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Relations between Work-life Conflict, Job Satisfaction and Life Satisfaction among Higher Education Lecturers

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Abstract:

Research Question: The central research objective of this study was the empirical examination of the relationships between the construct of work-life conflict in terms of life satisfaction and job satisfaction. **Motivation:** Modern business environment is highly competitive and frequently demands constant participation of employees in the business tasks despite their official working hours or formal job descriptions. This practice did not spare the employees in education (Devonport, Biscoomb & Lane, 2008; Salami, 2011), although they are generally satisfied with their jobs (Jordan, Miglic, Todorovic, & Maric, 2017). A healthy work environment is that in which the individual feels comfortable and respected, both as an employee and as a person with a private life that is important for individual satisfaction. As lecturers and researchers employed in higher education institutions, we wanted to examine the work-life balance among our colleagues.

Idea: Our main idea was to empirically test a structural model that connects three constructs: work-life conflict, life satisfaction and job satisfaction among the higher education lecturers from different European countries and to determine the relationships by measuring the variables related to respondents from our target group through known and validated questionnaires. **Data:** The quantitative data for our analysis were collected through a survey of 148 online participants. The participants in this study were higher education lecturers from Austria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Serbia and Slovenia. **Tools:** Work-life conflict was measured by using The work-life conflict survey (Bohen & Viveros-Long, 1981), life satisfaction by using The satisfaction with life scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985), and job satisfaction by using The job satisfaction survey (Spector, 1997). **Findings:** The results show that work-life conflict is negatively and statistically significantly related to job satisfaction and work-life conflict is negatively and statistically significantly related to life satisfaction. Affirmative and positive experiences lead towards lower work-life conflict, which consecutively imply a work and life satisfaction among the higher education lecturers. **Contribution:** The results of our study can be used both for further research in this area and in human resource management (HRM) practice.

Keywords: work-life conflict, life, job, satisfaction, organizational behaviour, HR, management

JEL Classification: D23, E71, I23, J28, M5

1. Introduction

The present time is characterized by high competitiveness on the market and the rise of modern information technology, as well as by the demands for constant readiness of employees and long working hours. Various research indicates that as the trend towards families in which both parents work is also increasing, individuals often face the problem of how to balance all work and family commitments. The lack of time or capacity and energy of the individual leads to the so-called conflict between work and family, which has many negative consequences, including lower satisfaction at work and in life in general (Tasdelen-Karckay & Bakalým, 2017).

Work organizations can make a significant contribution to reducing work-life conflicts. A healthy working environment in which individuals feel well and respected, as employees as well as persons with a private life, contribute to higher job and life satisfaction (Lee, Grace, Sirgy, Singhapakdi & Lucianetti, 2018). Also,

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numerous studies confirm the important influence of work-conflict on the job and life satisfaction. Companies want satisfied employees because they are more committed to and engaged in the organization (Kumara & Fasana, 2018) and more productive (Soomro, Breitenecker & Shah, 2018).

As educational institutions and lecturers have a major contribution of nurturing, educating and developing new generations, their working life and job environment represent strategic issues in reaching teachers' excellence (Singh & Singh, 2015). Perceived work-life balance satisfaction is correlated negatively with intention to leave the organisation among academics (Noor, 2011).

The central research objective of the study was the empirical examination of the relationships between the construct of work-life conflict in terms of life satisfaction and job satisfaction among higher education lecturers - by empirically testing a structural model that connects these three constructs and determines the relationships. The results of the study are discussed.

2. Theoretical Review

2.1 Work-life conflict

Conflicts between work and family have recently become the subject of much discussion within organizational behaviour (Netemeyer, Boles & McMurrian, 1996). Different research show that conflicts between work and family arise when work and family matters are incompatible (Cooklin, Dinh, Strazdins, Westrupp, Leach & Nicholson, 2016; Netemeyer, Boles & McMurrian, 1996). A work-family conflict is roughly divided into time, strain and behavioural conflicts (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). The time conflict between work and family exists when the time devoted to the demands of one role makes it difficult to meet the demands of another role, the strain conflict exists when the demands of one role make it difficult to meet the demands of another role, and the behavioural one appears when behaviours required of one role make it difficult to meet the demands of another role.

In addition to the conflict of time and strain, we also find in theory two conflicts between the two spheres, namely the conflict between work and family and the conflict between family and work. The conflict between work and family is a form of role conflict in which the general demands of work and the time devoted to work influence and disturb the fulfilment of family duties. However, the conflict between family and work is a form of role conflict in which the general demands of the family and the time devoted to work influence and disrupt work performance (Netemeyer, Boles & McMurrian, 1996). In other words, this means that either work can interfere with family matters and thus affect the normal and necessary functioning of the individual, or conversely, family matters can affect the functioning of the individual at work (Sav, Harris, Sebar, 2013).

According to the analysis of the literature in the field of conflict between work and family (Michel, Kotrba, Mitchelson, Clark & Balte, 2011), the main antecedents of work-family conflict are related to the role of employee, participation in work, social support at work, work characteristics and the personality of the employee. Similarly, Ryan, Ma, Hsiao and Ku (2015) found that the most important antecedents of work-family conflict were working hours (especially weekend work), conflicts between different roles, and ambiguity or confusion of roles.

The work-family conflict has many consequences. The most important of these are job satisfaction and life satisfaction, which we will also investigate into in our research. As previous research reports show, the conflict between work and family has a negative impact on the work satisfaction of the individual (Devi and Rani, 2016; Turliuc & Buliga, 2014; Wan Rashid, Sahari Nordin, Omar & Ismail, 2012). People who work in a family-friendly work environment that supports the reduction of conflicts between work and family will be more satisfied with their work and vice versa (Zhao, Qu & Ghiselli, 2011). In addition, research findings (Goh, Iliès & Wilson, 2015; Turliuc & Buliga, 2014) also suggest that conflicts between work and family have a significant impact on the life satisfaction of individuals. Work-family conflict is of growing importance in the society due to its significant consequences for work, non-work, and personal outcomes (Kossek & Lee, 2017).

2.2 Life satisfaction

Life satisfaction is understood to be a universal feeling and attitude towards life at a particular point, ranging from negative to positive (Kashyap, Joseph & Deshmukh, 2016). It includes satisfaction with the past, with the future, and with important other views about the life of the individual (Diener, 1984). Life satisfaction is a cognitive component of subjective well-being, i.e., the individual's assessment of his or her well-being, health, friendship and partnership and satisfaction with himself or herself (Dimec, Mahnic, Marinsek, Masten & Tusak, 2008).

Diener (1984) names three main determinants of life satisfaction. The first determinant is that satisfaction is subjective, which means that the experience of satisfaction is the perception of an individual. Another determinant is that subjective satisfaction has positive criteria. And the third determinant is that subjective satisfaction involves a complete evaluation of all parameters of an individual's life.

Although life satisfaction is relatively stable at all times, various stressful life events (e.g., loss of or change of job, divorce or marriage, etc.) can have a profound impact on the long-term level of subjective well-being (Lucas, Clark, Georgellis and Diener, 2004). Research papers also report, for example, on the long-term effects of parenthood on an individual's life satisfaction (Mikucka, 2016), and point to the correlation with work-life conflict (Cazan, Truta & Pavalache-Ilie, 2019).

2.3 Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a well-researched concept, so there are many definitions. Tang, Siu, and Cheung (2014) say that employee satisfaction is roughly influenced by three relationships, namely employee-organization relations, employee-manager relations, and employee-employee relationships. Employee satisfaction is also influenced by the personality of the individual (Judge, Heller & Mount, 2002). Thus, for example, those individuals who are emotionally more stable or more prone to trust, altruism, and conformity are generally more satisfied with work than those who are less stable (Roethmann & Coetzer, 2002). The same is true of other predictor variables, such as congenial optimism and the like, which have been proven to influence increased job satisfaction (Mincu, 2015).

Increased job satisfaction is undoubtedly influenced by the work environment. Individuals who work in an environment where they feel well, are respected and valued will also be more satisfied with the work (Dimec, Mahnic, Marinsek, Masten & Tusak, 2008). Also, selfemployed are more satisfied with their job in comparison with the employees (Janicijevic & Paunovic, 2019). A good working environment for employees is greatly influenced by the leader in the organization, who needs to be understanding, friendly, show interest in and listen to employees (Robbins, 1993). Besides, the leader also influences the nature of work, fair pay, complexity, and meaningfulness of work tasks, as well as relationships among colleagues and other important factors that affect job satisfaction (Lumley, Coetzer, Tladinyane & Ferreira, 2011).

However, job satisfaction is also influenced by work-life balance policies and practices (Kamran, Zafar & Ali, 2014). It can be influenced either generally or through indicators of family demands such as the number of young children, partner employment, and similar (Saltzstein, Ting & Hall, 2001). Grandey, Cordeiro, and Michael (2007) found that organization and leadership support in work-life balance is strongly associated with job satisfaction and the level of work-family conflict. An individual needs to perceive the organization as family-friendly, as this has a significant impact on job satisfaction and also on reducing work-family conflict (Lapierre, Spector, Allen, Poelmans, Cooper, O'Driscoll, Sanchez et al., 2008). The survey (Jiang, 2012) has also showed that when leaders respected their employees as individuals with unique traits and needs, including family, and treated them differently but fairly, employees perceived a high level of trust, dedication, satisfaction, and reciprocity.

Good knowledge of job satisfaction is not only important for the employee but also for leaders of organizations and the organization itself, as more satisfied employees are also more productive employees (Keles, 2015), which is the goal of all organizations. Employee's job satisfaction is an important indicator of organizational effectiveness (Roethmann & Coetzer, 2002). Satisfaction is reflected in greater stability, discipline, accountability and a greater workforce (Hajdukova, Klementova & Klementova, 2015), and the chances of employees being employed will be reduced (Morrison, 2008). Satisfied employees are also productive employees, therefore managers need to recognize the needs and desires of employees, including in terms of family life obligations, to increase employee satisfaction (Saari & Judge, 2014).

3. Research Sample and Methodology

3.1 Research setting and participants

The participants in this study were higher education lecturers from Austria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Serbia and Slovenia. The full set of questionnaires was completed by a total of 148 participants, which represent our sample, of whom 60 (40.5%) were men and 84 (56.8%) were women and 4 (2.7) did not answer this question. According to the marital status of respondents: 90 (60.8%) were married, 3 (2.0%)

were engaged to be married, 8 (5.4%) were divorced, 29 (19.6%) were in a committed relationship, 14 (9.5%) were single and 4 (2.7%) did not answer this question. We have also asked about the number of children (under the age of 18), where 65 (43.9%) had none, 40 (27.0%) had one child, 32 (21.6%) had two children, 7 (4.7%) had three children and four did not respond.

According to the educational level of respondents: 3 (2.0%) had a B.Sc. or B.A., 27 (18.2%) had a M.Sc. or MBA, and 113 (76.4%) had a Ph.D. (five did not respond). According to their academic ranks 21 (14.2%) were teaching assistants, 14 (9.5%) were research assistants, 52 (35.1%) were assistant professors, 31 (20.9%) were associate professors, 25 (16.9%) were full professors and five did not respond.

According to work status, 125 (84.5%) had a full time job, 9 (6.1%) were in part time employment, 8 (5.4%) worked per contract, one was self-employed and five did not answer. The average age of respondents was 38.23 years for the 144 who replied to this question. The average years of work experience in higher education was 15.35 and the average years of work experience overall was 19.13.

3.2 Instruments

Work-life conflict was measured by using The Work-life conflict survey, a 16-item scale developed by Bohlen and Viveros-Long (1981). The response scale was a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). The coefficient of reliability (Cronbach's alpha) was 0.752, respectively.

Life satisfaction was measured by using The satisfaction with life scale – SWLS, a five item scale developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen in Griffin (1985). The response scale was a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). The coefficient of reliability (Cronbach's alpha) was 0.868, respectively.

Job satisfaction was measured by using JSS (Job Satisfaction Survey), a thirty-six-item scale developed by Spector (1997). The response scale was a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). The coefficient of reliability (Cronbach's alpha) was 0.633, respectively.

Empirical research on work-life conflict, life satisfaction and job satisfaction was performed by a survey method. To obtain data, we designed an online questionnaire, which was sent via e-mail in spring 2019. After conducting online research, primary data were controlled and edited. For processing and analysing data, we used the IBM SPSS Statistics 24. Descriptive statistics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Means and standard deviations of construct elements

Construct	M	SD
Work-life conflict	3.095	0.565
Job satisfaction	3.193	0.306
Life satisfaction	3.692	0.813

4. Results and Discussion

The empirical part of our research is based on quantitative research, for which the data were collected through our survey. In continuation, we present a method to test the model by applying structural equation modelling (SEM), which is used for testing structural relations between constructs. That operation was conducted by building a model in Lisrel 8.80 software package, which is an analytical statistics program, which allows the testing of multiple structural relations at once (Prajogo & McDermott, 2005). It combines factor and regression analyses by which it tests the proposed model so we can assess the significance of hypothesized cause-and-effect relations among the variables (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000). The standardized solutions and t-values for the hypotheses tested in the model are presented in Figure 1.

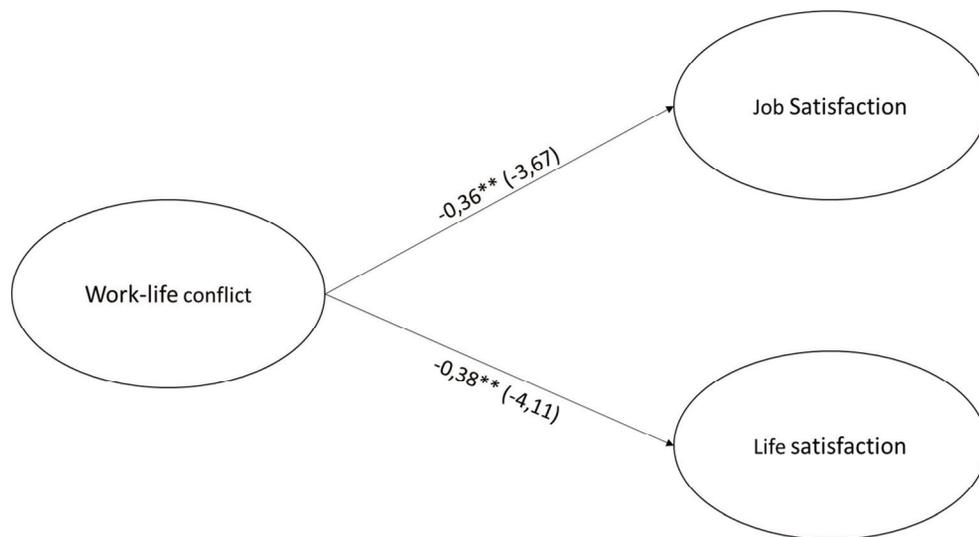


Figure 1: Standardized solutions (and t-test) for the hypothesis

Standardised solution weights and t-test values between the work-life conflict and life satisfaction and between work-life conflict and job satisfaction are presented in the model in Figure 1. We can therefore, with the use of structural equation modelling, confirm negative relations between the researched constructs. The work-life conflict is negatively and statistically significantly related to job satisfaction, and the work-life conflict is negatively and statistically significantly related to life satisfaction, as we hypothesised based on the literature review.

The fit indices of the structural model are as presented in Table 2. We wanted to test the relations between the constructs in this model, both of which are statistically significant according to the t-test values. The whole model shows statistical significance of P-value=0.00000.

Table 2: Model fit indices

Fit indices	Value for the model
2/df	2.3013
RMSEA	0.094
NFI	0.657
NNFI	0.770
CFI	0.778
IFI	0.780
SRMR	0.110

The value of parameters directs that the model ought to have better indices. One explanation can be its simple structure, as we kept only two major variables, despite the results of previous research that identifies various other factors that could be included (Amish & Singh, 2019). On the other hand, we intended to focus only on higher education lecturers and main components of work-life conflict that are recognized in the literature, which is why we decided to use the presented construct, and not a more comprehensive one.

Our decision to accept the model despite these values of fit indices was motivated by previous research where models with similar results were used as suitable. Although generally acceptable value of RMSEA for good model is below 0.5 (Byrne, 2010; Schumacker & Lomax, 2004), Brown and Cudeck (1993) suggest that values higher than 0.05 can indicate a fair fit, while MacCallum, Browne and Sugawara (1996) consider values in the range of 0.08 to 0.10 to indicate a mediocre fit. Having that in mind, we chose not to reject the model in spite of the fact that fit indices are not as expected. Some future research related to this topic should include either a larger sample or more variables in the construct, in order to improve model fit indices.

This article provides general conclusions based on the analysis of the whole sample, without the differentiation between certain demographic aspects, due to the sample size. Nevertheless, further research should definitely include such clustering, as previous research shows the influence of various demographic

variables on work-life conflict. For example, Gilmaghani and Tabvuma (2019) point that women in management and education are found to have a lower work-life balance satisfaction than their male counterparts. When it comes to age, Kumar and Deo (2011) point out that junior college teachers experienced significantly more stress on most of the dimensions of stress in comparison with senior teachers. Marital status and parenthood can also impact work-life conflict among lecturers (Atteh, Martin, Oduro, Mensah, & Gyamfi, 2020; Karkoulian & Halawi, 2007; Kim & Kim, 2017). This is particularly important in case the employees perceive family responsibility discrimination by their supervisor, as they experience increased emotional exhaustion and work-life conflict in such cases (Trzebiatowski & del Carmen Triana, 2020). Aligning work and private life is a significant challenge for young academics because of demanding working conditions, and it is particularly strong in case of young female academics due to growing family responsibilities (Dorenkamp & Suß, 2017). Considering the data we collected, we can also test the influence of the position in the academic hierarchy and title on the results generated by our model.

Finally, another direction for further research can also be a cross cultural analysis. In this paper, the main limitation for such study was the size of our sample, despite having respondents from six countries. Although we did not see significant differences among participants from different countries, the sample was too small to provide valid conclusion in that area, so this topic should definitely be additionally investigated into, as some previous research already points to potential dissimilarities (Bayraktaroglu, Atay, Ilhan & Mustafayeva, 2019).

Conclusion

With the proposed hypothesis, based on previous research and in-depth studies of the relevant literature, empirical evidence was collected on the relationships between work-life conflict, job satisfaction and life satisfaction, which were lacking in the study and are highlighted in this study. The results are interpreted as follows: With decreasing work-life conflict, job satisfaction and life satisfaction increase. Positive experiences therefore lead to a lower work-life conflict, which in turn leads to a work and life satisfaction of the higher education lecturers.

The study was focused mostly on how higher education lecturers' work-life conflict relates to their job satisfaction and life satisfaction, whereas other determinants were not considered, and there are also other factors involved in achieving job satisfaction and life satisfaction. In the future, it would also make sense to identify the precursors of conflict between work and family, especially at the level of organization and demographic characteristics of the individual, and the consequences of job and life satisfaction concerning the organization, such as employee commitment, engagement, absenteeism and the like.

The theoretical contribution of this study is in the existing research into work-life conflict in relation to job satisfactions as well as into life satisfaction in the aspect of advancing previous research by empirically examining the relations between them. The practical contribution is in the presented results that the relations are also present in the case of higher education lecturers, which can be useful for decision makers and human resource managers in higher education institutions when developing human resource policies. In the future we suggest that employees in economic organizations should be included as well, in order to gain a broader insight into studying the connection between work-life conflict and individual satisfaction.

The broad scientific and professional interest in the constructs relating to work-life conflict, job satisfaction and life satisfaction is growing as global competition increases rapidly and management expresses the need for such research; and our research can complement these studies. The work-life conflict plays a remarkable role in the sustainability of organizations through their employees.

Undoubtedly, a reduced conflict between work and family is an important factor for both individuals and the organization. Work-life balance practices create the so called "win-win" situation for both employees and the organization, as satisfied employees are also more productive employees, and at the same time enhance the quality of life of the individual. A key question for organizations, therefore, should be how to promote the improvement of employee performance in individual roles and prevent the conflict between work and other life roles.

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