The Prevalence of Work-Family Conflict on Dual-Earner Couple's Subjective Well-Being

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Abstract

Recognizing the challenges and outcomes associated with balancing work and family roles is vital for dual-earner couple's subjective well-being. In this study, exploration on the prevalence of work-family conflict and how this affects the subjective well-being of dual earner couples was done to come up with interventions to take care of the subjective well-being of the dual-earner couples. This study utilized stratified random sampling and two self-administered questionnaires which intend to measure the work-family conflict, family-work conflict and subjective well-being and quantitative descriptive-survey approach to interpret the data collected. The results revealed that dual-earner couples experience more work-to-family conflict than family-to-work conflict. And women experience higher work-family conflict than men. Consequently, women also experience less life satisfaction than men. These findings lead us to the conclusion on the extent to which work-family conflict is prevalent among dual-earner couples as well as the degree of impact on their subjective well-being. Simultaneously, interventions such as utilization of offset, vacation leave and sick leave, strict implementation of adequate amount of breaks throughout the day, support groups, and encourage the right to log out that restricts time spent at work after work hours is proposed to lessen work-family conflict and improve subjective well-being.

Keywords

Work-family conflict • Family-work conflict • Dual-earner couple

Introduction

Family is claimed to be an essential unit of the society. Moreover, Filipinos are known to have close family ties. Working on the other hand is said to be good not only for personal or financial benefit but for our well-being as well. Current socioeconomic conditions appear to present a threat to the stability of the Filipino family and with the onset of surge in the number of husbands and wives who have sought employment. The rise of dual-earner couples has been accompanied by a sharp increase in the prevalence of work-family conflict. Gone are the days that the gender role is clear and distinct wherein fathers are the provider and mothers take care of the household and the family as a whole. This change has introduced new challenges for most families that affect family structure, responsibilities, child and elderly care and everyday household chores [1].

The spillover theory suggests that problems and stress in one domain are carried over to the other domain of life leading to increased stress and strain and eventually results in negative outcomes in these domains [2]. Moreover, spillover is exacerbated when both husband and wife juggle multiple roles [3]. Various empirical studies have been conducted about work-family conflict among dual-earner couples and these studies consistently found that it is work-related stress that predicts work-family conflict [4].

Subjective well-being was coined refers to how a person evaluates his/her life, including emotional experiences and cognitive evaluations of what an individual considers a happy life. Related studies on subjective well-being and work life found that having employees who have high subjective well-being is valuable and productive [5]. Research on subjective well-being established that "happy" people are more likely to be healthier and function more effectively compared to people who are experiencing negative affect. Work-life balance plays a significant role in the subjective well-being of every individual.

To sum up, the issue of work-family conflict will become more prevalent as more women enter the workforce. In reality, dual-earner couples will become a necessity in the coming years given our unpredictable economy so it is important to understand the work-family interface and how it affects the subjective well-being of dual-earner couples to come up with interventions to lessen work-family conflict.

Statement of the problem

The purpose of this study is to describe the prevalence of work-family conflict on dual-earner couple's subjective well-being. This study seeks to answer the following:

➢ What is the relationship between work-family conflict and the subjective well-being of dual-earner couples?

➢ What is the work-family conflict/s on dual-earner couples?

➢ What are the proposed policies of work-family in the workplace?

Review of related literature

There is no doubt that one of the greatest stressors in our lives is trying to balance work and family roles. Half of an individual's waking hours is spent commuting to work or working so it is understandable how dissatisfaction with career demands can spread into other parts of one's life which affects the relationship with family and friends. The potential for conflict and stress rises as most workers face the need to balance work and family responsibilities. People who are unhappy with their job and find it monotonous seek satisfaction in other areas of their life, such as recreation and family. However these other satisfactions fail to compensate for their frustration at work. Among dual-earner couples, women tend to experience higher levels of work-family conflict than husbands, especially when young children are at home [6]. They suggested that work-family conflicts are the result of the stress and stress of accommodating multiple tasks and roles at work and family assignments and responsibilities.

Role theory is one of the popular theoretical framework used by the researchers to explain work-family conflict and predicts that multiple life roles lead to inter-role conflict as individuals struggle to fulfill each

role successfully due to incompatible work and family pressures [1,7]. Emphasized that there is a work-family conflict where the demands of one area make it difficult to meet the demands of the other which is further supported by existing literature regarding how work-family conflict has been linked to harmful consequences which includes physical exhaustion, lower job satisfaction and lower organizational commitment. Where it is more difficult to earn a living, a worker may take longer hours to work [8]. Found that the longer hours at work predicted interference with family life, leading to psychological distress [9]. Maintain the factors associated with increased work-family conflict among dual-earner couples are high level of work participation, heavy workload, work or home-related conflicts, and low level of supervisor support. Work-family disputes can have repercussions on work and family life [10]. Different occupational, family and personal traits are considered to contribute to the individual experience of work-family conflict [11]. Based on various studies, it is seen that the strain of the task i.e., long working hours, ambiguity of labor role, work role conflict, working in shifts and physical and psychological efforts result in tensions that result in role overload and conflict between work and family [12,13].

Research on the consequences of work-family conflict suggests that high levels of such conflicts are associated with dysfunctional outcomes for individuals and organizations. At the individual level, high levels of work-family conflict are linked to lower levels of job satisfaction, life, marital and family satisfaction and heightened distress [14]. At the organizational level, high levels of work-family conflict is found to be associated with intentions to leave work and low organizational commitment and poor job performance [8,14]. From a systems perspective, recent work demonstrates that work- family conflict can produce "intersecting effects" of stress and tension between a couple [15]. Another consequence of the development of the nature of work and family is individual's satisfaction with their work and family. The conflict between work and family is, in turn, related to increased levels of depression, higher alcohol consumption, marital tension and poorer health [16]. It is said that work-family have more important implications for psychological well-being than family-work conflicts taking into account the two directions of work-family conflict [17]. These factors were also determined to create work-family conflict in other cultures and societies [18]. Studied the concurrent assignment of males and females to the relative importance of family and work roles and the contribution of these attributions to experience of work family conflict [19]. Results showed that members of the working and dual group demonstrated higher work-family conflict than individuals in the family group.

The term subjective well-being (SWB) was coined and sought to understand people's evaluations of their quality of life including cognitive judgments and affective reactions. Emphasized that well-being is an important concept for understanding an employee's optimal human functioning [20]. Consequently, positive psychologists have focused on how to raise levels of well-being using people's subjective perspective. Examined the relationship between workplace performance and subjective well-being of employees [21]. The analyses indicate a positive relationship between the job satisfaction, workplace performance and subjective well-being. Overall, this shows that job satisfaction improves productivity and growth levels through improvements in subjective well-being. Found a direct relationship between subjective well-being and life satisfaction [22]. People with greater subjective well-being were more satisfied with their lives. Conducted a research in the field of subjective well-being and found that different factors affect subjective well-being [23]. First is the workplace characteristics such as physical and cultural. Second is systemic interrelationships at work such as the interaction with clients, colleagues or supervisors and third is specific aspects of the job that are related to the workload or type of work or both. The higher level of subjective well-being at the workplace will translate into high self-esteem, meaningful involvement, control of one's own life, and absence of stressors. This will lead to increased employee productivity and efficiency. The global environment in which organizations operate today (completion, long hours, downsizing) has a significant impact on employee satisfaction, affecting engagement, turnover intent, motivation, performance

and health.

According to spillover model, satisfaction in one area positively influences other areas of life likewise as overall life satisfaction. Previous research of suggests that happiness within the family is expounded to job satisfaction which family experiences influence workplace and behavior [24,25]. Found that satisfaction with the financial status, personal relationships and satisfaction at work were the primary predictors of overall life satisfaction [26]. Found that the individual's pleasure at work was positively related to his/her own daily well-being (spillover); this, in turn, was transmitted to the partner (bidirectional crossover) [27].

Family is an essential unit of society that plays a critical role in the individual's psychological and social development. The relevance of family to well-being has been highlighted by many studies in adult samples. Part of this role can be evaluated using the concept of family life satisfaction, the assessment of the person's family life according to their own subjective criteria [28]. Good family relationships and close family ties have been reported to benefit the life satisfaction of every family member [29].

Positive forms of work are directly related with subjective well-being such as commitment to work, stamina and happiness. These should be integrated into HR policies to improve the subjective well-being of employees and to work optimally to achieve personal and career goals. Hence, the organization will work to raise employee morale through appropriate workshops and training, which will go a long way in helping the organization thrive.

Work-life balance has always been very crucial in every worker's well-being. To do this, employers need to look at the work practices such as working hours, work pressure, occupational stress, that are causing conflict in the search for balance between family life as feelings of well-being give them a sense of confidence that they will successfully overcome difficulties and achieve excellence in their personal and professional life. This study contributes to the literature on satisfaction in the areas of life and overall satisfaction in life, examining overall satisfaction in the lives of dual-earner couples.

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted among 30 respondents based in Cebu City. Stratified sampling was used in selecting respondents to have an equal sample size of men and women. A target total of 30 dual-earner respondents were selected for data collection wherein 15 are males and 15 are females. All the respondents met the following criteria:

➢   Married and living together at least for a year

➢   Both are working full-time career

➢   Must have at least 1 child

➢   Currently living or renting in Cebu City, Philippines

To crosscheck, if all the respondents meet the criteria, they are asked to fill-out a demographic profile. The respondents who met the criteria were given the link of the questionnaire.

A self-administered questionnaire consisting of two different modified scales was used in this study. Work-Family conflict was measured by a 5-point Likert scale consisting of 10 modified items originally developed by [30]. Subjective well-being was measured by a 5-point Likert scale consisting of 5 modified items originally developed [31].

The study employed a quantitative descriptive-survey to explore the work-family conflict experienced by dual-earner couples and determine their subjective well-being to come up with an enhanced work-family conflict policies or programs in the workplace in Figure 1.
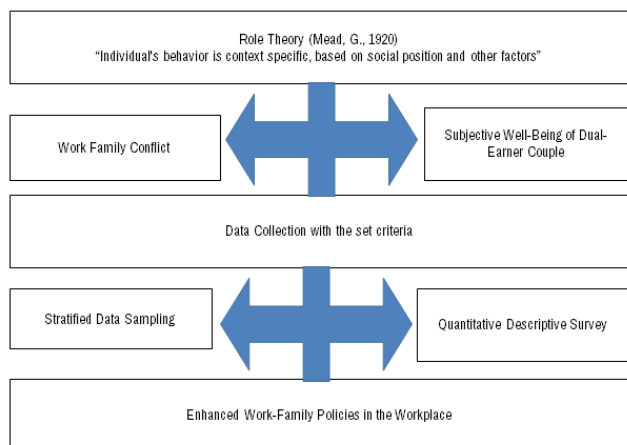
Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study.

Results

The mean age of women respondents is 26.86 years and men with 27.53 years. Mean scores and standard deviations of research variables were calculated and findings are displayed on below tables, wherein N stands for number of sample population (Tables 1 and 2).

Variables	Mean	SD
Work-to-family conflict subscale (1-5)	20.66	1.67
Family-to-work conflict subscale (6-10)	11.2	2.07
Subjective well-being life satisfaction scale	12.26	2.18

Table 1. Mean scores and standard deviations for women.

Variables	Mean	SD
Work-to-family conflict subscale (1-5)	20.06	0.96
Family-to-work conflict subscale (6-10)	9.73	1.53
Subjective well-being life satisfaction scale	12.93	2.05

Table 2. Mean scores and standard deviations for men.

The mean scores of the work-to-family conflict for women and men are both high. Results indicate that dual-earner couples experience more work-to-family conflict than family-to-work conflict. The findings of the study is identical with the study where it was found out that it is work-related that predicts work-family conflict [4]. Further, it can be implied that wives experience more work-to-family conflict than their husbands. This is also consistent with the findings wherein women tend to experience higher levels of work-family conflict than husbands, especially when young children are at home [5].

Meanwhile, Subjective Well-Being Satisfaction with Life (SWL) findings show that given the high work-to-family conflict experience by wives, they also have lower satisfaction with life. On the other hand, husbands experience less work-to-family conflict, it is understandable that they have higher satisfaction with life. It is consistent with study in which work-family conflict has been consistently found to be one of the factors impacting life-satisfaction [32]. The findings also support the study on the relationship between work-family conflict and subjective well-being that work-family conflict has an apparent, prompt, negative impact on the well-being of dual-earner couples. Regardless of the gender, it is important to note that most of the respondent's scores in the Subjective Well-Being Life Satisfaction Scale lie under slightly dissatisfied. In women, 13 out of 15 respondents are slightly dissatisfied while 2 out of 15 only were slightly satisfied. In men, 11 out of 15 are slightly dissatisfied while 4 out of 10 were only slightly satisfied. Individuals who scored in this range tend to have minor but significant problems in a number of areas of their lives or have numerous areas that are doing well but one area that represents a considerable problem for them. If an individual has moved temporarily into this level of life satisfaction, it may be due to certain recent events, things will generally improve with time and satisfaction will generally increase. Conversely, if one is chronically somewhat slightly dissatisfied with many areas of life, a few changes could be made. Every so often, an individual thinks too much, from time to time life changes are necessary. Consequently, in spite of the fact that temporary dissatisfaction is frequent and typical, a chronic degree of dissatisfaction in many areas of life requires reflection. Some individuals may gain motivation from a small degree of dissatisfaction but on numerous occasions, dissatisfaction in a number of areas of life is an interference and troublesome (Table 3).

Respondent code	Work-family scale scores			Subjective well-being life satisfaction scale scores	
	Work-family subscale scores	Family-work subscale scores	Total	Score	Interpretation
001F	23	16	39	10	slightly dissatisfied
002F	20	11	31	13	slightly dissatisfied
003F	21	8	29	13	slightly dissatisfied
004F	21	9	30	10	slightly dissatisfied
005F	20	10	30	12	slightly dissatisfied
006F	16	12	28	16	slightly satisfied
007F	20	10	30	12	slightly dissatisfied
008F	21	10	31	13	slightly dissatisfied
009F	21	9	30	9	slightly dissatisfied
010F	20	11	31	14	slightly dissatisfied
011F	22	13	35	12	slightly dissatisfied
012F	19	11	30	16	slightly satisfied
013F	22	13	35	10	slightly dissatisfied
014F	22	15	37	10	slightly dissatisfied
015F	22	15	37	14	slightly dissatisfied
001M	20	9	29	12	slightly dissatisfied
002M	19	9	28	11	slightly dissatisfied
003M	19	9	28	11	slightly dissatisfied
004M	20	9	29	12	slightly dissatisfied
005M	20	8	28	14	slightly dissatisfied
006M	18	9	27	16	slightly satisfied

007M	21	8	29	12	slightly dissatisfied
008M	20	10	30	11	slightly dissatisfied
009M	20	8	28	16	slightly satisfied
010M	21	10	31	16	slightly satisfied
011M	21	10	31	11	slightly dissatisfied
012M	21	10	31	16	slightly satisfied
013M	21	12	33	12	slightly dissatisfied
014M	21	12	33	12	slightly dissatisfied
015M	19	13	32	12	slightly dissatisfied

Table 3. Mean scores and standard deviations for men.

Discussion

Having two earners in the family is favorable but not without an adverse impact. The findings highlighted the extent to which work-family conflict is prevalent among dual-earner couples as well as the degree of impact on their subjective well-being. There are positive implications to dual-earner couples through increase in financial income of the family but negative implications such as inadequate time to attend familial functions and responsibilities, loss of leisure time, missing out on family events, and blur work-family boundaries are evident in the findings of the study. Dual-earner couples need to balance their professional and family roles to reduce negative impact on their dual-earner status.

Employers and policymakers must look into the prevalence of work-family conflict on dual-earner couples and how this affects their subjective well-being. Policies such as encouraging utilization of offset, vacation leave and sick leave, strict implementation of adequate amount of breaks throughout the day, support groups and encourage the right to log out that restricts time spent at work after work hours especially this time of pandemic wherein work-from-home setup is rampant. According to the findings in the study of the use of workplace support is positively related to job satisfaction over time and enhanced understanding of the relationship between use of family-friendly workplace supports and work–family outcomes may increase organizations' willingness to come up with such supports in the future, especially in the research suggesting that work–family human resource policies are related to higher perceived organizational performance and higher market values [33,34]. In the study of the use of family supervisor support is found to be effective as a promising approach to manage work-family conflict and work demands [8].

Conclusion

Future research may examine other variables such as the stress level and job demands which also might be one factor to measure work-family conflict. Finally, it is important to note that the sample in this study may not be a representative of the larger national population of dual-earner couples. The researchers recommend the use of interview as a research instrument in conjunction with the self-administered questionnaire. The researchers believe that further study is needed to address these relationships among a more diverse sample.

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