

FAMILY TO WORK CONFLICT AMONG WORKING MOTHERS IN UAE

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Abstract

With an increasing participation of female employees in the workforce, there has been a surge in research studies that would be examining the interface and interdependence of work and family. The researcher has analyzed the family to work conflict experienced by working mothers in UAE's educational sector. This research work will be essentially helpful in understanding the spillover of family domain onto work related outcomes. Data was collected from female employees married with children. As working mothers have various roles to perform at home and at the same time they have to fulfill their role responsibilities at work, they were found to be experiencing conflicting demands from both the domains. The findings of this research study show that family to work conflict plays a significant role, thus causing negative impact on work related outcomes.

Keywords: Family to work conflict, spillover effect, working mothers, role responsibilities

Introduction

The need for understanding the bidirectional effect of work and family domain has increased many folds with the proportionate increase of women in the workforce. At the same time researchers have directed their efforts towards developing a finer understanding of how these two domains interact and interfere with each other as the resultant outcomes evidently affecting each other to a considerable extent. United Arab Emirates has 43% of women in the labor force. (Global Gender Gap Report 2010, the UNDP Human Development Report 2010, and UAE yearbook 2010). This is definitely a significant contribution as compared with other Islamic countries. The socio cultural landscape has witnessed a gradual and positive shift of the traditional roles of women. This change should be studied in order to understand the effects accompanied and felt across the domains. Thus there is a need to conduct detailed investigation on how work and family interface interact with each other. This will enable the authorities to

devise their socio economic reforms accordingly for future. UAE being a culturally diverse country with equally diverse work force will present a great opportunity for similar research studies. With the help of available statistical data it was evident that approximately 45% of the women are employed in education sector (UAE yearbook, 2009).

Work-family conflict, synonymous for negative spillover has been the most researched area so far. (Greenhaus& Beutell, 1985) At present most of the empirical evidences have focused upon work factors influencing non-work factors, but there is a great deal of work that needs to be done to examine the impact of non-work factors on work related outcomes.(Michel J, et al,2011) Non-work factors are mainly linked to family and individual. Zhang et al. (2012) identified the need for more research to analyze the family and individual variables. Allen et al.(2000) in the meta analysis proposed family domain factors as antecedents of work family conflict, namely, family support, number of children, childcare support, elderly care support, family involvement, life cycle stages etc. As per the research findings by Carlson et al. (2006) involvement in family domain will help the individual to perform better in work domain. This indicates that higher involvement in family will lead to lower experienced family to work conflict and thus in turn assist the individual to be more focused and committed towards their work. This research study attempts to examine the degree of family to work conflict experienced on account of involvement in family role and the resulting impact it may have on the organizational commitment. Keeping in view of the research studies conducted to establish the theories and concepts relevant to work family interference, majority of the contribution is from the Western countries, the need to conduct such a study especially in a multicultural population of UAE becomes significant. While there are attempts to explore the work-family construct in eastern settings especially in Asian countries, published studies have been limited.

Literature Review

Work family interface research studies have helped researchers in developing various theories, out of which spillover theory has been one of the most prominent one in explaining the cross domain effect. The spillover theory acknowledges that the work and family are interconnected domains of human life that influence each other, because people's attitudes, moods, values, habits, and behaviors can spillover from one domain to the other, thus generating similarities between the two domains. (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000) Spillover theory has been considered as instrumental in examining both positive and negative spillover of the two interacting domains. Spillover theory states that facilitating higher involvement in one role will lead to role satisfaction thus resulting into positive spillover onto the other role and

meeting the role demands more effectively. But if role involvement is not as desired by the individual this may result into conflicting demands for the other role as well.

Edwards & Rothbard, (2000) stated that bi directionality of work and family interface results into spillover effect which can be both positive (work family enrichment/family work enrichment) and negative (work family conflict /family work conflict). Thus work domain may have positive or negative impact on family domain and family domain can have positive or negative impact on work domain.

Family involvement

Family involvement as defined by Yogev and Brett (2001) is the degree to which individuals identify psychologically with their family roles, the relative importance of the family to individuals' self-image and self concept, and the individuals' commitment to their family. Higher psychological involvement in one role will result into dedicating more efforts in that role and thus failing to fulfill the demands of the other roles. This is specifically more relevant to working women. Michel et al. (2011) stated that family role stressors including family involvement are predictors of family to work conflict .They further reported that family to work conflict plays a mediating role affecting work outcomes of job performance and withdrawal behavior. Evidence for the relationship between family involvement and family interfering with work are less clear. Researchers have found that family involvement is positively related to family-work conflict. (Greenhaus, Parasuraman, and Collins, 2001) However, the relationship that family involvement seems to have is more complex than the work involvement-work to family conflict relationship. As per the research findings by Parasurman et al. (2001) & Beutell et al. (1985) family involvement was found to have cross-domain effects, as it was found to be associated with lower levels of work-family conflict. Greenhaus, Parasuraman, and Collins (2001) found a positive relationship between family involvement and work-family conflict, a relationship that was stronger for males than females. Women would be experiencing more of family to work conflict on account of family role involvement, childcare responsibilities and elderly care responsibilities at home, thus leading to demand for higher family involvement. (Tori, Leslie B. & Hammer, 2013) Direct relationship between family involvement and organizational commitment is difficult to establish, but the empirical evidences suggest that facilitating higher involvement in family role will lead to lower family to work conflict and this in turn may result into higher commitment levels towards the organization. The employee when able to manage the family role effectively will be able to dedicate more time and efforts towards work role.

Family-work conflict

Work family conflict has work related antecedents and family related outcomes, wherein family related antecedents and work related outcomes are studied to understand family to work conflict. Allen et al., (2000) Past research examining the antecedents and consequences has purported that work-family conflict has deleterious consequences such as lowered job and life satisfaction, increased job and life stress, lowered organizational commitment, and increased intention to turnover (Allen et al.,2000) The experienced WFC and FWC will be higher with higher role demands in both the domains. Absence of family to work conflict should not be misinterpreted as enrichment or enhancement. (Frone, M. R., Russell, M., & Cooper, 1992) Family interfering with work and the resulting outcomes are difficult to establish looking at the behavioral aspects associated with it. Family to work conflict can be reduced when the employees have organizational support, family support and social support. (Michel J, et al, 2011) This support will help the employee in fulfilling their family roles effectively and satisfaction. Work family conflict is related to work related, family related and individual outcomes likewise family to work conflict has been evident to be related to these three outcomes. (Amstad et al, 2011) Empirical evidences suggest that family involvement is positively related to work family conflict and negatively related to organizational commitment. When a qualitative and quantitative research study was conducted among female managers by, Ruderman et al. (2002) to examine the positive spillover of work and family domain, it was concluded that the involvement in family roles helped in being more effective in their managerial roles. Empirical evidences have suggested that work-family conflict acts as full mediator, or partial mediator between the antecedents and outcome relationships, but the evidences are less clear, which creates an opportunity for the researcher to investigate the mediating role of family to work conflict between family domain and work domain. (Amstad et al, 2011)

Organizational commitment

Organizational commitment refers to the level of commitment between the person and the employing organization. Affective commitment refers to employee's emotional attachment to identification with, and involvement in the organization. (Allen et al., 2000) Continuance commitment refers to employee perception of working conditions and affiliations. Normative commitment refers of sense of duty and loyalty towards the organization. Affective commitment is the most appropriate type of commitment that can be examined in the context of work family conflict. Allen et al. (2000) reported that both WFC and FWC are related to organizational commitment, and WFC is found to be negatively related to

affective organizational commitment. Zhang et al. (2012) when studied the work family conflict and individual consequences reported that FWC is negatively related to affective organizational commitment.

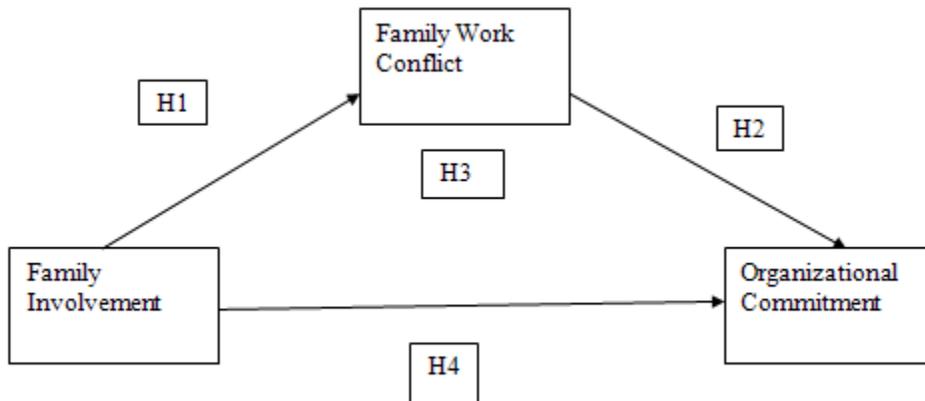
H1: Family involvement is related to family to work conflict

H2: Family to work conflict is related to organizational commitment.

H3: Family involvement is directly related to organizational commitment.

H4: Family to work conflict mediates the relationship between family involvement and organizational commitment.

Proposed Model of the study



Method

Participants

The respondents of the study are 314 married women working at teaching and non-teaching positions in educational institutes (schools and universities) in UAE. All the participants were married with children. The level at which the participant is working, the tenure of employment, age of the respondent, number of children, elderly care responsibility, work schedule and age of the children were controlled variables for the study. The responses were collected with the help of questionnaire, consisting of 46 closed-end questions related to the controlled variables and the three variables of research interest. The supervisors were contacted and handed over the questionnaire along with brief information of the research topic. In some cases respondents were contacted over telephone and then questionnaires were completed through e mail communication. 63% of the respondents work full time, wherein the remaining 27% work either part time or on contractual basis. 53% of the respondents belong to the age group of 30-39 years, 22% belong to the age group of 40-49 years, and 20% respondents belong to the age group of 20-29 years, whereas approximately 5% of the respondents belong to the age group of 50-59 years. Approximately 44% of the respondents have two children, 25% have one

child, 17% have three children and the rest of the respondents have more than three children.

Research Instrument

Family Involvement

To measure family involvement, job involvement scale developed by Frone and Rice (1992) was used. The scale was essentially developed to measure job involvement, but the same scale was used by replacing “job” with “family”. The responses were collected for the 10 items included on a 5-point Likert scale. Some of the items were, “ I like to spend most of my time with my family.”, “Many things in my life matter more than my family.”, and “ I feel uncomfortable when things go bad at work.”

Family to work conflict

The family to work conflict bi directionality was measured using the scale developed by Carlson et al. (2006) using a 5-point Likert scale. 15 items from that scale were included that can help in measuring time, strain and behavior based WFC (both work family interference and family work interference). A sample item from the work-to-family conflict scale was, “The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life.” A sample item from the family-to-work conflict scale was: “The demands of my family interfere with work-related activities.” Higher scores indicate higher conflict.

Organizational Commitment

The scale used for measuring organizational commitment was developed by Mowday, Steers, Porter (2010) which includes 15-items. The wording for some of the items was changed to make it easier for the respondents to understand. A sample item reads “I feel very little loyalty to this organization.”, “I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined.” Responses were collected on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree.

Analysis

The data collected was analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM). In the application of SEM, two –step approach involving analysis of measurement model and structural model was followed. In order to establish validity of the models, absolute fit indices-normed chi square, regression mean square approximation (RMSEA), and incremental fit index, comparative fit index (CFI) were used.

Table 1 Table for reliability of measures

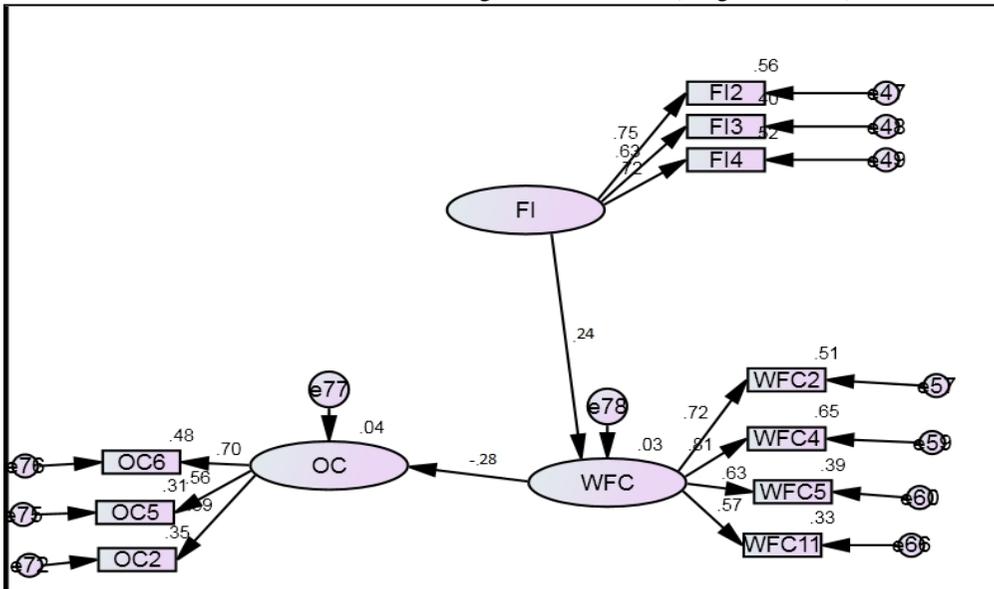
Variables	Number of items	Alpha
Family involvement(FI)	10	0.73
Work Family Conflict(WFC)	15	0.77
Organizational Commitment	15	0.65

Table 2 Measurement models comparison

Model	Chi square	df	p	Normed chi square	RMSEA	CFI
MM1	65.130	33	0.001	1.974	0.056	0.953
MM2	56.585	32	0.005	1.768	0.050	0.964

When the two measurement models were compared the difference in Chi square value was significant. ($p < 0.05$) The values of Normed chi square are acceptable as well. As the research study involves analysis of mediating effect the direct and indirect effects will be measured hence the following two structural models were tested.

SEM without measuring the direct effect (Original Model)



SEM with direct effect (Revised Model)

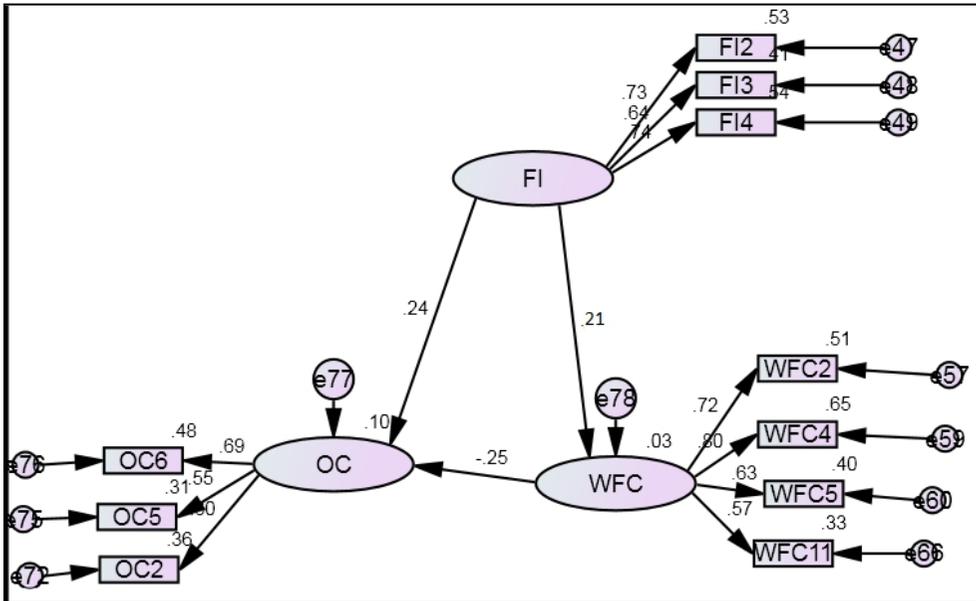


Table 3 The estimates for the factors in the original and revised model

Factors	Estimate Original model	Estimate Revised model
FI2	0.748	0.728
FI3	0.632	0.638
FI4	0.72	0.735
WFC2	0.717	0.716
WFC4	0.806	0.804
WFC5	0.628	0.629
WFC11	0.571	0.572
OC2	0.592	0.601
OC5	0.56	0.553
OC6	0.696	0.693

The original model indicates path coefficient between family involvement and work family conflict found to be significant (0.24), and the path coefficient between work family conflict and organizational commitment is significant. (-0.28) The model also shows that work family conflict is negatively related to organizational commitment.

The original model is then revised to measure the direct effect of family involvement on organizational commitment. The revised model shows the direct relationship between family involvement is significant (0.24). Also looking at the model the relationship between family involvement and work family conflict is significant (0.21) and also between work family conflict and organizational commitment is significant (-0.25).

The absolute and incremental fit indices for both the models are mentioned below.

Table 4 Fit indices for original and revised model

Model element	Original model	Revised model
Chi square	65.130	56.585
Degrees of freedom	33	32
Normed Chi square	1.974	1.768
Probability	0.001	0.005
RMSEA	0.056	0.050
CFI	0.953	0.964

**difference in chi square=8.545,df=1 ,p=0.0035(p<0.05)*

Absolute indices ,normed chi-square 1.768 (< 3) , RMSEA 0.050 (< 0.08) and incremental index values, CFI is 0.964 (> 0.90) are significant to confirm goodness of fit of the models. Thus we may consider revised model further to understand the indirect and direct effects.

Table 5 Comparison of models to measure direct and indirect effects

Effect	Original model	Revised model
Total	0.067	0.292
Direct	0.000	0.241
Indirect	0.067	0.051

The revised model shows decrease in the indirect effect and the total effect along with the direct effect is significant.

Table 6 Path coefficients for revised model

Hypotheses	Parameter	Decision
H1: FI→ WFC	0.21	Supported
H2: WFC→ OC	-0.25	Supported
H3: FI→ OC	0.24	Supported
H4:FI→WFC→OC	0.292 (total effect)	Supported

Based upon the revised model fit indices and the analysis of direct and indirect effects the mediation effect of work family conflict is found to be significant, supporting the following hypothesis,

H4: Family to work conflict mediates the relationship between family involvement and organizational commitment.

Based upon both the structural models compared the following hypotheses are supported,

H1: Family involvement is related to family to work conflict

H2: Family to work conflict is related to organizational commitment.

H3: Family involvement is directly related to organizational commitment.

Discussion and Conclusion

Post the analysis of the data to test the hypothesized relationships of family involvement is found to be directly related to organizational commitment. The significant positive relationship between family involvement and family work conflict indicates that more involvement in family roles will make it difficult for the employee to dedicate enough resources towards their work thus creating conflict. (Carlson & Kacmar, 2006) The relationship between family work conflict and organizational commitment is significant and negative, similar findings were reported by Zhang et al. (2012) As far as organizations are concerned if the employees get the support required that will help them in spending quality time with the family, would in turn assist in dedicating more resources towards their work, thus the experienced family to work conflict and resulting outcomes will be minimized.

Even though the research findings are just partially indicative of experienced work family conflict and in turn affecting organizational commitment, still the study findings cannot be generalized considering the limitations of the study. Family involvement is related to the other family domain factors as well, such as number of children, elderly care, life cycle stage etc. as mentioned these variables are not taken into consideration for the present study. The employer, employee and government authorities need to work in tandem and all should be focusing on long term benefits in order to improvise the overall quality of life of the workforce. As it has been proved through many empirical research findings (Allen et al., 2000) employee involvement in deciding on the work schedule can help in minimizing the work family conflict. Job schedule flexibility has been found to be negatively related to work family conflict (Beutell, 2010) hence the organizations need to encourage employee involvement in work scheduling activities. At the same time presence of dependable support from family, social and organizational, helps in decreasing the stress associated with the resource drain. Redesigning the work conditions and the jobs may help employees to reduce work load, which seem to reduce work-family conflict. The work schedule should also be prepared in such a way so as to ensure that working parents 'are able to dedicate quality time towards their family responsibilities. Organization need to develop a mechanism ,wherein they identify those employees who are stressed on account of family domain responsibilities, and provide them assistance such as assistance in finding dependable childcare facility or childcare giver, employee assistance programs that will offer resources and referral services to reduce concerns over workers' dependent care arrangements.

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