

Exploring the Influence of Work – Family Conflict on Sewing Machines Operators’ Turnover Intention in the Apparel Sector in Colombo District, Sri Lanka

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Abstract- The turnover intention of sewing machine operators in the apparel sector in Sri Lanka is significantly influenced by work-family conflict, making a major factor contributing to employee turnover. The primary objective of this study was to examine the relationship between work - family conflict and turnover intention among sewing machine operators in Colombo apparel organization in Sri Lanka. The primary data were obtained from the study sample, which comprised 254 of sewing machine operators which was selected using a simple random sampling method, using a self-administered questionnaire containing 27 statements on a five-point Likert Scale. Bivariate analysis was employed as the main statistical technique in this study. The key finding of this research indicates that work-family conflict has a significant impact on the turnover intention of sewing machine operators.

Index Terms- Sewing machine operators, Turnover Intention, Work-Family Conflict

I. INTRODUCTION

Work-family conflict is characterized as a type of inter role conflict where the role demands and responsibilities from both work and family spheres are mutually incompatible and inappropriate with each other in certain contexts (Fernando, 2015). According to (Beutell & Greenhaus, 1985), Work-family conflict refers to competing role constraints from work and family that are incompatible and make it harder to fulfill one duty as a result of fulfilling the other.

Employees are considered to hold the most common and significant positions due to the duties they fulfill in various areas. Therefore, for employees to maintain a healthy work-life balance, it is important to understand the implications and the consequences of work-family disputes.

Over the years, the importance of balancing work and family responsibilities has progressively grown in significance for employees, families and organizations. Research indicates that working long hours presents difficulties in maintaining healthy balance between one's professional and personal lives. Extended work hours have been shown to increase work-family conflict, which subsequently results in psychological strain, albeit indirectly.

Employee turnover intention is considered as actual separation from the organization (Aydogdu & Asikgil, 2011). It is defined as a “mental decision of individuals regarding a job to continue or leave the job” (Jacobs & Roodt, 2007). Further, (Javed, et al., 2014) has described turnover intention as the desire to look for new opportunities in other businesses. In generally, turnover intention refers to a decision to quit a company, either voluntarily or involuntarily (Erkmen & Esen, 2014).

Employee turnover is a crucial aspect that holds significant importance for all organizations in world wide. Turnover refers to the phenomenon where employees leave an organization and subsequently leading to their replacement. According to the view of (Mello, 2011), turnover creates cost for the organizations. Employee turnover hurt the overall productivity of the organization (Iqbal, 2010). Further, (Lee, et al., 2009) has described the consequences of high turnover as financial and non-financial. Financial consequences can be described as financial cost such as, cost of people's time, cost of materials and equipment, cash outlays, and productivity losses. Non-financial consequences can be described as other costs such as loss of customer, business and damaged morale which are harder to estimate however may entail large negative impacts on organizational effectiveness. Moreover, (Achoui & Mansour, 2007) identified the negative consequences of turnover as tangible cost including recruitment, selection, production cost and intangible cost like moral impact, workload impact and team performance disruption.

In relation to Sri Lanka, the managers of the apparel industry consistently encounter a significant challenge in the form of employee turnover (Dheerasinghe, 2009). Additionally, it was observed that the annual average workers turnover rate in Sri Lanka's garment factories stands at 60 percent, with the net number of people leaving the sector is close to 25 percent.

Hence, this study investigate the influence of work-family conflict on turnover intention of employees' intension to leave their jobs within the apparel sector organizations located in Colombo District.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Work – Family Conflicts

Work to family conflict is a type of resistance of role pressure that arises from work place and affects the family sphere and found mutually incompatible. Work family conflicts has been extensively studied and found positive influencer towards employees' job burnout. These conflicts positively influence withdrawal behavior likes in form of family interruption, late arrival to workplace, and absenteeism. The concept of work family conflict is based on the scarcity model (Good, 1960) which include one assumption of the model is that an individual has a fixed amount of resources, such that investment in a role will reduce the level of resources available for investment by the same individual in another role. Thus, simultaneous involvement in multiple roles will give rise to conflict, a form of inter role stress, which occurs when role pressures from work and family are mutually incompatible in some respects (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Scholars stated that "as many scholars have observed, the work-family literature has been dominated by a conflict perspective" (Powell & Greenhaus, 2006). Conflict that can take varying forms depending on time, strain or behavior (Jerusalim & Chen, 2009). Time-based conflict is when time devoted to one role makes it difficult to participate in the other role, with the number of hours worked being directly related to the amount of work-family conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Associated factors include work hours, frequent overtime and irregular shift work (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Finally, behavior-based conflict is where specific behaviors required in one role are incompatible with behavioral expectations within the other role (Greenhaus, et al., 1989). For example, a manager may have to be focused and have aggressive characteristics at work, while at home in a family situation might be expected to be warm, emotional, and thoughtful in their interactions with other family members. Therefore, if a person cannot manage their behavior to suit the expectations of different roles they are likely to experience conflict between the roles (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

Turnover Intention

According to (Van Dyck , 2013) Voluntary employee turnover has been widely researched, and encompasses the employee's thoughts of quitting his/her current position, intention to search for another position. Cohen, (1997) suggested that pose the possibility that work-family conflicts may force employees to leave their jobs because the workload and stress at work produce frustration not only there but also at home and in the family sphere. The emotions felt in the workplace are felt at home as employees find it hard to zone out while not at work and change their behaviors and feelings in the short period of time between the two locations (Powell & Greenhaus, 2006). As different definitions for employee turnover intention can be identified, the dimensions also differ which has used to measure the turnover intention. The following table will show the various dimensions that various researchers and their studies use.

Table 1: Different measures of Turnover

Author	Dimensions
(Mobley, et al., 1978)	Thinking of quitting Intention to search Intention to quit
(Samad & Milia, 2006)	Actively look for a new job next year Often think about quitting
Al-Hussani et al., (2013)	Think a lot about leaving the organizations Actively searching for an alternative to this organization. As soon as it is possible, I will leave the organizations.
Lee (2013)	Are you considering leaving your organization within the next year, and if so, why?
Kim (2005)	Think about quitting the job Look for a job during the next year
Galhena (2009)	Frequently alert on the vacancies published in newspapers and poster
Blau & Boal (1989)	Frequency of thought of quitting Intention to quit Planning to quit Active job search behavior

Work - Family Conflicts and Turnover Intention

There is a consensus in the literature regarding the way work-family conflict considerations affect turnover intention either directly or moderating; however, few turnover models have addressed work-family conflict as an important factor in the turnover process (Howard, et al., 2004). A perspective offered by (Sussman & Cogswell, 1971) stated that there is a non-economic factor in job movement in which the greater the demand for workers in any occupational system the greater the consideration given to familial concerns such as work aspirations of spouses, special needs of children, community activities, links with relatives and friends, and so on. In other words,

individuals will take the job which is offering the available pay when it is situated in a market of few options, while a worker will take those non-monetary factors into consideration relevant to his/her situation and personality when s/he enjoys great demand for his/her services. In addition, according to Becker's human capital theory, which postulates that due to the limitations to one's time and energy, employees have to economize between work and family. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to the likely effects of family factors on the leaving process when studying the immediate precursor of turnover. The analysis of the relationship between work-family conflict and intention to leave needs to take the effect of the families constitute on personal decision making and the work-relevant variables in that particular industry into consideration.

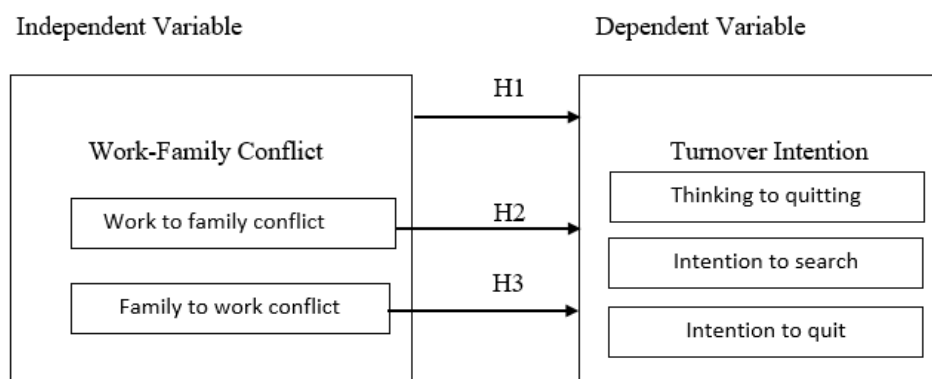
Regardless of applying various turnover models and different theoretical orientations, intention to quit and absenteeism have been linked to work-family conflict, and several studies have revealed a significant relationship between work-family conflict and intention to leave. (Good, et al., 1996) Found a direct relationship between work-family conflict and intention to leave among entry-level retail managers but not the upper-level group. In addition, (Good, et al., 1988) reported that although the relationship between work-family conflict and intention to leave was positive, it was quite weak. In addition, (Boyar, 2003) further examined the effect of work-family conflict and family-work conflict on turnover intentions separately and found that both were significant in predicting turnover intentions.

Furthermore, (Lee & Maurer, 1999) in most psychologically-oriented turnover models, various family-related factors are found related to intention to leave. For example Stroh, Brett, & Reilly, (1996) studied the effects of gender, family structure and the "glass ceiling" on intention to leave and subsequent leaving, and found that sex, children at home, and the interaction of sex and glass ceiling were significant predictors of intention to leave. Similarly, (Lee & Maurer, 1999) suggested that the family's characteristics of having a spouse, and having an employed spouse and an increasing number of children living at home are important to the leaving process. Moreover, (Mowday, 1981) posited that "non-work influences" interact with job attitudes to affect intention to leave. In addition, (Mobley, et al., 1979) stated that "family responsibilities" affect individual values, which in turn affect intentions to search the job opportunities and quit. Therefore, previous turnover research which emphasized different family characteristics and different sets of antecedent make it difficult to generate a coherent set of family characteristics that are most relevant to quitting and how they might operate (Boyar, 2003).

(Boyar, 2003) Concluded that as children and elderly family members may require care, the obligation to meet their needs can influence family roles, which in turn creates inter-role conflict, resulting in FWC. This study found both WFC and FWC were positively related to turnover intentions; highlighting that both work and family issues may encourage employees to search for employment elsewhere. Thus, employees may respond to greater conflict through seeking greater work-life balance with a different organization. Similarly, (Mowday, 1982) argued that non-work factors, such as family issues and responsibilities, may also influence turnover intentions. This may be due to employees feeling that their job is of less importance to them than their family. For example, seeing their current job may not fit their desired and appropriate work hours, leading to less time with family. While empirical research has found strong support for WFC influencing turnover intentions, studies exploring FWC have had mixed results. For example, studies have tested conflict from both domains but found only WFC to be a significant predictor (Anderson, et al., 2002). However, some studies have found both WFC and FWC to be significant predictors of turnover intentions (Haar, 2004). Furthermore, (Haar, 2004) found WFC accounted for more than twice the variance as FWC, hinting the influence may cross both domains but is likely to be much stronger from the work domain. Overall, we know turnover intentions are a seldom tested outcome of work family conflict, and while WFC is likely to be the dominant predictor, the influence of FWC has been mixed. We now proceed to detail the employee group (Maori) the present study focuses on, particularly how their cultural values and beliefs around family may alter the influence of FWC on their turnover intentions.

III. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Figure 1- Conceptual Framework



Source: Author Compilation, 2024

IV. METHODOLOGY

The study involved a population of 743 sewing machine operators employed in selected apparel organization, Colombo district, Sri Lanka. Both married and unmarried employees were included in the study to examine the conflict that arises from balancing work and family responsibilities across different demographic backgrounds. The research employed a simple probability random sampling technique, with a selected sample of 254 – sewing machine operating employees utilized for the study, as suggested by (Morgan , 1970). To collect the necessary data, a questionnaire which consisted of 27 closed-end questions was used as the primary data collection method by limiting the respondents' ability to express their thoughts and required them to select one option from a list of possible alternatives. The researcher obtained permission from the human resource manager to distribute the questionnaire to the machine operators. Subsequently, 254 sewing machine operators from the entire population on the production floor were selected to participate in this study. The collected data from the questionnaire was analyzed using quantitative analysis techniques.

V. DATA ANALYSIS

The internal consistency reliability was examined with Cronbach's Alpha test in order to measure the reliability of the primary variables, indicating how well items work together as a cohesive unit and can independently measure the same construct. The results of Cronbach's Alpha test are given in Table 2, indicating that internal consistency of each tool is deemed acceptable.

Table 2: Reliability Statistics

[1]	[2] Variable	[3] Cronbach's Alpha
[4] 01	[5] Work-family conflict	[6] 0.706
[7] 02	[8] Turnover Intention	[9] 0.706

Source: Survey Data

The Table 5.1 revealed that the main two variables in this research study, work-family conflict and turnover intention exhibit high level of reliability as indicated by Cronbach's Alpha values of 0.706 for both constructs.

VI. RESULTS

The regression analysis for the primary data can be found in Table 3.

Table 3: Results of Regression Analysis

Variable	R Square	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
Work-family conflict	.276	.462	.047	.525	9.792	.000
Work to family conflict	.214	.632	.075	.462	8.275	.000
Family to work conflict	.197	.764	.097	.444	7.869	.000

Source: Survey Data

Based on the analysis conducted above, the R square value is 0.276, indicating that 27.6 percent of the variance in turnover can be attributed to work-family conflict. In simply, a 27.6% change in turnover intention can be explained by the presence of work-family conflict. This impact hold significance, as evidenced by the extremely low p-value of .000, which is less than 001. In addition to that, the t value of 9.792 exceeds the critical value of 1.96, further confirming the substantial influence of work-family conflict on turnover intention.

According to the above analysis, R square is 0.214, which means that 21.4 percent of the variance in turnover intention is explained by work family conflict. Simply put, it means that 21.4% of the change in turnover intention can be accounted by work-family conflict. This impact is highly significant, as the sig. value is 000 and this value is less than 001. Further, the t value is 8.275, which is greater than 1.96. This means there's a significant impact of work-family conflict on turnover intension.

Finally, R square is 0.197, which means that 19.7 percent of the variance in turnover intention is explained by family to work conflict. Simply put, it means that 19.7% of the change in turnover intention can be accounted by family to work conflict. This impact is highly significant, as the sig. value is 0.000 and this value is less than 0.001. Further, the t value is 7.869, which is greater than 1.96.

VII. FINDINGS

The research problem addressed in this study pertains to the investigation of the influence of work-family conflict on the turnover intention of sewing machine operators in the Colombo District. To explore this issue, a conceptual framework was developed based on existing theoretical knowledge. The findings of the study indicate a significant impact of work-family conflict on the turnover intention of sewing machine operators in the Colombo District as a whole. Specifically, both work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict were found to have a highly significant impact on turnover intention. Therefore, the study provides a clear answer to the research problem, affirming the highly significant influence of work-family conflict on the turnover intention of sewing machine operators in the Colombo District.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this study suggest that turnover intention among sewing machine operators in the Colombo District has a highly significant impact from work-family conflict. In order to address work-family conflict and improve employee retention, several strategies can be implemented. One such strategy is to establish and maintain an open communication system within the organization, which can help reduce employee grievances and problems. Additionally, conducting well-being and training programs for employees can lead to enhanced employee retention and a better work-family balance. Another effective approach is to offer schedule flexibility, allowing employees to prioritize their family responsibilities alongside their work commitments. For instance, permitting employees to swap shifts with their colleagues can help reduce work-family conflicts and ultimately improve employee retention.

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