

Job Demand and Work – Family Conflict: The Moderating Role of Job Control

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Abstract

This paper examined job demand and work-family conflict, and the moderating role of job control in Lagos Airport Hotel, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria. A total of 100 respondents participated in this survey. Data was collected through questionnaires distributed to these respondents. A correlation coefficient was employed for the analysis of the data.

Consequently, the survey data of one hundred (100) employees of Airport Hotel, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria, shows that job demand and the number of hours spent in a situation of low job control negatively impact the family life, while high job control buffers the work-family conflict.

Furthermore, it was revealed that where there is high job demands and high job control, there will be no experience of work-family conflict and interestingly, that women and men experience the same work-family conflicts when they are confronted with equal working hours. Moreover, the result also indicated that high job control is a good moderator of work-family conflict.

Keywords: Job Demand, Job Demand-Control, Work-family Conflict.

Introduction

The past three decades has witnessed significant research works on work-family conflict. This is borne out of the challenges being faced by employees in the workplace due to global competitions, dwindling family incomes, technological advancements and the influence of job demands that keep employees unduly in the work place thus presenting difficulties and challenges in balancing work and home responsibilities (Major and Germano, 2006). Corroborating this, the role hypothesis posits that multiple roles could result to a potential source of stress when there is struggle to balance work priorities in other to meet all expectations (Greenhouse and Beutell, 1985). However, the work family literature portends how the Psycho-social work environment can play a vital role in influencing job demand and family life which can eventually lead to stress (Major and Germano, 2006).

Consequently, the conflicts resulting from work interfering with family and family interfering with work could be principally derived from work place factors. (Romain & Blum, 2001). In overall, the conflicts arising from work and family have its implications on organisations and individuals and this has been negatively linked to reduced stress, turn-over intentions and job satisfaction (Bordeaux and Brinley, 2005).

Unfortunately, and despite an increasing recognition of the effects of work family conflicts on the health of employees in organisations, very few researches have come up to address how the challenges arising from these conflicts could be resolved and ameliorated in Nigeria.. Much of the studies have focused on western countries particularly Europe and America. Therefore, this work wants to extend the boundary of knowledge in this area by examining the impact of job demands on work-family conflicts and how job control can moderate and mediate this conflict in Nigeria organisations.

Literature Review

Work and family are two important spheres in the world of work; but the changes in the tradition of work where both wives and husbands are engaged in paid employments have eroded the commitment expected in both spheres and the attempt to balance this new roles and the developments arising therefrom has resulted in stressful conflicts (Roman and Blum, 2001). Several studies in the literature have attributed work-family conflict and distress therefrom

to other factors such as longer working hours, executive positions at work and having more children (Fredriksen-Golden and Scharlach, 2001, Golund, 2004). However, the literature also records some contrary views in some studies and findings whereby it is explained that apart from the various factors listed, working wives experience less psychological distress than housewives (Theits, 1983). Nevertheless, and in all, the conclusion that could be drawn is that the two spheres of work and home are two incompatible expectations that could create conflicts. (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985), which may result from the general demands of time and strain from both spheres that tamper with maximum work performance expected of them (Allvin et al. 2012).

Furthermore, the work-family literature has posited that job demand has potent effects of work interfering with family on both men and women with the consequences more on the women than men probably because of cultural values and differences in countries that place more domestic responsibilities on women than men. (Allvin et al. 2012).

Consequently, attempt is being made to examine the associations between work interfering with family and family interfering with work and the role job control could play in moderating such interference.

Job Control as Moderating Factor

Karasek, (1979) and Theorell, (1990) have focused on the constructs of job control. The constructs from these researchers have reported positive association of job control with employee job performance, organisational commitment, employee well-being and alleviation of stress and turn over. Also, some studies such as (Vander Doef and Maes, 1999) have confirmed this positive

association between work-family conflict, job demand and job control. However, the ability of job control to moderate job demand and work-family conflict has been given less attention in the research literature. The theoretical model of (Karasek and Theorell, 1990) posits decision latitude employees have in their job. The theory describes the extent to which employees can have control over their works, in terms of decision making and in performing different tasks. It therefore stressed that employees with high job demand with less corresponding control will result to “high strain” whereas, a job with less control and low demand will result to low strain. This in order words means that even a job with high demands will not necessarily result to stress if there is corresponding high degree of control (Karasek and Theorell, 1990). Moreover, a good number of researchers have explored this model to analyse the relationship between the psycho-social work environment and different stress related problems such as psychological distress burnout and cardiovascular diseases. In spite of this, there have been few empirical investigations on the effects of job control on work-family conflict. Therefore, on a more general note, since work and family life have gone through considerable changes over the years, it is therefore of interest to have a bird eye view into how job control can influence and /or moderate work-family conflict as well as the negative consequences of job demands.

The aim of this paper therefore is to examine the relationship between job demand and its interference with family and whether job control can moderate this family interference. Unfortunately, less-premium is given to job control as a moderating factor in the literature.

The Effects of Work Interference in the Family

Traditionally, men are presumed to be good providers for the family by meeting the basic needs of family responsibilities through paid employment; however, the issue of consideration is whether both men and women in paid employment suffer the same level of conflicts and stress when they are confronted with the same job demands and job control. While researchers such as (Karasek et al, 1987 and Karasek and Theorell, 1990) believe that women are more affected in this regard than men others such as (VanterDoef and Maes, 1999) believe that women are stronger than men. Whatever way, the argument goes that because women carry more responsibilities of domestic work in addition to their jobs boils down to the fact that women report more stress than men and therefore show more work-family conflict than men in a situation where both of them are engaged in the same number of working hours (Fenwick and Tausig, 2001, Ronlund, 2004). However, (Eagle et al, 1997, Kinnunen and Manuno, 1998) have a contrary view on this. They believe that men and women report similar work-family conflict in a situation of equal engagement. However, psychological tardiness and potency could explain the differences in their findings; in that some individuals can be more psychological potent and effective and record less stress in a situation of high work demands and less control. In this article therefore, we tend to examine whether job demands have specific effects on work-family conflicts and whether job control can moderate the effects. Hence, the study hypothesized thus:

H₁ – Work-family conflict is positively associated with job demand.

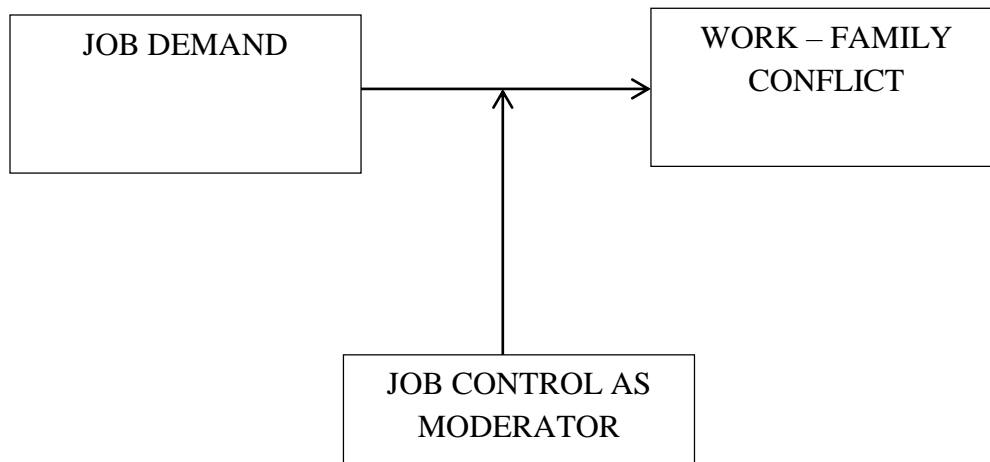
H₂ – Job control moderates the relations between the dimensions of work-family and the dimensions of job demand.

The increasing research on work-family conflict over the years, found that work demands interfere with family and vice versa (Frone, 2000). For example, (Major, Klein and Ehrhaurt, 2002) posit that hours spent at work predicted Work- Family conflict. Also, (Frone, Russell and Cooper, 1992) found that job stressors, e.g. work pressure and role ambiguity contribute to greater Work-family conflict. The most relevant of the antecedents that relates to the present study is job control which refers to workers freedom to make decisions on their work that can ease work-family conflict, for example, (Karasek and Theorell, 1990).

Theoretical Model of Work-Family Conflict

The role theory as enunciated by Kahn, Wolk, Quinn, Snoek and Rosenthal (1969) explained that when ambiguity and conflicts are experienced within a role, an undesirable outcome could result. The theory states that when employees perform multiple roles, it could lead to personal conflicts borne out of the challenges of successfully accomplishing each role as a result conflicting demands of time, energy and behaviour among roles (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1986). However, the theory has some limitations in that it fails to spell out any moderating variables such as job control that could buffer or mediate the relationship between work and family stressors and stress outcomes. Also, the theory less emphasized family roles which could give more explanation in understanding work-family conflicts (Jackson &Schular, 1985).

Figure 1: *Job Involvement and Job Demand Framework*



Source: Research Framework (2019)

Methodology

The aim of this article is to study the applicability of demand-control Model on the possibility of combining paid work and family. This will be approached by looking into whether Job demand increases and job control reduces the perceived level of work-family conflict and to analyse whether job control can moderate the effects of high demands. In respect of this study, the research population will be defined, which is the total number of staff of Hotel and catering, Air Port Hotel,

Lagos. The total population is 200 and the sample is 100. A distribution of 200 self-administered questionnaires was made to the staff of the Hotel. The questionnaire was in two sections consisting of 20 questions. The first section obtained the demographic variables of respondents such as sex, age and marital status and the second section tested the hypotheses and consisted of three parts such as work-family conflict, job demand and job control in which the respondents were required to rate their importance towards each factor based on five point Likert scale ranging from 1 – strongly disagree to 5 – strongly agree. The Likert Scale has been tested for reliable psychometric properties in the literature with internal consistency ranging from 0.78 to 0.87 (Carlson et.al, 2000, Tetrick and Bufferdi, 2006).

The Cronbach's alpha Co-efficient was 0.90 as measured by the reliability analysis of the items in the work-family conflict scale while the Cronbach's alpha Co-efficient of the items in the job demand scale as measured by the reliability analysis was 0.84. The purpose of this study therefore is to extend the body of knowledge in understanding the job and workplace conditions that are associated with work-family conflict and to determine whether job control in terms of ability to schedule work, take decisions on the job and take part in making decisions on how the job is to be done will reduce the strain and conflict associated with the family.

Thus, the study investigates the relationship between job demand and work-family conflict among Hotel and catering staff of the Nigerian Airport Hotel, Lagos. The study adopts cross-sectional research design. However, a convenience sampling technique was used, which is a non-probability method in conducting the research.

Although, this type of technique lacks precision but for this type of study, it is ideal in that it was cheap and time saving. Overall, 200 questionnaires were distributed to the staff of the Airport Hotel and 130 were returned with the response rate of 65%. Thirty (30) of them were not properly filled and therefore left with one hundred (100) that were used in conducting this research. Correlation Co-efficient and standard deviation were used for the analysis.

Data Analysis

Results

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of the study participants

<i>Demographic characteristics</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Sex		
Male	71	71.0
Female	29	29.0
Age		
20-35	15	15.0
36-55	74	74.0
Above 56	11	11.0

Marital status		
Married	86	86.0
Single	14	14.0

Table 1 describes the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. A total of 100 employees of Lagos Air Port Hotel, Lagos State were included with the mean age of participants being 45.06 years (Standard deviation 1.36). Majority of participants were male i.e. 71% while female was 29%. Among the male and female employees 86% were married while 14% were single.

Hypothesis 1

H_i: Work-family conflict is positively associated with job demand.

H₀: Work family conflict is negatively associated with job demand.

Table 2: Correlation summary of work-family conflict and job demand

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	R	P
Work-family conflicts	100	23.15	3.252	0.539*	0.000
Job demands	100	16.83	3.482		

***p<0.01 (Significant Result)**

The result in Table 2 revealed that work-family conflict is positively associated with job demand ($r=0.539$, $p<0.05$). The null hypothesis (H₀) is rejected while the alternate hypothesis (H₁) is accepted. The relationship between work-family conflict and job demand is moderate and statistically significant in a positive direction.

Hypothesis 2

H₀: Job control does not moderate the relations between the dimensions of work-family conflict and the dimensions of job demand.

H_i: Job control moderates the relations between the dimensions of work-family conflict and the dimensions of job demand.

Table 3: Correlation matrix of job control as moderator work-family conflict and job demand

	Job control	Work-family conflicts	Job demands
Job control	1.000	0.770**	0.651**
Work-family conflicts		1.000	0.539**
Job demands		*	1.000

***p<0.01 (Significant Result)**

Table 3 depicts that there is significant, high and positive correlation between job control and work-family conflict ($r=0.770$, $p<0.01$). Similarly, the relationship between job demands and work-family conflict ($r=0.539$, $p<0.01$), job control ($r=0.651$, $p<0.01$) is positive and statistically significant in each case. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected while the alternative hypothesis (H_i) is accepted. This implies that job control moderates the relations between the dimensions of work-family conflict and the dimensions of job demand.

The socio – demographic table shows that 86% of the respondents were married while 14% were single. The table also showed that all the respondents were adults; with ages between 20 – 35 (15%), 36 – 55(74%) and 56 and above (11%). 86% married (male and female) respondents are engaged in paid employment at the Airport Hotel, Lagos.

Discussions

This section discusses the findings based on the dependent and independent variables through the objectives of the study. The first hypothesis which states “Work- family conflict is positively associated with job demand” was analysed with the use of Correlation Co-efficient. Past studies such as (Boyar et.al, 2008, Biggart et.al, 2009, Hall et.al, 2010) show a strong support for the hypothesis. As shown by the correlation analysis, there exists a positive relationship between job demand and work-family conflict. Consequently, many findings in the literature support this positive relationship between job demand and Work-family conflict (for example, Mauno, Kinmunen and Ruokolainen, 2006) were of the opinion that the physical, psychological, social or organizational features of a job which require physical or psychological effort and energy from an employee are constantly related to psychological and physiological strain, in that most employees might not be able to handle the conflict associated with their work and family role, thereby resulting in an emotional exhaustion (Karatepe, 2013). The long period of time spent by the worker on the job will definitely affect the family adversely and consequently, translates to work-family conflict (Yildirim and Ayca, 2008). Moreover, more other studies further support this positive relationship. (e.g. Beham, Drobic and Prag, 2011, Baker, Brummelhuis, Prins and Heijden, 2011). Their studies found a significant and positive relationship between job demand and work-family conflict and thus consistent with the findings of the study.

Overall, the above findings are consistent with the result of the analysis which states that work – family conflict is positively associated with job demand. However, several other studies (for examples, Razak, Yunus and Nasuridin, 2011, Lawrence, 2013) show negative relationship between job involvement and work-family conflict.

Job Control as Moderator

H_i – Job Control moderates the relations between the division of work-family conflict and the dimensions of job control.

This hypothesis was fully supported.. The results of the analysis found that job demands increase work-family conflict while a high degree of control can reduce it (e.g. Control = $r = 0.0770$, $P < 0.001$).

Job demand and work family conflict ($r = 0.539$, $P < 0.01$). However, the model is equivocally supported. While job demands are strongly associated with work-family conflict, control has a high moderating effect. Moreover, the results support the idea that control can transform stressful demands into positive challenges. Also, the findings of the study show that control reduces work-family conflict in situation of high demands.

Job control was found to buffer the interactions between job demand and work – family conflict. This result is similar to previous studies that have shown the model’s ability to predict two – way interaction between job demands and control, (e.g. Beehr, et.al, 2001, Schaubroeck, et.al, 2000).

The fundamentals of demand-control model posit that it is not high demands in a work situation that can cause stress but rather the joint effects of the demands of a work situation and the decision making latitude (discretion) available to workers facing those demands.(Karasek, 1979: 287).

In other words, high job control and high job demand may not necessarily result in stress, rather, a situation of low control borne out of less available resources at the employees disposal.(Fernet, et.al. 2004). Thus, high job demands with low job control were associated with high levels of work interference with family resulting in work –family conflicts.(W I F).(Tarja, et.al. 2008).

Implications of the Study

Theoretical Implications

This study will be helpful in understanding the dynamism and the causes of work-family conflict. Also, job demand, in this study was found to be impactful in the work-family conflict in that it has significant and positive relationships which has been supported by previous studies. Lastly, job control as moderator of work-family conflict shows a significant relationship.

Practical Implications

The work-family conflict might have practical significant value towards organizations. Consequently, from the present study, job demand and job control are some of the interpreters of work-family conflict in that high levels of job demands with low level of job control are predictors of work-family conflict (Razak et.al, 2011; Lawrence, 2013). Also, job control as moderator shows there is less family conflict among employees in situation of high control.

Future Research

A growing body of literature is addressing the conflicts individuals experience due to work responsibilities interfering with family responsibilities and vice versa, therefore it is necessary to begin to address the known gap that exists between work/family conflicts and other variables such as job control. Past researches addressed relevant outcomes such as work-related behaviour, self-

efficacy than job control but given findings from extant literature, it seems very reasonable to further explore the relationship between work-family conflict, and job control. Furthermore, research is also needed in the area of how men's and women's experiences may differ with regards to work /family conflict.

It could also be helpful to further explore variables that may impact men and women experience of work/family conflict in other dimensions. In all, the nature of relationship between work/family conflict and job control deserves special attention in future research. Although, the present study finds that work/family conflict could be mediated by job control but longitudinal and experimental research are needed to further explore this relationships since the relative importance of job control in work/family conflict may depend on a particular outcome under the present consideration.

Limitations and Future Direction.

Several limitations have been identified in the study. In the first place, the study was conducted using cross – sectional research design limiting the data collection to one point as against the longitudinal design where the data can be collected at disparity of points that will enhance better conclusion.

Moreover, the results of this research cannot be generalized in that the larger participant was the staff of a private sector organization which might not likely be generalizable to other sectors of the economy.

Furthermore, the sample used was small. A large sample that could produce better result may be needed for further study; in order to have accurate values. Besides, similar research should be conducted in any other private organizations to get more generalized findings or results.

Conclusion

The findings of this study suggest that job demand does not necessarily result in conflict particularly when employees have control over their job responsibilities and that high control and high job demand may not necessarily lead conflicts and stress.

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