The Impact of Work-Family Conflict on Job Satisfaction in Teachers: A Conceptual Framework

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Abstract

Work-family conflict has been shown to be associated with employee's job satisfaction. However, there is little research regarding the potential mechanisms of this relationship as well as in education field. In this study, we examined the effect of work-family conflict on job satisfaction in teachers, and whether this effect is mediated by burnout and moderated by professional identity.

Keywords: work-family conflict, job satisfaction, professional identity, burnout, teachers

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Problem

Yang and Kassekert (2009) put forward their views on job satisfaction, they believe that usually employees' well-being is determined by job satisfaction, which also determines employees' mental health. In terms of job satisfaction improvement, the fundamental purpose is to allow employees to improve their attitude towards work. Evidence shows that employees with negative attitudes to their jobs have extremely low job satisfaction, while those with high job satisfaction have positive attitudes and vitality at work. Besides, they are more productive than average (Robbins & Judge 2012). Therefore, job satisfaction could apply to measure the work level of employees to a certain extent and can also be used as a standard to measure work efficiency (Dawal et al., 2009). But Mortimer and Lorence (1989) put forward a different point of view, they defined job satisfaction as the evaluation of the positive emotional state from the employee's personal work and experience. The happiness and

liveliness of employees with positive emotions at work is also reflected in productivity, and those employees are extremely productive (Robbins & Judge 2012). Therefore, in an organization, managers should focus on employees' job satisfaction for the following three main reasons. First, organizational productivity is closely related to employees' job satisfaction, which directly affects productivity (Baruch-Feldman et al. 2002). Second, organizational turnover rates are also related to job satisfaction, research shows that employees' turnover intentions are negatively correlated with their job satisfaction (Shields & Ward, 2001). Employees' job satisfaction, which makes employees feel that managers are take responsible for them, which helps to reduce employees' turnover (Robbins & Judge 2012). Kaya (1995) also proposed that low job satisfaction is one of the key elements affecting employees' well-being in organizations, and it is also the cornerstone of creating a loyal organizational environment. When employees feel high level of job satisfaction, they tend to work harder and demonstrate high level of work engagement and organizational commitment. Therefore, positive job satisfaction could prevent employees from being disappointed or even leaving their organisations (Dawal et al., 2009). According to Yang and Kassekert (2009), job satisfaction is also positively related to organizational citizenship behavior, thereby improving individuals' and organizations' efficiency by reducing costs associated with negative organizational behaviors such as absenteeism, burnout and workplace incivility. Consequently, managers must pay attention to improving the job satisfaction of employees. However, this issue has not received enough attention in the field of education at present, and relevant research on teachers' job satisfaction is still scarce.

1.2 Significance of the Problem

Addressing their educational work, the teaching profession, working circumstances, and other factors, teachers' job satisfaction is a generic and emotional experience (Richter et al., 2021). According to research, teachers' job satisfaction not only significantly and favourably predicts their work engagement and performance (Li Xincui, 2016; Nemțeanu et al., 2022), but it can also have a significant impact on career maturity (Riyanto et al., 2021; Fute et al., 2022), job burnout (Madigan & Kim,2021), and turnover intention (Liu et al., 2021). Therefore, enhancing teachers' job happiness is crucial to raising educational standards, whether done from the standpoint of bettering their working conditions or from the perspective of students' development and progress.

Examining the potential antecedent variables that influence teachers' job satisfaction as well as conducting empirical research on their influencing factors can yield critical theoretical and empirical data that can be used to investigate practical strategies for enhancing teachers' job satisfaction (Burić & Kim, 2021). Two elements—internal and external factors—were previously given more consideration in analyses of the antecedent determinants of teachers' work satisfaction. Teaching culture (You, Kim & Lim, 2017), organisational environment (Ghavifekr & Pillai, 2016), the principal's leadership style (Bogler, 2002), and organisational support are the key school management elements (Samdal & Rowling, 2011). Other factors include self-efficacy (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca & Malone, 2006), job motivation (Arifin, 2015), personality characteristics (Li, Wang, Gao, & You, 2017) and psychological capital (Larson & Luthans, 2006).

In recent years, however, the theme of "how to reconcile work and family" has become a challenge for many professionals, especially teachers, due to significant changes in work organisations as well as family. With the transition from traditional face-to-face to online education, the field of schooling in China and even around the world has changed, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 (Jain & Singh, 2021). Due to the restrains of online learning, students' attention to learning is decreasing and the level of learning is more difficult to manage, therefore, teachers have to mobilize more resources to stimulate students' interest in learning to ensure teaching success (Riffert et al., 2021; Sutaji et al., 2021). In order to maintain proper communication between instructors and students during instruction, it is also important for teachers to consider the regular operation of online equipment (Parker & Bickmore, 2020). Teachers are required to learn online teaching technologies rapidly and thoroughly since assignment correction and feedback must also be done online (Simamora et al., 2020). More significantly, teachers must not only oversee their students' education but also address the issues that arise in their everyday lives. As a result, teachers' work-family conflicts are likely exacerbated by this circumstance.

1.3 Literature Review

1.3.1 Work-family Conflict and Job Satisfaction

One of the major issues facing the workforce in the twenty-first century is work-family conflict (Maertz et al., 2019). The conservation of resource hypothesis states that since personal resources are finite, teachers would feel under strain and their performance at the school will suffer if work takes up a lot of resources intended for the family (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Work-family conflict has grown rapidly in recent years due to facts such as extremely work overload (Kubicek, Paskvan, & Korunka, 2015), demands for job availability of non-working time (Kelly et al., 2014), the number of dual-earner households speedily increased (Masterson & Hoobler, 2015), and more recently the response to the COVID-19 pandemic (Restubog, Ocampo, & Wang, 2020). Work-family conflict is defined as "a form of internalized conflict in which the role pressures of work-family dimensions are somehow incompatible" (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), and it is inevitable for individuals who often hold multiple jobs for work. Wilson and Baumann (2015) argue that its effects are pervasive and damaging to employees and their organizations. Work-family conflict has been linked to employee withdrawal from work in numerous ways, including considering quitting their company, according to research (Amstad, Meier, Fasel, Elfering, & Semmer, 2011; Watanabe & Falci, 2016).

Job satisfaction is one of the many factors that are impacted by work-family conflict (Hong, Liu & Zhang, 2021). Work-family conflict will have a detrimental impact on work satisfaction since it causes instructors to feel bad and distressed. The term "job satisfaction" refers to a person's subjective level of satisfaction with various aspects of their job. It is an attitude variable that captures the person's favourable emotional perception of their job (Alsughayir, 2021). Job satisfaction may be affected by all aspects of the workplace. Conflict between work and family is mostly brought on by how one's job interferes with their daily lives, which causes them a variety of problems. According to the social exchange theory,

people develop unfavourable attitudes about their jobs and their subjective appraisal of their work declines because they think their jobs are the root of their unneeded difficulties, which leads them to blame their jobs for those issues (Hamon & Bull, 2016). Thus, job satisfaction will decline (Vandenberghe et al., 2011). According to a meta-analysis, work-family conflict has a negative predictive value for job satisfaction (Ford et al., 2007). Additionally, academic research has shown that job satisfaction declines when work-family conflict increases (Erdamar & Demirel, 2016). However, besides the empirical evidence discussed before, the exact mechanism about how work-family conflict influences job satisfaction is yet unknown.

1.3.2 Burnout as a Mediator between Work-Family Conflict and Job Satisfaction

Chronic workplace stress is thought to cause a psychosocial illness known as burnout (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Maslach, Jackson, Leiter, Schaufeli, and Schwab (1986) suggested that the three symptoms of burnout are emotional exhaustion, depression, and low self-accomplishment. Burnout is the sense of being emotionally overextended and weary due to one's work (no longer feeling like you are competent and successful at work). It's important to note that instructors seem to experience burnout on a fairly regular basis (Chang, 2009). This is maybe not unexpected given the multiple pressures that instructors will encounter throughout the course of their workday (McCarthy, Lambert, Lineback, Fitchett, & Baddouh, 2016).

Work-family conflict is a significant contributor to burnout and a significant antecedent (Smith et al., 2018). According to Demerouti et al., burnout and work-family conflict have a sort of "spiral connection." They discovered that work-family conflict contributed to employee burnout, which in turn affected workers' ability to do their jobs effectively. As a result, work-family conflict caused more burnout, which in turn made burnout worse (Liu et al., 2015). Organizational atmosphere significantly affects burnout as well as work-family conflict, which is obvious. Additionally, several research speculated that work-family conflict might mediate the connections between work demands and intentions to leave their jobs (Li et al., 2022), job satisfaction (Giancaspro et al., 2022), and happiness (Ifelunni et al., 2022). The current study discovered a positive correlation between work-family conflict and teacher burnout, which was in line with other research (MA et al., 2014).

Burnout and job satisfaction have long been correlated by theory and study (Zedeck, Maslach, Mosier, & Skitka, 1988). Regarding this, some studies believe that burnout causes a decline in job satisfaction (i.e., that job satisfaction is an emotional result of burnout), while others contend that the opposite may be true (Tehseen & Hadi, 2015). The two are very certainly connected in some way. However, it's crucial to recognise that theoretically, they are different. First, burnout has a connection to oneself, including assessments of one's abilities, even if for instructors it also has to do with teaching and related practice. Second, they might be viewed as different in terms of how teachers will assess their own teaching. Particularly, a dissatisfied teacher dislikes their work, but a burnt-out teacher feels unable to do it well (Randall & Scott, 1988). Finally, in the OECD's (2020) framework for measuring teacher wellbeing, job satisfaction is seen as a psychological component, whereas burnout is regarded as a physical component.

1.3.3 Professional Identity as Moderator Between Burnout and Job Satisfaction

Many researchers believe that professional identity development is an ongoing process for teachers. For example, Goodson and Cole (1994) argued that teachers' identity construction is based on personal and professional dimensions. They see teachers as professionals whose lives and work are shaped by factors and circumstances outside the classroom and school. Professional identity is not considered stable or unique because it is not a stable concept (Coldron & Smith, 1999). The balance between teachers' professional self-image and multiple roles is complex and ever-changing (Volkman & Anderson, 1998). Coldron and Smith (1999) emphasized that to be a teacher is to be recognized as a teacher by oneself as well as by others, thus redefining socially acceptable identity.

Day, Kington, Stobart and Sammons (2006) emphasized the complexity of the professional identity. The teacher's perception of himself or herself as a teacher may be influenced by historical, social, psychological, and cultural aspects. Additionally, a professional identity may include a few sub-identities that may conflict or complement one another (Popper-Giveon & Shayshon, 2017). Mishler (2004) contends that it is preferable to acknowledge the existence of several sub identities when defining identity. According to Gee and Crawford (1998), although we might adopt several identities depending on the social context, there are connections among these identities. Using the metaphor further, it can be said that the chorus of voices sounds better the better the relationships between the various identities are.

Research in this field drew attention to concrete issues relevant to teachers' appraisal of professional identity, such as teaching low status sub-subjects in schools, like art and music (Paechter & Head, 1996) or prevent teachers' burnout by increasing sense of professional identity (DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997). Beyond that, Beijaard, Verloop, and Vermunt (2000) argue that teachers are probably to benefit from their appraisal of their professional identity. For example, better and positively understanding their professional identity from a teacher's perspective may facilitate educational institutions' and schools' reform or enhance collaboration among teachers. Typically, relatively experienced teachers rate issues related to their profession as positive, such as interaction with students and commitment to the organization (Beijaard,1995). Research has also found that teachers' positive self-perceptions of their professional identity enable teachers to stay in relatively poor work environments and to be more tolerant of relatively low salary (Moore & Hofman, 1988). Therefore, in essence, measures taken to improve teachers' working conditions can help teachers to generate positive evaluations of their professional identities.

According to certain research, teachers' professional identities significantly influence how satisfied they are with their jobs; the stronger the identification, the happier the work (Troesch & Bauer, 2017). To examine the moderating impact of teachers' professional identities on their job satisfaction, Tang's (2020) study, for instance, used rural teachers on the Chinese mainland as its research subject. The findings showed that poor job satisfaction is highly correlated with long work hours, big class sizes, and a lack of awareness of one's financial position. However, teachers' professional identities can counteract the detrimental

impacts of long hours and low pay. In the "hyper diverse" educational environment, Karousiou, Hajisoteriou and Angelides (2019) primarily examined the formation and effect of teachers' professional identities. Teachers believe their reputation is significantly lower than that of other professions, according to Fuller, Goodwyn and Francis-Brophy (2013) research from the United Kingdom. Professional identity has an impact on a person's fundamental work attitude, cognitions, and values from the standpoint of social culture. The challenge of teacher recruitment and retention persists, and teachers' work satisfaction is currently significantly lower than it was in the past (Chen et al., 2020).

According to the social identity, a person's level of identify with his or her profession will influence how they view their work, and those who have a high level of occupational identity will report feeling more satisfied with their jobs (Scanlan & Hazelton, 2019). Several motivating elements determine whether teachers are happy with their employment. One of these intrinsically motivating elements, professional identity, can help teachers feel content with their job since it originates from within the person (Moore & Hofman, 1988). Existing research demonstrates that preservice special education teachers' professional identities and job satisfaction are considerably and positively correlated, and that professional identities can significantly and positively predict job satisfaction (Chen, Zhong, Luo & Lu, 2020).

2. The Present Study

Examining potential links between work-family conflict and job satisfaction among Chinese teachers is the goal of the current study. The present study specifically sought to determine (a) if burnout mediates the association between work-family conflict and job satisfaction and (b) whether professional identity would moderate the relationship between burnout and job satisfaction. In Figure 1, the suggested model is shown.
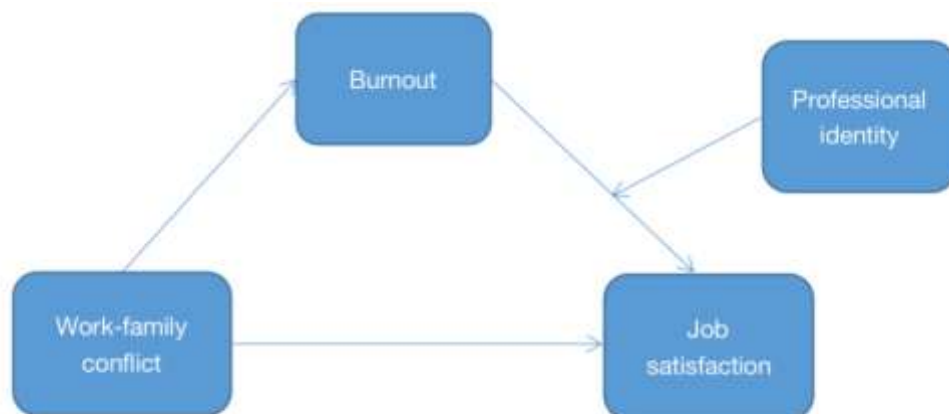

Figure 1. Theoretical framework

3. Conclusion

Based on previous research, teachers prioritise doing their jobs well and being devoted to

their work, but they also prioritise their roles in the family and taking care of their family members (Maeran, Pitarelli & Cangiano, 2013), which leads to greater conflicts between work and home in their everyday lives. Teachers are expected to do a rising number of extra duties while working longer hours at the school to meet the demands of society, families, and schools (Tye & O'brien, 2002). Having to balance work and family is a challenge that most teachers frequently encounter (Rabagliett et al.,2021). Therefore, research on work-family conflict and its antecedents and consequences are necessary.

In addition to the aforementioned implications of this paper, the theoretical framework (Figure 1) is based on previous theoretical and empirical evidence. In this theoretical model, burnout and professional identity are perceived to exert a mediate and moderate role in the relationship between work-family conflict and job satisfaction. Furthermore, it should be understood that burnout and its three dimensions (emotional exhaustion, depression, and low self-accomplishment.) play a significant role in predicting the level of job satisfaction. Hence, it is necessary to further investigate how these three dimensions mediate the relationship between work-family conflict and job satisfaction. In addition, how professional identity moderate the relationship between these three dimensions and job satisfaction could also be taken into further consideration in future research.

4. Implications and Limitations

This conceptual article offers a theoretical contribution that may be used as a resource for more research. By including a substantial mediator on the link between work-family conflict and job satisfaction, this article actually gets a more accurate picture of the relationship between these variables. The analysis of burnout and job satisfaction linking with another moderator to offer a better explanation from the standpoint of professional identity is another theoretical addition of this study. Although the proposed conceptualization has not yet been empirical tested, this article provides practical implications for educational stakeholders. The proposed framework allows policy makers and school leaders to identify the most valuable factors related to teacher job satisfaction that are important for promoting and improving teachers' well-being and psychological health. In addition, concept papers could probably help policy makers and school leaders develop work-friendly policies that support teachers in work-life balance.

Despite the implications mentioned above, this study has several limitations. Though burnout and professional identity were applied, but these might not fully capture the complex mechanisms between work-family conflict and job satisfaction. Future researchers could consider investigating other relevant variables to examine potential effect as well. In addition, the role of burnout's three dimensions play in the whole process are required to be examine precisely in future research. Moreover, this present study only investigates the general work-family conflict, which has ignored the two directions of work-family conflict (work to family interfere and family to work interfere), future research is recommended to integrate more factors into this framework via work-family conflict's two directions rather than one-way work-family conflict.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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