

Direct and Indirect Effects of Work-Family Conflict on Job Performance

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ABSTRACT

A model is developed on the effects of work-family conflict on employees' emotional exhaustion, job satisfaction and job performance based on the role theory and the conservation of resources theory as well as related studies. The model proposes that the consequences of work-family conflict can be traced through four different paths and the relationships between work-family conflict and the outcome variables are: 1) work-family conflict has a direct negative effect on the level of employees' job performance; 2) work-family conflict tends to increase employees' emotional exhaustion which will in turn lower the job performance level; 3) work-family conflict reduces employees' job satisfaction which will in turn decrease the level of job performance; 4) work-family conflict leads to emotional exhaustion experienced by employees which will reduce the job satisfaction level and consequently lower the job performance level.

Keywords: *work-family conflict; emotional exhaustion, job satisfaction, job performance*

INTRODUCTION

With the increase in dual-career households, employees are increasingly occupying both work and family roles simultaneously and they have to deal with job-related demands that place limits on the performance of family role and vice versa. With responsibilities for multiple roles employees are more likely to experience interrole or work-family conflict involving incompatible demands (Aminah & Zoharah, in press; Boyar, Maertz Jr., & Pearson, 2005; Yang & Hawkins, 2004). As a result, there has been an increased concern over the interrole conflict that employees are experiencing as they try to balance the demands of work and family roles since this conflict could result in negative consequences (Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000; Butler & Skkattebo, 2004; Frone, Yardley, & Markel, 1997). Job performance as one of the direct consequences of work-family conflict has been examined by several researchers including Aryee (1992), Frone et al. (1997), Karatepe and Sokmen, (2006) and Netemeyer, Maxham, and Pullig, (2005) who reported a significant negative relationship. Nonetheless, the gap in job performance research lies in the lack of emphasis on the indirect effects of work-family conflict on job performance although previous studies have shown the effects of work-family conflict on emotional exhaustion (Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996) and job satisfaction (Bhuiyan, Menguc, & Borsboom, 2005; Wayne, Musisca, & Fleeson, 2004), the effects of emotional exhaustion on job satisfaction (Cam, 2001), as well as the effects of emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction on job performance (Carmeli, 2003; Witt, Andrews, & Carlson 2004). Against this backdrop, a model is developed that examines the most effective path that predicts job performance as a consequence of work-family conflict, emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction.

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT AND OUTCOME VARIABLES

Work-Family Conflict and Job Performance

Several studies have examined the relationship between work-family conflict and job performance with mixed results. Frone et al. (1997) found a significant relationship using a self-rated measure of job performance. Aryee (1992) used a self-rated measure of work quality and found that it was related to job-parent conflict but not to job-spouse or job-homemaker conflict. Karatepe and Sokmen (2006) conducted a study in Ankara, Turkey on frontline hotel employees and found a significant negative relationship between both work-family conflict and family-work conflict with job performance. Netemeyer et al. (2005), in their study on customer service employees, customers and supervisors, found direct and indirect effects between work-family conflict and employee performance rated by supervisor. How the experience of work-family conflict affected performance ratings given to men and women has also been studied by Butler and Skattebo (2004). Genderwise, they found that men who experienced work-family conflict was rated lower on overall performance than men who did not, but no difference in overall performance ratings were given to women who experienced the conflict and women who did not.

While there were studies supporting the relationship between work-family conflict and job performance, others did not. Bhuiyan et al. (2005), found no significant relationship between work-family conflict and job performance. Similar findings were reported by Netemeyer et al. (1996). Since there were a number of studies that tend to support the relationship between work-family conflict and job performance, therefore the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1. Work-family conflict has a significant negative relationship with employees' job performance.

Work-Family Conflict and Emotional Exhaustion

Previous studies have shown that women who experienced work-family conflict also experienced emotional exhaustion. Bacharach, Bamberger, and Conley (1991) found significant correlations between work-family conflict and emotional exhaustion among nurses and engineers. They tested an integrated research framework which consisted of inter-relationships among role overload, role conflict, work-home conflict, emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction. Aryee (1993) examined determinants of burnout among dual-career couples in Singapore. His study indicated that burnout experienced by married working women was influenced by both work and non-work stressors, whereas burnout experienced by their husbands was only affected by work-related stressors. Ray and Miller (1994) demonstrated further evidence regarding the relationship between work-family conflict and emotional exhaustion. Their findings revealed that among the three dimensions of burnout, emotional exhaustion was the most prevalent effect resulting from home/work stress. Netemeyer et al. (1996) distinguished the effects of work-family conflict from family-work conflict in relation to job burnout. They reported that work-family conflict experienced by teachers and business owners was more highly correlated with burnout than family-work conflict.

Boles, Johnston, Hair, and Jr. (1997) found that work-family conflict experienced by sales personnel increased their emotional exhaustion. A study conducted among full-time employed fathers (Kinnunen, Vermulst, Gerris, & Makikangas, 2003) showed that emotional stability moderated the relationships between work interference with family and depression. Demerouti, Bakker, and Bulters (2004) conducted a longitudinal study on employees (70% were women) to examine the relationship between work-home interference or work-family conflict and emotional exhaustion. They found that work-family conflict was a causal determinant of emotional exhaustion.

Based on the literature review, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Work-family conflict has a significant positive relationship with emotional exhaustion.

Work-Family Conflict and Job Satisfaction

A number of studies have examined the relationship between work-family conflict and job satisfaction and found that work-family conflict was negatively related to job satisfaction. Aryee (1992) carried out a study on married professional women from dual-career families in Singapore. All the work-family conflict dimensions studied (job-spouse conflict, job-parent conflict and job-homemaker conflict) were negatively related to job satisfaction. A study was conducted by Judge, Boudreau, Bretz, and Jr. (1994) on male executives to address the path analytical associations between work-family conflict, job stress and job satisfaction. Multivariate regression analyses revealed that increased in work-family conflict experienced tended to reduce the job satisfaction level.

A significant relationship between work-family conflict and job satisfaction was also established by Aminah (1996) who examined the path associations among work-family conflict, job satisfaction, family satisfaction and life satisfaction among women researchers in Malaysia. Lee and Choo (2001) studied the work-family conflict among married Singapore women entrepreneurs. They reported that work-family conflict was negatively and significantly correlated with outcome variables including job, marital, and life satisfaction. Significant negative correlations between work-family conflict and job satisfaction were also reported by Bhuian et al. (2005) and Wayne et al. (2004). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Work-family conflict has a significant positive relationship with job satisfaction.

Emotional Exhaustion and Job Satisfaction

A number of evidences with the exception of a few have shown that increased psychological burnout, including emotional exhaustion, is associated with decreased job satisfaction. A study by Wolpin, Burke, and Greenglass (1991) documented evidence that there was a moderate effect of burnout on job satisfaction, longitudinally. The results indicated that increased psychological burnout including emotional exhaustion has resulted in decreased job satisfaction. A significant correlation between emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction have also been documented (Cam, 2001). Singh, Goolsby, and Rhoads (1994) examined the relationship between burnout and job satisfaction and found that burnout dimensions correlated negatively with psychological outcomes including job satisfaction. Elit, Trim, Mand-Bains, Sussman, and Grunfeld (2004) in their study assessed job satisfaction and the prevalence of burnout and found that emotional exhaustion as a dimension of burnout was correlated with job satisfaction. Contrary to the findings, Boles, Johnston, Hair, and Jr. (1997) reported in their study that emotional exhaustion was not related to job satisfaction. Similarly, Wright and Cropanzano (1998) also found that emotional exhaustion was unrelated to job satisfaction and the weak relationship according to them may be due to the effective coping strategy adopted by the workers. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: emotional exhaustion has a significant positive relationship with job satisfaction.

Emotional Exhaustion and Job Performance

Generally, it is perceived that burnout is related to diminished job performance. Wright and Cropanzano (1998) found that emotional exhaustion was associated with job performance among social welfare workers. Emotional exhaustion was found to be the most significant predictor of job performance after controlling for positive and negative

affectivity. Similarly, findings of Singh et al.s' (1994) study have shown that the burnout, including emotional exhaustion, resulted in substantively significant but negative effect on job performance.

Wright and Bonett (1997) in their 3-year study of human services personnel examined the relationship between burnout and job performance. A negative and significant relationship was established between emotional exhaustion and job performance. A negative significant impact of burnout on performance among salespersons in Australia has also been reported by Lo, Cravens, Grant, and Moncrief (2001). Witt et al. (2004) examined the relationship between emotional exhaustion and service quality ratings among call center customer service representatives of a financial services institution. Their study found that low levels of emotional exhaustion consequence high call volume performance among the representatives. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5: Emotional exhaustion has a significant positive relationship with job performance.

Job Satisfaction and Job Performance

Job satisfaction and job performance are salient behavioral outcomes in organizations. A significant relationship between job satisfaction and job performance employees at two call centers in the utilities industry in the southeastern United States was reported by Tuten and Neidermeyer (2004). Carmeli (2003) found that there was a significant relationship between job satisfaction and job performance among senior managers. Similarly, Bhuian et al. (2005) also reported a significant relationship between sale managers' job satisfaction and job performance. Babin and Boles (1996) found that the correlation between job satisfaction and job performance was significant and positive among service providers. On the other hand, Sohi (1996) found non-significant relationship between satisfaction and performance among sales personnel. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H6: Job satisfaction has a significant positive relationship with job performance.

THE PROPOSED MODEL

The model presented was drawn from the previous theory and models on work-family conflict as well as previous related studies (Figure 1). Role theory (Kahn, Wolf, Quinn, & Rosenthal 1964) suggests that the demands of multiple roles can lead to stressors (such as interrole conflict), and in turn, to symptoms of strain or negative outcomes (such as reduced job satisfaction and job performance). The conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989) as an integrated stress model is an alternative framework for understanding work-family relationships. According to this theory, individuals seek to acquire and maintain resources. Stress occurs when there is a loss of resources including time and energy. Based on the conservation of resources theory, when there is a depletion of emotional energy, the deterioration in job satisfaction and performance standards is expected.

Based on these theories, and previous research findings pertaining to the relationships between work-family conflict and the outcome variables, this present model proposes that the consequences of work-family conflict can be traced through four different paths.

- Path 1: Work-family conflict → job performance
- Path 2: Work-family conflict → emotional exhaustion → job performance
- Path 3: Work-family conflict → job satisfaction → job performance
- Path 4: Work-family conflict → emotional exhaustion → job satisfaction → job performance

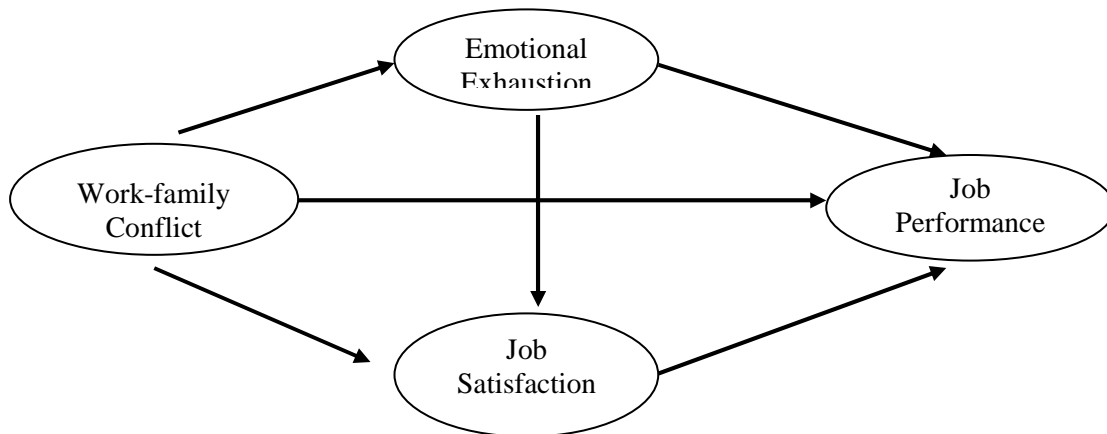


Figure 1. Direct and Indirect

Effects of Work-Family Conflict on Job Performance

CONCLUSION

This model proposes that 1) work-family conflict has a direct and indirect effect on job performance; 2) work-family conflict tends to increase employees' emotional exhaustion which will in turn lower the job performance level; 3) work-family conflict reduces job satisfaction which will in turn decrease job performance; 4) work-family conflict leads to emotional exhaustion which will reduce job satisfaction and consequently decrease job performance. According to this model, there is a need to pay attention to the interface of work and family roles which could result in conflict and the negative consequences arising from the conflict.

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