

## WORKPLACE CONSEQUENCES OF WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT FOR WOMEN

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### ABSTRACT

Traditional gender roles state that women should prioritize caring for their families and maintaining their homes, while men should prioritize their work. The number of couples balancing two careers has steadily increased over the last few decades. Married women who work put in more hours taking care of their kids and taking care of the house than their working husbands. Traditional women's roles have changed over time, but they still reflect a one-way relationship between work and family. Women have a harder time juggling the demands of family and work. Women find it more difficult to give up their family responsibilities, even when they are employed. It is against this backdrop that this study examined the implications of work-family conflict for women at the workplace. This study is theoretical in nature and relied on context analysis. The study concluded that both work-family conflict and family-work conflict had positive relationships with job tension and the number of hours worked, and both types of conflict had negative relationships with organizational commitment, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and turnover intention. The lack of sensitive, responsive, and consistent care from overworked parents or substitute providers can lead to decreased cognitive and social skills and can promote attachment insecurity in children, research is still unclear about the effects this time sacrifice may have on children. Therefore, flexibility in the workplace is necessary to reduce distress, including changes in appetite, aches and pains related to tension, and difficulty falling and staying asleep in women.

**Keywords:** work-family conflict, family-work conflict, flexibility, women

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### INTRODUCTION

Inter-role conflict occurs when the role pressures associated with one organization clash with the pressures associated with other groups. From the perspectives of work-family and family-work, this type of conflict demonstrates the extent to which roles from the work and family domains are incompatible, i.e., involvement in the work (family) role becomes more difficult as a result of involvement in the family (work). As a result, one role's demands make the other more difficult to perform. Work-family conflict (WFC) is related to cultural beliefs, norms, and values, especially concerning gender roles. Since the 1960s, there have been dramatic changes in the family and the workforce, including an increase in the number of women working in the paid labor force and more dual-career couples.

In light of these evolving times, a substantial body of research has concentrated on gender-related issues in multiple roles, careers, and families. Conflict between work and family suggests that work gets in the way of family, and conflict between work and family suggests that family gets in the way of work. Additionally, studies have shown a negative correlation between work-family conflict (including family-to-work and work-to-family conflict) and the domain-specific satisfaction of family and work (Bello & Tanko, 2020; Khateeb, 2021; Kim,

2022).

Examining the numerous elements that affect family, work, and global life satisfaction is crucial to helping female employees manage their experiences with work-family conflict and its detrimental effects. Prior research suggests that within couples and families, the demands of multiple roles often fall disproportionately on women (Sathya-Dav & Mano-Raj, 2017). Women are frequently the ones who must manage multiple roles, so it is critical to deepen our understanding of how work-family conflict and managing multiple roles affect women's lives.

Moreover, many women experience a great deal of stress in their lives due to role strain (Kim, 2023). Unlike men, women are often expected to adjust to the new role of the working spouse without significantly reducing their responsibilities as a wife, mother, and homemaker. The conflict between work and family affects women today, negatively impacting their happiness in their careers, marriages, and lives. As a result of this, this research explored the implications of work-family conflict for women in the workplace.

## **METHOD**

The research method is the process of seeking a complete and comprehensible clarification of a problem concerning the facts to advance understanding. In any given undertaking, it might be necessary to use a variety of general research method categories. As a result, this study used a secondary technique to collect data, which involved compiling relevant data from textbooks, journals, and websites that host related information. Conversely, the present study utilized an exploratory research design. This is because it piques the interest of the researchers and motivates them to obtain a thorough understanding of the subject. This enables the researchers to collect baseline information regarding the effects of work-family conflict on women in the workplace.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Concepts of Work-Family and Family-Work Conflict**

Work-family conflict has been the subject of much research in the past two decades. Work-family conflict, which is the main concept, has been associated with an array of negative outcomes such as poor job attitudes, ineffective work performance, dissatisfaction within the family domain, diminished psychological well-being, and physical and behavioral symptoms of distress (Sarwar, Panakik & Ur-Rehman, 2019). As a result, studies have tried to identify the variables that affect WFC.

A form of inter-role conflict known as work-family conflict (WFC) arises when role pressures from the work and family domains are incongruous with one another. Work-family conflict is a specific type of inter-role conflict that can arise from incompatible role challenges from the work and family domains (WFC). The definition of work-family conflict is based on the inclusion of the inter-role conflict concept. When a person plays two or more roles, inter-role conflicts occur; however, as Sanders (2014) noted, these conflicts happen outside the organization's physical buildings. Work-family conflict can also be accurately described as a type of inter-role conflict where the demands of roles from both professional and family life are somewhat mutually exclusive. Put differently, being involved in the work (family) role makes it harder to participate in the family (work) role (Bello & Tanko, 2020).

Role pressures are also combinations of expectations and demands that individuals either place on themselves, or have placed on them by other people. Another way to look at work-family conflict is as a type of inter-role conflict where the demands of the roles in both the personal and professional realms are somewhat mutually exclusive. The term "work family conflict" refers to the disruption of two facets or elements of life (such as family and work) that

lead to stress. The accomplishment of a high degree of employee productivity is critical to the organization's success. Organizations are able to accomplish their objectives because of the efficiency and commitment of their workforce. The productivity of workers is negatively impacted by work-family conflict (Akinyele, Peters & Akinyele, 2016). Conflict between family and work reduces women's efficiency and happiness.

The direction of the conflict between work and family is inherently bi-directional. That is, work may interfere with the family domain (work-to-family conflict; W-to-FC) and family may interfere with the work domain (family-to-work conflict; F-to-WC). Workplace demands impede the fulfillment of family obligations in the W-to-F conflict scenario, while work-related obligations are impeded by familial demands in the F-to-W conflict scenario (Okolie & Ighorhiohwunu, 2021). According to Poppla & Fagbola (2020), there is expected support for the existence of two distinct types of conflict because work-related stressors and family involvement have positive relationships with work-family conflict and work-family conflict, respectively.

Two key features become apparent when the modern work-family conflict construct is further defined. First, the role pressures are directed and have detrimental effects across domains. Consequently, scholars and researchers have recently concentrated on the extent to which involvement in the work role is complicated by involvement in the family role, a phenomenon known as work-to-family conflict (WFC), and the extent to which involvement in the work role is complicated by involvement in the family role, a phenomenon known as family-to-work conflict (FWC). Second, most people believe that work-family conflict is caused by strain, time, and behavior (Sathya-Dav & Mano-Raj, 2017).

Time-based conflict arises when role performance in one domain is hampered by time or attention assigned to another, such as rigid work schedules and demands for work or family time; Increased anxiety or stress in one domain, such as unclear roles or overconfidence in a role, impairs role performance in the other domain, resulting in strain-based conflict; Moreover, behavior-based conflict arises when expectations and habits from one domain are transferred to another, impeding role performance in the other domain (Steinmetz, Bosak, Sczesny & Eagly, 2014). In general, empirical evidence has supported the time-based, strain-based, and behavior-based categorization of the work-family conflict constructs.

### **Workplace Consequences of Work-Family Conflict for Women**

Organizations and their leaders are becoming more conscious of the roles they can play in assisting their employees in achieving work-family balance as the pressure to do so grow in the contemporary workplace. Situations like downsizing, which frequently result in higher workload expectations, may raise the rate of employee turnover because emotional exhaustion has been connected to intentions to quit. A survey of family-friendly corporate policies (Sanders, 2014) found that corporate culture seems to dictate work-family balance more than almost anything else. According to Sathya-Dav and Mano-Raj (2017), social support from sources connected to the workplace might play a more significant role in the process of occupational stress than support from sources unrelated to the workplace. Managerial support for work-family balance was identified by Sanders (2014) as one of the sub-dimensions of work-family culture, and it was found to be positively correlated with lower intention to leave. Numerous studies on work-family conflict have demonstrated the potential benefits to employees' job satisfaction, performance, and organizational commitment when supervisors are sensitive to their subordinates' family needs. It is important to look for alternative solutions to alleviate work family conflict, and to examine if any of those solutions are working to alleviate the stress levels of employees. Some organizations have begun to implement non-traditional approaches to jobs, such as part-time and shared jobs, flexible schedules and compressed work weeks (Sathya-Dav & Mano-Raj, 2017).

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In the mid-1970s, fewer than one in five working women had a professional or managerial position; by the mid-1990s, that number had risen to approximately one in four. Furthermore, women now make up half of all professional school graduates, and they work in professions like accounting, business, and law in proportions that are roughly equal to those of men. Despite the similar rate of entry into these professions, there is growing evidence that the experiences and career paths of men and women in the workplace diverge quite quickly (Adisa, Osabutey & Gbadamosi, 2017). Despite gaining the necessary education and experience, working women are still worried that they will eventually hit the "glass ceiling" in today's workplaces.

The phrase, which first gained popularity in the 1980s, describes obstacles that prevent women from moving up the corporate ladder. The metaphor of "glass" alludes to these barriers' imperceptibility. The goal of this phenomenon's research is to pinpoint the interpersonal and organizational biases that prevent women from advancing. Sex stereotypes, the lack of mentoring for women, and beliefs linking masculine characteristics to effectiveness as a leader are a few examples of observations and problems in this field (Adisa et al., 2017). There are no job ads that explicitly say that women cannot apply or are not qualified for senior management roles, but data indicates that women are still having trouble moving up the corporate ladder. For instance, only around 7% of executives in the U.S. and other countries have the titles of chairman of the board, COO (chief operating officer), CEO, or executive vice president (Poms, Fleming & Jacobsen, 2016).

Managers' perceptions of their subordinates' work and family demands the phenomenon where demands from one domain spill over into another have not been examined as a potential mechanism linking women and their career outcomes, even though researchers have extensively investigated female managers from the "think leader, think male" framework. According to social role theory, women are typically viewed from a non-work, caregiving vantage point, so their non-work demands should be quite salient to workplace colleagues (Sarwar et al., 2019). Thus, we believe that supervisors' perceptions of the intersections between their subordinates' personal and professional lives are a worthy subject for further study and could provide light on why the glass ceiling still exists. The perceptions of bosses have a significant impact on promotability assessments, which helps to explain why there is a gender disparity in promotions. One possible explanation for the persistence of the glass ceiling is the relationship between perception and promoteability.

The glass ceiling metaphor has often referred to barriers to the corporate suite, as in Morrison, White, Van Velsor, and the Centre for Creative Leadership (1987). Sarwar et al. (2019) found that promotions to higher organizational levels were associated with greater masculinity and that having children meant less career success for women but more career success for men. Kim's (2023) meta-analysis on work-family conflict revealed that, despite strong relationships between these two constructs and sex being frequently proposed in the management literature, sex has a near-zero relationship to work interference with family and a weakly positive relationship to family interference with work (with women experiencing slightly higher family interference with work). This finding was consistent across many studies. Kim's examination of numerous studies led to the conclusion that the degrees of work-family and family-work interference appear to be fairly comparable for men and women. Notwithstanding the empirical results, supervisors may believe that their male and female employees have different family-work conflicts. To be sure, there are a variety of reasons for these impressions. Managers might have come across reports, for instance, suggesting that women devote a greater amount of their daily time to family and home responsibilities than do men, or that women are more prone to being sidetracked by family matters when working (Kim, 2023).

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Significantly, studies have demonstrated that, when compared to factors like race, age, and occupation, sex is the most immediate and fundamental means of classifying people. Furthermore, it has been discovered that preconceptions about men and women are readily and automatically activated. Cognitive biases are reinforced over time because managers are more likely to notice and remember information that supports previous assumptions than information that challenges them. Poms et al. (2016) provided an illustration of this idea: colleagues in the legal profession were more likely to recall instances in which mothers left work early than those in which they worked late, based on the presumption that mothers who work do not devote themselves entirely to their careers. Put another way, managers associated women with higher levels of conflict between work and family because they classified them into stereotypically feminine care-giving roles. The reality for women in the workplace is lower advancement opportunities and lower wages, despite the apparent achievement of workplace equality as evidenced by the significant increase in the number of professional women in recent years. Long-standing misconceptions about women's inadequacies could be one reason for this. Prior research has discovered a connection between sex and person-job fit (the alignment of a person's skills and abilities with the demands of their job) as well as person organization fit (the alignment of a person's values with those of their organization) (Kim, 2023).

First, let's talk about person-organization fit. It is proposed that people should be seen as successful in organizations that share their needs, goals, values, and personal traits. Organizations, however, are not gender-neutral. That is to say, the assumption that women will perform poorly is fostered in organizations by the contrast between stereotypes attributed to men (such as being tough and achievement-oriented) and stereotypes attributed to women (such as kind and caring) (Anglin et al., 2022). Kim (2023) argues that the adage "think leader, think male" has changed how people view male and female managers in the workplace. Being a woman denotes femininity, which has been linked to beliefs about a decline in leadership effectiveness, managerial skill, and credit for organizational accomplishments basically, incompatibility with what employers are thought to want in workers; Furthermore, countless studies conducted over the past few decades have shown that gender norms and stereotypes are formed well before the age of five, and that many of these stereotypes are fairly rigid (Kim, 2023).

Regarding the double standard of the female manager, it is observed that while negative perceptions of women are consistent with roles that involve providing care, they also conflict with perceptions of successful managers. As proof, 82.1 percent of adult men and women think that women are more biologically suited to be mothers than men. People think that men and women should behave differently from one another, particularly when it comes to behaviours like providing care, which are thought to be fundamentally different between the sexes (Anglin et al., 2022). These lack-of-fit expectations about women in business organizations are likely confirmed over time, as managers attend to women's behaviours that perpetuate this line of thinking. Managers then act in ways (e.g., in performance evaluations, allocation of desirable assignments) that affect how women are regarded and rewarded in organizations (Richards, 2015; Orhero & Okolie, 2023). So though managers may not consciously see women as ill-suited to their organizations, managers' enduring stereotypes about women's care giving roles may affect their perceptions. Regarding person-job fit, we propose that when employers (regardless of gender) classify staff according to gender, they implicitly anticipate that female staff members will be less committed to their work due to the pressure of taking care of others. Similar to the issue of person-organization fit, stereotyping of leaders as males is probably involved. In fact, male stereotypes and associated preconceptions are the most often mentioned barrier to women's advancement in large-scale, thorough studies of executive women (Gagnano et al., 2020).

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Since managerial positions are closely associated with status, authority, and responsibility within an organization, they have historically been associated with men. We use a related stereotype about women's ties to care-giving duties to try to explain why women do not fit well in their jobs. According to Gragnano et al. (2020) findings, 70% of American adults agree that women's family responsibilities prevent them from devoting as much time and effort to their jobs as men. Being a woman has a marginally positive correlation with work interference with family, while sex has almost no correlation with it. Bello and Tanko (2020), referencing person categorization theory, highlighted the self-fulfilling prophecy of managers' expectations affecting the calibre of the exchange relationship with their staff. According to research, managers' expectations of workers in areas like career success are a better indicator of the quality of the exchange relationship than workers' actual job performance or similarity in demographics. This eventually affects how employees allocate resources, attain goals with them, and other related issues. Therefore, interactions between managers and women may actually reinforce the expectation that women are not suited for their jobs.

Managers' preconceptions about women's care-giving roles and worries about how these roles may manifest as family-work conflict may translate even if they do not view women as being unfit for their jobs generally; we expect a negative relationship between managers' perceptions of their female subordinates' work performance and their perceptions of the family-work conflict, in addition to a decreased fit with their organizations and jobs (Bello & Tanko, 2020). The theoretical argument is grounded in social role theory, which holds that the effective execution of the masculine managerial function is incompatible with the feminine role of providing care. Specifically, when family conflicts with work, such conflict is seen as incompatible with managers' vision of the successful worker as someone who is unfettered by outside demands and puts his or her job first (Bello & Tanko, 2020). According to this belief, the ideal worker is perceived to have the ability to "drop everything" for work demands. "Face time" and long hours are not necessarily associated with actual productivity, yet these often function as shortcuts to assessing subordinates' performance (Akinyele, 2016; Orhero, Okereka & Okolie, 2023). Chana, Ibrahim, and Abdulhamid (2022) have demonstrated evidence of a negative relationship between supervisor-assessed job performance and family-work conflict, despite the fact that a few previous studies have demonstrated a negative relationship between family-work conflict and self-reported job performance. Subordinates' reports of being considered for a promotion and managers' evaluations of their promotability are linked to their perceptions of fit. Empirical data from person-organization fit studies indicates that individuals who are deemed fit are more likely to be positively assessed by decision makers.

### **Balancing work and family in Nigeria**

Women in Nigeria's early history were mostly employed in their own homes or farms, where they put in long and arduous workdays. As western civilization advanced, a large number of women obtained education and started working outside the home. Nowadays, the majority of women in the workforce work because their families depend on their income as well as for their own self-actualization. As a result, a growing proportion of educated women are juggling stressful careers with marriage and parenthood. It can be extremely difficult for a woman to advance in her career to juggle the demands of raising children, taking care of ageing parents, and working outside the home. In addition, it may result in strained interpersonal relationships, financial difficulties, and emotional distress.

The modern Nigerian woman must balance the responsibilities of both the job and her family. It is obvious that women juggling so many roles would surely encounter additional stressors that might have a detrimental impact on their health. Due to cultural and religious differences, Nigerian women may experience different effects on their mental health from their Western counterparts when juggling work and family responsibilities. The roles of women as

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homemakers are highly valued in Nigerian culture. If a woman neglects those responsibilities, she may face the anger of her spouse and their family members (Okolie & Ighorhiohwunu, 2021). It can also be emotionally taxing for working mothers to constantly consider how to manage the family's financial resources due to Nigeria's weak economy. These women are also expected to demonstrate their engagement in their work environment, as well as their commitment of time and emotional energy; for both male and female employees, unstable transportation to and from work causes additional moments of stress and anxiety every day. According to Orhero (2020) and Chana et al. (2022), these circumstances might be a factor in the women's stress levels and decreased sense of well-being. Therefore, combining work with family roles may be more detrimental to the mental health of Nigerian women than their Western counterparts.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The relationship between work-family conflict and work/family characteristics can be elucidated utilizing role theory, conflict theory, resource drain theory, and social role theory. Role and resource drain theories suggest that expectations for work/family roles and role performance are influenced by features of the family (e.g., dual-career couples) and the job (e.g., tenure, type of job, job autonomy, task variety). As a result, one's finite supply of time, focus, and energy may be impacted. Higher tenure, for instance, ought to result in more flexibility, enabling better use of scarce resources and lowering opinions of WFC.

Foluke, Stella, and Chima (2015) have correctly stated that the persistent stereotype that "manager equals male" is the biggest obstacle for women in management across all industrialized nations. According to social role theory, expectations regarding what constitutes appropriate behaviour for men and women as well as their beliefs about their own abilities and skills are shaped by gender-typical roles (such as homemaker versus breadwinner) assigned to men and women. Studies have consistently demonstrated that women are perceived as more expressive, communal, nurturing, and supportive, while men are perceived as more competent and agentic (Richards, 2015; Orhero, 2019). And one area where social role stereotypes have surfaced is in management skills, giving rise to the stereotype of the think-male leader.

According to social role theory, female managers face a dilemma. In other words, they are (1) unrelated to management efficacy and (2) related to caring, social roles within the community. The aforementioned quotation exemplifies the prevalent stereotypes that link women specifically to roles of care-giving: Women are less dedicated to their careers because of their obligations as mothers and caregivers. Care giving roles are under rewarded in the labour market and in organizations and are seen as incongruent with leadership roles (Sanders, 2014). The inference is that the stereotypes associated with care-giving may harm women's careers. Sanders (2014) argues that the division of labour and the separation of work and home are the two most fundamental assumptions of the traditional male model of work, which has led to a greater value being placed on male workers and those without active family commitments. The traditional model's problematic underlying assumption is that all women are responsible for providing care. In actuality, women who place a great deal of emphasis on their careers are less likely to get married, to have children, and to have fewer children overall. The traditional model's second problematic premise is that the domains of work and family are mutually exclusive and antagonistic. Work and family can be allies, despite popular belief to the contrary, as evidenced by recent studies that reveal many employees take pride in having found a balance that meets their needs and permits them to devote themselves fully to both roles (Sanders, 2014; Orhero, 2021). Therefore, it is problematic to assume that all female employees play the caretaker role and that they also face more conflict between these roles than do male employees.

Lastly, conflict theory suggests that because the work and family domains have different standards and obligations, they are incompatible. According to conflict theory, factors related to the family (such as family climate) and the job (such as alternate work schedules and the organization's responsiveness to families) should influence the likelihood of cross-domain conflict. An organization that provides flexible work schedules could potentially decrease work-family conflict (WFC) by creating a work environment that better accommodates the demands of the family domain.

## CONCLUSION

Work-family conflict impedes the performance of duties related to the family. As a result, it has an impact on household responsibilities that determine job and marriage satisfaction. There exists a noteworthy correlation between family responsibilities and work roles (FIW) and job satisfaction. This correlation increases the probability of incomplete work assignments, which in turn generates negative perceptions of organizational structures and the job itself. Consequently, work performance is hindered and job satisfaction is reduced. Thus, organizations are under increasing pressure to address employees' family responsibilities as the number of dual-earner and single-parent households raising children keeps rising. A new demographic reality has replaced the sexual division of labour that resulted from the growth of industrial capitalism in the nineteenth century. This new reality sees workers' obligations to provide primary physical care for their dependents combined with their financial obligations to support their families.

Worldwide, the number of women entering the workforce is rising. Traditional gender roles are changing as a result of this trend, and concerns regarding the psychological health of men and women who are dealing with role overload and work-family conflict are being raised. Fathers also face conflicts between work and family responsibilities; though perhaps not to the same extent or type as mothers do when there aren't housewives at home to take care of the household and children's needs. Three separate categories can be used to categorize potential outcomes of work-family conflict: domain-unspecific, family-related, and work-related.

In conclusion, Both work-family conflict and family-work conflict had positive relationships with job tension and the number of hours worked, and both types of conflict had negative relationships with organizational commitment, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and turnover intention. The lack of sensitive, responsive, and consistent care from overworked parents or substitute providers can lead to decreased cognitive and social skills and can promote attachment insecurity in children, research is still unclear about the effects this time sacrifice may have on children. Therefore, there is need for workplace flexibility in order to decrease physical distress such as difficulty in falling asleep and in staying asleep, changes in appetite, and tension-related aches and pains in women.

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