Work–Family Conflict Among Married Professional Women in Malaysia

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THE DEMONSTRATED CONSEQUENCES of work–family conflict on satisfaction with work, family, and life, as posited in the model of work–family conflict (Kopelman, Greenhaus, & Connoly, 1983), have increased researchers’ interest in the interaction between work and family. Negative relationships have been found between work–family conflict and job satisfaction (Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1986; Kopelman et al., 1983; Mohd. Kamil., 1993; Parasuraman, Greenhaus, Rabinowitz, Bedeian, & Mossholder, 1989; Sekaran, 1985) as well as between work–family conflict and family satisfaction (Aryee, 1992; Greenhaus & Kopelman, 1981; Parasuraman et al.; Pleck, Staines, & Lang, 1980). Positive relationships have been found between job satisfaction and life satisfaction (Bamundo & Kopelman, 1980; Burke & McKeen, 1988; Rice, Near, & Hunt, 1980; Sekaran 1985) and between family satisfaction and life satisfaction (Campbell, Converse, & Rodgers, 1976; Kopelman et al., 1983; Lee, 1978).

Most of the existing research on the relationship between work and family has been conducted in Western societies, but as more women in non-Western societies join the work force, understanding the effects of work–family conflict on these women’s satisfaction has become increasingly important. Because satisfaction is a component of individual well-being, it could affect the way women function as parents; thus, women’s satisfaction or dissatisfaction may have implications for the quality of their children’s lives (Dodge, 1990; Hock & DeMeis, 1990). Abdullah (1985) explored the effects of work–family conflict on professional Malaysian women but did not relate the results of her analysis to role satisfaction or to life satisfaction. In the present study I examined correlational and

This research was funded by a grant from Universiti Pertanian Malaysia, Serdang.
I am grateful to Suhartini Harvyastuti for her assistance in the data analysis.
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path analytic associations among work–family conflict, job satisfaction, family satisfaction, and life satisfaction among married professional Malaysian women.

The participants were 82 female Malaysian researchers employed at research institutions. The women were married, lived with their husbands, and had at least one child. Work–family conflict was measured using an eight-item scale by Pleck et al. (1980) that assesses conflict based on indicators such as excessive time spent at work, schedule conflicts, and fatigue or irritability ($\alpha = .90$). Job satisfaction and family satisfaction were each measured using a single item that assesses satisfaction with one’s career and satisfaction with one’s family life, respectively. Life satisfaction was measured using an eight-item semantic differential scale ($\alpha = .93$) adapted from the General Index of Well-Being (Quinn & Shepard, 1974).

In addition to a correlation analysis, I conducted a path analysis (Cohen & Cohen, 1983), using stepwise multiple regression, in which each variable is regressed on all the other variables that are postulated to precede it. Work–family conflict was significantly related to job satisfaction ($r = -.30, p < .05$) and to life satisfaction ($r = -.19, p < .05$), although the correlation coefficients were very low. Work–family conflict was not related to family satisfaction, however. Life satisfaction was related to job satisfaction ($r = .47, p < .01$) and to family satisfaction ($r = .49, p < .01$). The relationship between family satisfaction and job satisfaction was significant ($r = .43, p < .01$). Work–family conflict explained 8% ($R^2$) of the variance in job satisfaction, $F(1, 80) = 7.87, p < .01$, but did not contribute to the variance in family satisfaction. As antecedents of life satisfaction, family satisfaction and job satisfaction explained 30% ($R^2$) of the variance, $F(2, 79) = 18.46, p < .01$. Job satisfaction contributed a 7% ($\Delta R^2$) increment in explained variance. The present results indicate that work–family conflict was of interest to the organizations where the Malaysian women were employed and to the women themselves, because it can lead to reduced job satisfaction and hence to reduced life satisfaction.

REFERENCES


Received September 20, 1995