schedules, commuting issues and more. Besides that, having a supportive work environment would also help in reducing family work conflict as it could be one of the ways to relieve stress and negative emotions among employees which would avoid spill overs at home. For example getting a supportive work group can reduce work stress in general as work stress often stems from responsibilities or workloads that may not match the skills, knowledge or expectations



of the individual. Having a cohesive group and a good leader may elevate satisfaction and motivation which could help resolve issues at work without having to bring it back home.

### Conclusion

Work and family are two important things in life especially for working parents. The involvement of both parents in the employment sector is becoming more significant as a result of high spending demands and a growing family which may suggest that the economic needs are among the main factors that contribute to the time spend more at work. The different roles that need to be borne cause them to have multiple responsibilities that is the role as an employee, the role as a family member, parent and this requires their high commitment in performing their roles while achieving the right balance which may cause a toll on their life satisfaction and quality of life. Support from family and the workplace are equally important can help reduce conflicts by avoiding spill overs either from home to work or work to home.

In conclusion, this study revealed that work family conflict or more precisely, strain-based interference of family issues on work significantly correlated with employees life satisfaction. Compared to previous studies, the contrast finding (non-significant results) may be due to the nature of feedback. However, other factors may also be the source of the opposing results. Therefore, more studies should be carried out in the future to really indicate the consequences of work-family conflict. Findings from this research may help add on to the importance of achieving work life balance which has always been highlighted as one of the important psychosocial work factors that contribute to employees' health and well-being.

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