

**TWO FACETS OF WORK - LIFE CONFLICT AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT (STUDY OF NURSES OF PUBLIC SECTOR HOSPITALS IN MATARA DISTRICT, SRI LANKA)**

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**ABSTRACT**

Majority of work–family conflict research has been taken place in Western countries. Most of them have ignored the South Asian context, which required further empirical evidences in other cultural context. Thus, there was a need to study the relationship between Work-Life Conflict and organizational commitment in the Asian context; Sri Lanka. This study aims to investigate the impact of work life conflict on organizational commitment of nurses in public sector hospitals in Sri Lanka. Cross-sectional explanatory descriptive study involving deductive approach is used. In this quantitative study, a survey questionnaire was developed and data collected from randomly selected 120 nurses of five public sector hospitals in Matara district, Sri Lanka. Correlation and regression analyses were used to predict and estimate the relationships. SPSS version 20 was incorporated for data analysis. Results revealed that both of *family interference with work* and *work interference with family* have significant and negative effects on organizational commitment. *Family Interference with work* dimension had more impact than *work interference with family* on organizational commitment of nurses in public sector hospitals. The present study is very important as it contributes to the empirical literature and extends the conversation by exploring work–family conflict and organizational commitment in the Sri Lankan context. It was recommended that work–life balance programs needs to be introduced and provided for employees in order to reduce the burden of work-family role conflict and induce commitment to their jobs.

**Keywords:** *Nurses, Organizational Commitment, Sri Lanka, Work-Life Conflict.*

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The success of any organization depends on the use and allocation of productive resources in organizations (Soltani, 1998; Ahmadi et al., 2009). Among all of these resources, human resource, as the most effective one, strongly affects the ultimate productivity of organizations (Ahmadi & Mobaraki, 2012). As the productivity of human resources is the main factor forming the productivity of all organizational productive factors, focusing on human resources is the main factor in improving the organizational productivity (Bordbar, 2013; Salehi, et al, 2012). Therefore, studies were conducted to determine the factors influencing the efficiency of human resources. Studies shown that one of the factors affecting the productivity of human resources is employees' organizational commitment (Sharifi Asl, et al., 2012; Zaki, 2009).

Work family conflict is considered to be an important issue of today business world (Grandey et al. 2005) due to increase of the women participation to the work force. Managing work and family responsibilities has become a growing problem due to various reasons including great changes in the nature of work environments and family lives (Kamkar & Mohamadi, 2010). Traditionally men have right to work and women have to take care of the house hold works (Zulfiqar, et al., 2014). But at the present the traditional gender family roles has changed because of the upturn number in working women. Hence, not only the women but also men have to share the personal life activities with women. This transformation have affected to the work family demands of the work force. Therefore the modern workforce including both men and women has to face the work-life conflict.

Soltani, (1998) stated that sometimes work and business problems negatively influence the people's personal lives and, consequently, work-family conflict appears. On the other hand, sometimes family life issues as well as personal problems may result in disorders in their work and business lives and this way, family-work conflict occurs (Soltani, 1998). Hence, the balance between family and working life is one of the factors influencing the success of organizations (Abolhallaj, 2008).

Boles et al. (2016) concluded that the work- life conflict has several negative outcomes such as less commitment, emotional exhaustion and burnout. Thompson, et al. (1999) concluded that there was a relationship between high work life conflict and lower organizational commitment. According to Spence Laschinger et al. (2001) organizational commitment is critical to both organization and the employees and it is considered as an important component to determine the performance and effectiveness of employees and the organization. Hence, this study aims to investigate the impact of work life

conflict on organizational commitment among female nurses in public sector hospitals in Sri Lanka.

### **1.1 Research Problem**

When consider the previous researches done about this topic, most of them are done in the foreign context such as India, Pakistan, Turkey, America, China and Nigeria likewise. When compare the Sri Lankan context with these countries there are significant differences can be seen in relation to the culture, economy, and technology and work structure. Because of that there is a challenge to directly apply the findings from these contexts to Sri Lankan context. Therefore the generalizability is questionable. As well as there is an inconsistency between the findings from different contexts according to the literature. Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian (1996); Perrewé, Ralston, & Fernandez (1995) found that there is a negative but significant correlation between work-family conflict and organizational commitment and both variables are inversely correlated. Perrewé, Ralston, and Fernandez (1995) found that this result sustained in the Chinese sample also. But they found that there is no substantial relationship between work – life conflict and organizational commitment in the sample of Americans. Therefore it is essential to investigate the relationship between work – life conflict and organizational commitment in Sri Lankan context.

Nurses are the workers who take care of the patients in hospitals. Nurses can be consider as the largest single group of regulated and registered practitioners in the health workforce of any country and are internationally recognized as being fundamental to the provision of health care (Yamey, 2002). Therefore the role of nurse is key to the success of the health care service provided by the hospitals. Because of nature of the work schedules especially night works, it is really difficult to get the commitment from nurses. When they are doing night works they tend to think about their children, husband and other house hold activities. Then it generates stress, pressure and anxiety among female nurses and ultimately they cannot balance their work and family life and this will create work – life conflict. Therefore it is essential to examine the impact of work –life conflict on organizational commitment among nurses at hospitals in Sri Lanka.

### **1.2 Objectives of the Study**

- To examine the impact of WLC on OC among female nurses in public sector hospitals at Matara district, Sri Lanka
- To study the relationship between WIF and OC among female nurses in public sector hospitals at Matara district, Sri Lanka

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- To study the relationship between the FIW and OC among female nurses in public sector hospitals at Matara district, Sri Lanka.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Work - Life Conflict (WLC)

Greenhaus & Beutell (2016) defined WLC as the role pressure from incompatible work and family domains to create inter role conflict. Hence it occurs when the demands from one role conflict with the demands from other role (Allen et al., 2000). Individual required physical, psychological and social resources to fulfil the demands of their two roles (Greenhaus & Beutell, 2016). When individuals use their resources to fulfil duties in one role, it cause to limit an individual to fulfil responsibilities in other role (Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). Because of the increase of the women participation to the work force the WFC has become a main issue in the modern world (Ramarajan & Reid, 2013).

#### 2.1.1 Determinants of Work -Life Conflict

Researchers have measured WLC in different ways. At the early stage, it was measured considering *work interference with family* domain. After that the researchers found the duality of WLC and measured it considering both domains of WLC: work interference with family (WIF) and family interference with work (FIW) (Duxbury, Higgins, & Mills, 2017).

##### *Work Interference with Family (Work - Family Conflict)*

It refers to influence of work life to the family life and inability to do the family life obligations because of the work duties. Therefore if a person experiencing a high level of work- family role conflict, then the task, duties, responsibilities in their job role interfering to their family life. Especially the excessive work demands of the work role generate negative family outcomes (Akintayo, 2010b).

##### *Family Interference with Work (Family-Work Conflict)*

It occurs when the individuals spend more times with family rather than the job. Therefore if a person has more responsibilities in the family life it will interfere to work role they perform in the job. It affect to reduce the work outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job performance, career success and increase the absenteeism and turnover intention (Akintayo, 2010b).

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### *2.1.2 Forms of Work–Life Conflict*

There are three forms of WLC; Time-based conflict, Strain-based conflict and Behaviour-based conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 2016).

#### *Time – based Conflict*

Time based conflict occurs when the time devoted to one role limit to participate in other role. The amount and frequency of overtime and irregular shift work and inflexibility of work schedules also associated with the WLC (Greenhaus & Beutell, 2016).The WLC faced by married persons are higher than unmarried persons and also parents experienced higher WLC than non-parents(Herman & Gyllstrom, 1977) .

#### *Strain - based Conflict*

The strain experienced in one role affect in to interfere with participation in other role can be identified as strain based conflict. Therefore the characteristics which produce strain either family or work role affect to create WLC. In addition to that work environment changes, participation in boundary spanning activities, mental concentration and stress in communication were also related with WLC (Burke & Greenglass, 1999; Greenhaus & Beutell, 2016).

#### *Behavior – based Conflict*

Most times the required behaviours in work role is incompatible with the family role. If the person cannot adjust to these behavioural changes it will contribute to work –family conflict. In addition to that if the individuals have to perform multiple roles in their work, which can limit the individual’s resources to fulfil the roles of personal life (Dierdorff & Ellington, 2008). Specially the individual who have high degree of personal interactions in their job can also direct to fatigue and it will lead to withdrawal from the family life responsibilities (Dierdorff & Ellington, 2008).

## **2.2 Organizational Commitment (OC)**

Organizational commitment is the individual’s psychological attachment towards an organization (Jabeen, Behery, & Abu Elanain, 2015). Employee willingness to stay with organization is reflected by the organizational commitment. Jabeen et al (2015) have identified three attitudes of the individuals who committed to their organization. They are a feeling of identification of organizational goals, a feeling of involving the duties of the organization and a sense of loyalty to the organization.

### *2.2.1 Components of Organizational Commitment*

Allen & Meyer (1991) suggested that researchers could better understand an employee's relationship with an organization by analyzing three components (Affective, Continuance, and Normative) simultaneously.

#### *2.2.2 Affective Commitment*

Affective commitment is employees' psychological attachment and involvement in organization (Meyer, Irving, & Allen, 2014). It is a work related attitude with positive feelings towards the organization (Morrow, 1993). As a result of that the workers aware about the goals and objectives of the organization and act in a way to achieve them (Liu, 2006).

#### *2.2.3 Continuance Commitment*

Greenberg and Baron (2003) explained that persons desire to continue working for an organization because he or she needs to do so and cannot afford to leave. Continuance commitment creates within the employees because of the material benefits they are gain from staying with the organization (Meyer et al., 2002).

#### *2.2.4 Normative Commitment*

Normative Commitment involves employees' feelings of obligation to stay with the organization (Meyer et al., 2002). Greenberg & Baron (2007) explained that persons desire to continue working for an organization because he or she feels obligations from others to remain there. Hence, if an organization treat their employees well by being loyal to them it will affect to improve the normative commitment of employees towards the organization (Khan et al., 2013).

## **2.3 Work – Life conflict and Organizational Commitment**

Perrewé et al (1995) found that negative relationship between WLC and OC by investigating the relationship among stressors, sources of conflict and commitment of the employees in Hong Kong and United States. Netemeyer, Boles, and McMurrian (1996) found is a significant negative correlation between work- family conflict (WFC) and OC as well as family –work conflict (FWC) and OC of small business owners, high school and elementary school teachers. Akintayo (2010) conducted a research on Work-family role conflict and organizational commitment among industrial workers in Nigeria. The finding of this study revealed that there was a significant relationship between WLC and OC. As well as he found a significant difference of work –life conflict among men and women industrial workers and also between married and single workers. Riaz and Hunjra (2015) found a significant negative

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relationship between WLC and OC among faculty members of different universities in Pakistan. Further they revealed that the facets of work –life conflict have significant and negative impact on organizational commitment. Rehman and Waheed, (2012) examined the difference of the WLC face by men & women, and single & married members. They revealed that married employees experienced high level of work- family conflict than single individuals. Moreover, there was no significant difference between men and women. Research conducted Mathias et al (2010) to examine the relationship among work- family climate, organizational leadership characteristics, organizational commitment and turnover intent of 526 employees in 37 hotels across US. They found a significant relationship between work – family climate with organizational commitment and turnover intent.

## **2.4 Hypotheses Development**

Researcher has developed the following hypothesis based on the research objectives.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a negative relationship between WLC and OC among female nurses in public sector hospitals at Matara district, Sri Lanka.

H<sub>2</sub>: There is a negative relationship between WIF and organizational commitment among female nurses in public sector hospitals at Matara district, Sri Lanka.

H<sub>3</sub>: There is a negative relationship between FIW and organizational commitment among female nurses in public sector hospitals at Matara district, Sri Lanka.

## **3 METHODOLOGY**

Cross-sectional explanatory descriptive study involving deductive approach is used. Research context is the public sector hospitals in Matara district, Sri Lanka. As well as the unit of analysis of this study is individuals (Nurses).

### **3.1 Population and Sample**

Target population of this study is all the nurses in public sector hospitals in Matara District, Sri Lanka. There are 1400 nurses in public sector hospitals in Matara district (Annual Health statistics, Medical Statistical Unit, Ministry of Health). Sample consists of randomly selected 120 female nurses of five public sector hospitals in Matara district, Sri Lanka. In this quantitative study, a survey questionnaire was developed and data collected from randomly selected 120 nurses of five public sector hospitals in Matara district, Sri Lanka. Questionnaire consists of four sections. A five point Likert scale has been used for sections of II, III and IV of the questionnaire.

### 3.2 Measuring Variables

FIW dimension was measured by the measurement scale developed by the Kopelman et al (1983) and WIF was measured through the scale developed by Netemeyer et al (1996). Affective commitment was measured through the scale developed by Meyer & Allen, (2004) and measurement scale developed by Mowday, Steers, & Porter (1979) was used to measure the dependent variables of Continuance commitment and Normative commitment.

## 4 DATA ANALYSIS & RESULTS

Table 1 shows the Cronbach's Alpha values for the variables in the study.

**Table 1: Reliability Statistics for variables**

Variable	Number of Items	Alpha Value
WIF	6	0.815
FIW	6	0.772
WLC	12	0.863
OC	6	0.718

### 4.1 Hypotheses Testing

#### 4.1.1 Results of Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation coefficients included in Table 2 reveal that there is a negative relationship between all the independent variables and OC. Hence there is a statistical evidence to claim that there is a negative relationship between WIF, FIW, WLC and OC. Therefore hypotheses of the above mentioned variables were accepted.

**Table 2: Correlation between WLC and OC**

Independent Variables	OC
WIF	-.521**
FIW	-.579**
WLC	-.610**

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).



#### 4.1.2 Results of Regression Analysis

**Table 3: Coefficient of Study Variables**

Model	Un-standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	4.757	.202		23.583	.000
WIF	-.202	.071	-.265	-2.869	.005
FIW	-.348	.077	-.415	-4.491	.000
WLC	-.542	.065	-.610	-8.370	.000

The square of the multiple R is 0.379 indicating that the 38% of variance in OC is explained by the two independent variables jointly. The F value is 35.686 that is significant at P = 0.000 suggesting that two independent variables have significantly explained the 38 percent of the variance in OC.

**Table 4: Model Summary**

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.
1	0.616	0.379	0.368	0.439	35.686	0.000

**Table 5: Results of Hypotheses Tested**

Hypothesis	Expected Results	Actual Results	Whether supported or not	Evidence
<b>H<sub>1</sub></b> : There is a negative relationship between WLC and OC	Negative Relationship	Negative	Supported	r = - 0.610** β = - 0.542** t = - 8.370**
<b>H<sub>2</sub></b> : There is a negative relationship between WIF and OC	Negative Relationship	Negative	Supported	r = - 0.521** β = - 0.202** t = - 2.869**
<b>H<sub>3</sub></b> : There is a negative relationship between FIW and OC	Negative relationship	Negative	Supported	r = - 0.579** β = - 0.348** t = - 4.491**

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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## 5 DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of WLC on OC among female nurses in public sector hospitals at Matara district, Sri Lanka. 42.5% of the respondents in the sample are in the age range of 26-35 years. 70% are married and 39.2% of the respondents haven't children and 30% of the respondents have only one child, 52.5% respondents are not living together with their parents and 33.3% respondents have 1 to 4 years work experience. All the hypotheses tested in this study were accepted. Results showed that both of *family interference with work* and *work interference with family* dimensions have significant and negative effects on organizational commitment. *Family Interference with work* dimension had more impact than *work interference with family* on organizational commitment of nurses in public sector hospitals. Moreover, results showed that there is a significant negative relationship between work life conflict and organizational commitment of nurses in public sector hospitals at Matara district, Sri Lanka. Findings of this study consistent with the previous studies (Hatam, et al., 2013; Boles, 2001; Day & Chamberlain, 2006). Akintayo (2010) found a statistically significant inverse relationship between work-family conflict and organizational commitment. As well as, results of the study by Beigi (2011) that individuals who experience more work-family conflict have less commitment to their organizations. However, Casper, et al., (2011) rejected the hypothesis that relationship between work-family conflicts and organizational commitment (Nabavi, et al., 2013).

## 6 CONCLUSION AND CONTRIBUTIONS

The study found that FIW, WIF and WLC have significant negative relationship with OC. As well as, *family interference with work* and *work interference with family* dimensions have significant and negative effects on organizational commitment. Result of this study will guide the decision-makers and administrators in the health sector, and contribute to the literature regarding the organizational commitment and work-family conflict. Hence, it is possible to claim that if the employees are supported to establish a fair balance between their work and family lives, a strong commitment to the organization will be developed. Moreover, decision makers of health sectors should provide employees the support to balance their work and family lives to retain the valuable employees in the organization by obtaining their commitment. As this study selected only the female nurses in public sector hospitals in Matara district, future studies can focus on nurses in public and private sector hospitals to do a comparison study. As well as, future researchers are recommended to choose other employees (not only nurses) in health care sector to achieve better results.

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