

Research Paper

A Correlational Study on Work-Family Conflict and Marital Satisfaction Among Married Individuals

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this current study is to examine and understand the relationship between work-family conflict and marital satisfaction. In the study work-family conflict is an independent variable and marital satisfaction is the dependent variable. The sample population comprises of 200 participants whom are married individuals. The data collected through a work-family conflict scale developed by Divna Haslam and the marital satisfaction questionnaire developed by David H. Olson, simple random technique was used to directly acquire the data. The statistical package of social sciences, SPSS, was used to analyse the data using both inferential (Pearson's correlation) and descriptive (mean, standard deviation and bar graph) statistics. The result of this analysis has been examined in this study. Work-family conflict and marital satisfaction were found to be not significantly correlated. so, it can be concluded that work- family conflict and marital satisfaction have a negligible negative correlation.

Keywords: *Work-Family Conflict, Marital Satisfaction*

Work-family conflict

A type of inter-role conflict in which there is some degree of mutual incompatibility between the role demands of the family and work domains (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). The inherent conflict between the demands of work and family responsibilities is highlighted by this definition.

Work-family conflict is defined by Greenhaus & Beutell (1985) as a particular kind of inter-role conflict. When a person's responsibilities or expectations from the several roles they play are incompatible, it can lead to inter-role conflict. Here the two domains where conflict develops are 'worker' and 'family member'.

The concept that people frequently encounter conflicting demands and expectations from their work and family duties serves as the foundation for the explanation of this definition. For instance, a job may need long hours.

The degree of mutual incompatibility between role pressures from the work and family domains (Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992). This term highlights the degree to which stress and strain result from the pressures of competing roles—work and family.

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A Correlational Study on Work-Family Conflict and Marital Satisfaction Among Married Individuals

The idea of work-family conflict is defined by Frone, Russell, & Cooper (1992) as the degree to which the expectations or pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible. Stated differently, the emphasis lies on the level of conflict encountered when the demands and anticipations of one job obstruct the capacity to perform duties in the other function.

A type of conflict between roles that arises when obligations to one's family and one's job aren't compatible (Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996). This description emphasizes the stress and difficulties people who attempt to manage work and family responsibilities face due to competing demands from both roles.

Work-family conflict is defined by Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian (1996) as a kind of inter- role conflict resulting from the incompatibility between work and family commitments. This concept places emphasis on the fact that conflict develops when duties and expectations from one domain—like work—conflict with those from another, like family.

The subjective evaluation or appraisal of the quality and contentment within a marital relationship, reflecting the degree to which spouses perceive their marriage as fulfilling, supportive, and rewarding" (Bradbury & Karney, 2010). This definition emphasizes the individual perceptions and feelings of spouses regarding the overall quality and happiness within their marriage.

Marital satisfaction

Marital satisfaction is influenced by how spouses perceive their marriage, including its fulfillment, support, and reward. Factors like effective communication, emotional intimacy, mutual respect, and shared goals influence these evaluations. Conflict resolution skills, trust, and commitment also play a role. Marital satisfaction is dynamic and can fluctuate over time due to internal and external factors like life stressors, individual growth, and changes in relationship dynamics. It is crucial to consider spouses' subjective perceptions and feelings when assessing marital satisfaction, as each individual brings their unique perspective to the relationship, shaping their evaluation of its quality and contentment.

The degree of happiness, contentment, and fulfillment experienced by individuals within the context of their marital relationship, encompassing factors such as communication, emotional intimacy, conflict resolution, and shared values" (Gottman & Silver, 1999). This definition highlights various dimensions of marital satisfaction, including emotional connection, effective communication, and alignment of goals and values between partners.

Effective communication is crucial for fostering understanding, empathy, and connection between partners. Open and honest communication allows couples to resolve conflicts, express needs, and maintain a strong emotional bond. Emotional intimacy, which involves trust, acceptance, and vulnerability, deepens the connection and enhances marital satisfaction. Conflict resolution is essential for navigating and resolving disagreements, and constructive handling leads to higher levels of satisfaction. Shared values and goals provide unity and purpose within a marriage, as partners align on important issues like family, finances, religion, and life goals. Aligning on these values fosters partnership and collaboration, strengthening marital satisfaction. Therefore, considering multiple dimensions of marital satisfaction, including emotional connection, communication, conflict resolution,

A Correlational Study on Work-Family Conflict and Marital Satisfaction Among Married Individuals

and shared values, can lead to a more fulfilling and satisfying relationship characterized by happiness, contentment, and mutual fulfillment.

The extent to which spouses perceive their marital relationship as meeting their needs for intimacy, companionship, emotional support, and personal growth, contributing to their overall well-being and life satisfaction" (Fincham & Bradbury, 1987). This definition underscores the multifaceted nature of marital satisfaction, which encompasses not only emotional and relational aspects but also its impact on individual well-being and fulfillment. Fincham & Bradbury's definition of marital satisfaction emphasizes the importance of spouses' perceptions of the fulfillment of their needs within their marital relationship. It goes beyond mere happiness or contentment and includes the degree to which the marriage meets fundamental needs for intimacy, companionship, emotional support, and personal growth.

Intimacy is the primary aspect of marital satisfaction, encompassing emotional closeness, physical affection, and sexual connection between partners. This fosters a sense of connection and bonding, contributing to overall relationship satisfaction.

Companionship is another essential aspect of marital satisfaction, enhancing feelings of togetherness and solidarity. A satisfying marriage provides companionship, allowing spouses to spend time together, share interests, and engage in activities that strengthen their bond.

Emotional support, which involves providing empathy, understanding, and encouragement during times of stress, contributes to feelings of security, trust, and satisfaction within the marriage.

Personal growth is another crucial aspect of marital satisfaction. A satisfying marriage not only meets emotional and relational needs but also contributes to overall happiness, life satisfaction, and personal growth. By addressing these aspects, couples can cultivate a strong and fulfilling relationship that enhances both their individual and collective well-being.

METHODOLOGY

Sample Size

The sample for this study comprises 200 married working individuals. Participants were selected using a convenience sampling method, focusing on individuals who were accessible and willing to participate from various workplaces. This sampling technique was chosen considering the feasibility of data collection from employed married individuals.

Instruments

Two Measures were used in this study:

1. Work-Family Conflict Scale (WAFCS) Developed by: Divna Haslam, Ania Filus, Alina Morawska, Matthew R. Sanders, Renee Fletcher:

The Work-Family Conflict Scale (WAFCS) is a tool developed by Divna Haslam, Ania Filus, Alina Morawska, Matthew R. Sanders, and Renee Fletcher to measure the level of conflict between work and family responsibilities experienced by individuals.

- **Reliability:** Reliability refers to the consistency of results when the scale is administered multiple times to the same group. It can be measured through internal consistency and test-retest reliability. The WAFCS has demonstrated good internal consistency, typically assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which should be above 0.70 for group comparisons.

A Correlational Study on Work-Family Conflict and Marital Satisfaction Among Married Individuals

- *Validity*: Validity refers to the extent to which the scale measures what it intends to measure. The WAFCS has been validated through various methods such as factor analysis, convergent validity (correlating with other measures of similar constructs), and discriminant validity (showing differences from measures of unrelated constructs).
- *Interpretation*: The WAFCS assesses the degree of conflict individuals experience between their work and family roles. Higher scores indicate higher levels of conflict, indicating that work demands are interfering with family responsibilities or vice versa.
- *Scoring*: The scale typically consists of several items rated on a Likert scale. The marking for positive worded was collected from 1 to 7, whereas, for negatively worded items, marking was done backward, which means response coded as 7 was marked as 1.

2. ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale developed by David H. Olson, Amy K. Olson, and Peter and M. Larson:

The ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale is a tool designed to assess marital satisfaction among married individuals. Developed by David H. Olson, Amy K. Olson, and Peter M. Larson, this scale has been widely used in research and clinical settings to measure various dimensions of marital satisfaction.

- *Reliability*: Reliability refers to the consistency of results when the scale is administered multiple times to the same group. The ENRICH scale has demonstrated good internal consistency, typically assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which should be above 0.70 for group comparisons. Test-retest reliability is also an important aspect of reliability, indicating stability of scores over time.
- *Validity*: Validity refers to the extent to which the scale measures what it intends to measure. The ENRICH scale has been validated through various methods such as factor analysis, convergent validity (correlating with other measures of marital quality), and discriminant validity (showing differences from measures of unrelated constructs).
- *Interpretation*: The ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale assesses various dimensions of marital satisfaction including communication, conflict resolution, financial management, sexual satisfaction, and leisure activities, among others. Higher scores indicate higher levels of marital satisfaction, while lower scores suggest areas of potential concern or dissatisfaction within the relationship.
- *Scoring*: 5 point likert scale, The marking for positive worded was collected from 1 to 5, whereas, for negatively worded items, marking was done backward, which means response coded as 5 was marked as 1.

Procedure

The scale was given to each participant individually by following standard instructions. The sample included married working individuals of both genders selected randomly. The participants were contacted online through Google Forms. A good rapport was built to make them feel comfortable, and they were assured that their answers would be kept confidential. A short introduction about the study and clear instructions were given at the beginning. They were asked to answer honestly, and after collecting all responses, the data were organized for analysis.

RESULTS

Table No. 1 Correlation between Work-Family Conflict and Marital Satisfaction

Variables	Marital Satisfaction
Work-Family Conflict	-.026

Table 1 shows that values of Pearson's product moment correlation between work-family conflict and marital satisfaction, the value shows that the two variables were not significantly correlated with the significance value of -.026. This clearly indicates that there is a no correlation between two variables, however there is a negligible negative correlation between work-family conflict and marital satisfaction which means higher level of work-family conflict leads to lower level of marital satisfaction. Thus, the framed null hypothesis "Ho: There will be no significant relationship between work-family conflict and marital satisfaction" is accepted.

The analysis shows that there is no significant correlation (-0.026 , $p < 0.01$) between work-family conflict and marital satisfaction. This finding suggests that people who experience higher levels of work-family conflict has no relationship on marital satisfaction, which states people can manage their work place and family with better communication, work – family balance, adaptability, flexibility and being resilient. At times, people prioritize their relationships, uses coping mechanisms which may contribute to maintaining marital satisfaction even in the face of work-family challenges.

However, the result value also suggests that there is a negligible negative correlation, which indicates the complex relationship between work and family conflicts can affect satisfaction. It's important to understand how work-family dynamics impact marital quality. This may be due to reasons such as Having work and family responsibilities is not a cause of increased stress and less quality time together. Long work hours and frequent business trips can create distance and strain in a marriage. Constantly feeling torn between work and family can result in feelings of dissatisfaction. Limited availability for emotional support and communication due to work demands can negatively impact marital satisfaction. Financial pressures caused by work-family conflict can lead to marital tension and dissatisfaction. Lack of shared free time and activities due to work demands can weaken the bond between spouses. Difficulty in maintaining work-life balance can lead to neglect of marital needs and decrease satisfaction. The exhaustion and burnout caused by work-family conflict can lead to decreased marital satisfaction.

In practical terms, these findings have important implications for individuals & families. It is really important to recognize and address work-family conflict in order to maintain marital satisfaction, overall well-being, and productivity. By doing so, we can reduce the negative impact that work-family conflict can have on marital relationships. Couples can benefit from open communication and support strategies to navigate challenges that come with work-family conflicts and protect their marital satisfaction. By acknowledging and addressing the relationship between work-family conflict and marital satisfaction, we can work towards fostering healthier and more fulfilling relationships both at home and in the workplace.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study revealed a negligible negative correlation ($r = -0.026$) between work-family conflict and marital satisfaction, indicating no significant relationship between the two variables. Hence, the null hypothesis (Ho: There will be no significant relationship between work-family conflicts and marital satisfaction) is accepted. This

suggests that individuals in the study were able to balance their work and family roles effectively without allowing one to interfere with the other. Although the correlation is slightly negative, it remains statistically insignificant, implying that higher work-family conflict does not necessarily lead to lower marital satisfaction. This may be due to factors such as good communication, emotional support, adaptability, and resilience within relationships. The findings also reflect that modern couples may possess better coping strategies and flexibility to handle work-related stress. Furthermore, supportive workplaces and shared responsibilities at home could contribute to maintaining marital harmony. Overall, the study emphasizes that resilience, understanding, and effective time management help individuals maintain marital satisfaction despite work-family challenges.

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A Correlational Study on Work-Family Conflict and Marital Satisfaction Among Married Individuals

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Conflict of Interest

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