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**I can Better Perform if I get Paid More: The Moderating Role of Income  
on the Relationship between Work Family Conflict and Employee  
Performance**

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**Abstract**

Seminal research studies carried out in the sphere of work family conflict lent credence to the notion that work family conflict is a deleterious factor damaging employee performance at work. Consequently, this study close looked at moderating role of income in negating the negative relationship between work family conflict and employee performance. Using random sampling techniques, a total of 124 employees working in apparel industry located in Trincomalee district were selected. Data were garnered using self-administrated questionnaire. Results revealed that the level of income moderated the relationship between work family conflict and employee performance such the negative relationship between work family conflict and employee performance is stronger at low level of income, nonetheless, negative relationship was negated at high level of income. Needless to say, this study makes theoretical contribution to the frontiers of work family conflict and proffers practical implications and would serve as a springboard for future research studies.

**Keywords:** Apparel Industry, Employee Performance, Work Family Conflict

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**Introduction**

The work family conflict research typically focuses on the difficulties employees have in balancing their work and family responsibilities (Adams, King & King 1996). The interest in work and family research studies has been fuelled by its negative consequences over the individual and the organization (Aryee 1992; Frone, Russell & Cooper 1992; Thomas & Ganster 1995). Previous studies have found that work family conflict affects the most of the employee's self-development and career advancement (Jayaweera 2005), absenteeism, tardiness, and poor work performance (Greenhaus & Beutell 1985; Frone, Russell & Cooper 1997), lower levels of general well-being (Aryee 1992; Frone, Russell & Cooper 1992), lower levels of job satisfaction (Adams, King & King 1996; Jayaweera 2005; Grandey, Cordeiro & Crouter 2005; Jayaweera 2007), higher levels of burnout (Burke 1988), and more alcohol use and poorer health (Frone, Russell & Cooper 1997), lower performance and leave the organization (e.g Kossek & Ozeki 1998). Of late, economic, social, technological and global changes have become a breeding ground for incubating work family imbalance. Needless to say, the issue of work family conflict is more prevalent today than ever before. Thus, the subject of how work/family conflict can be balanced has received significant attention to academics, employers, workers, politicians and the media.

In a nutshell, it is a pronounced notion that work family conflict plays as a militating factor against the success and survival of the organizations. Consequently, this study was designed to investigate whether the income employee received is as the means of alleviating the effect of work family conflict on employee performance. By construct, this scholarship is a novelty and extends the previous research by examining the moderating role of income on the relationship between work family conflict and employee performance.

### **Theoretical Underpinning**

Work family conflict is originated from role theory developed 50 years ago (Kahn et al. 1964) and it is defined by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) as “a form of interrole conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respects” (p.77). Therefore, the interrole conflict occurs when participation in one role consumes more resources (e.g., working long hours), which is incompatible with performance of another role (say leaving less time available for performing family role). Over the course of past five decades, the conceptualisation of work family conflict has been changed. In 1980s, work family conflict was considered as a “unidirectional and one dimensional construct” by many researchers (e.g., Kopelman, Greenhaus & Connolly 1983; Cooke & Rousseau 1984; Bedeian, Burke & Moffett 1988), nonetheless, during the 1990s, the unidirectional model of work family conflict was replaced by a bidirectional model in terms of the sources of the conflict: work to family conflict (work interference with family) and family to work conflict (family interference with work) (e.g., Gutek, Searle & Klepa 1991; Frone, Russell & Cooper 1992; Williams & Alliger 1994; Netemeyer, Boles & McMurrian 1996; Kelloway, Gottlieb & Barham 1999; Carlson, Kacmar & Williams 2000). Based on the seminal study of Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), Carlson, Kacmar and Williams (2000) brought the constructs of directions and dimensions together in a six dimensional model of WFC: work to family conflict including three forms (time- based, strain-based and behaviour- based) and family to work conflict including three forms (time-based, strain-based and behaviour-based). *Time-based conflict* refers to “time spent on activities within one role generally cannot be devoted to activities within another role” (Greenhaus and Beutell 1985, p.77) and *Strain-based conflict* is defined as “roles are incompatible in the sense that the strain created by one makes it difficult to comply with the demands of another” (Greenhaus & Buetell 1985, p. 80). The third form of work family conflict defined by Greenhaus and Buetall (1985) is behaviour-based conflict, in which “specific patterns of in-role behaviors may be incompatible with expectations regarding behavior in another role” (p.81). Consequently, work to family conflict is used to describe conflict that is perceived to originate in the work domain and family to work conflict is used to describe conflict that is perceived to originate in the family domain.

Therefore, work family conflict is blended with spill-over and cross-over nature in situ. The spill-over is an intra-individual transmission of emotions/attitudes/ stress/worries from one domain (say, work) to another domain (family), nonetheless, cross-over is dyadic and an inter-individual transmission (Westman 2001). What was sheering fact is that intrusion of

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mutual work and family roles cause serious negative consequences to individual, family and organisation. Inter alia, the crux of the problem is the employee performance that would damage both organisational performance and individual career aspiration. Albeit many seminal studies found that work family conflict affects employee performance (e.g. Ashfaq, Mahmood & Ahmad 2013; Yavas, Babakus & Karatepe 2008; Baum, 2007; Karatepe & Kilic 2007; Van Steenbergen, Ellemers & Mooijaart 2007; Brownell 1998; Frone, Russell & Cooper 1997; Aryee 1992; Kossek & Nichol 1992), level of income reported as a motivator for the employee performance in many studies (e.g. Wholey 1983). The level of pay is strongly dependent on justice theory: distributive justice (what they get) and procedural justice (how it is given) (e.g., Sweeney & McFarlin 1993; Colquitt et al. 2001). A few studies conducted in the past have established positive linkage between pay level and work family conflict (e.g., Boyar et al. 2008; Bhave, Kramer & Glomb 2013). Resultant nature of income leading to the thrust of the argument is that levels of income will moderate the relationship between work family conflict and employee performance. It can thus be hypothesised that level of income moderates the relationship between work family conflict and employee performance such the negative relationship between work family conflict and employee performance will be stronger at low level of income than those received higher level of income.

## **Methods**

### ***Subjects***

Subjects for this study were chosen from employees working in apparel industries located in Trincomalee district. The required numbers of respondents were selected in terms of the total number of employees working in each apparel industry. Eventually, using a random sampling technique, a total of 200 questionnaires were issued. Of them, 166 questionnaires were returned (83%), nonetheless, only 124 questionnaires were found to be usable (62%). Sample made up of 67.7% ( $N=84$ ) females and 32.3% of males ( $N=40$ ). The level of income was grouped into low level and high level. 3.17% of employees were identified as low level of income earners and remaining 62.9% were the high level of income earners.

### ***Measures***

Multidimensional/directional measure of work family conflict questionnaire developed by Carlson, Kacmar and Williams (2000) was used to measure work family conflict. Eighteen (18) questions composed the measure including three items for each dimension and both direction (work to family conflict and family to work conflict): time, strain and behaviour. Using a 5-point Likert scale, participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with each item. The responses range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 strongly agree. An example of an item from the time based work to family conflict scale was, "The time I must devote to my job keeps me from participating equally in household responsibilities and activities" An example item from the time based family to work conflict scale was, "The time I spend on family responsibilities often interferes with my work responsibilities". In the current study, the Chronbach alpha for work family conflict was 0.81. Similarly, employee performance was measured using self-reported measure consisting

of six questions with a choice of a five-point Likert scale from “much worse” (1) to “Much better (5). Items include, for example; how do you rate the quality of your own work, It took me longer to complete my work task than intended and all in all I am performing well. In the current study, the Chronbach alpha for employee performance was 0.79.

**Results and Discussion**

In this study, level of income has been hypothesised as a moderator of the relationship between work family conflict and employee performance. More precisely, the negative relationship between work family conflict and employee performance will be stronger at low level of income than at high level of income. The results of the moderator analysis are presented in Table 1.

Table No 1: Level of Income as a Moderator between Work Family Conflict and Employee Performance

	<i>b</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	6.31 (5.38, 7.24)	.47	13.41	p < .05
Level of income	-3.28 (-4.58, -1.99)	.66	-5.01	p < .05
Work family conflict	-.77 (-1.03, -.51)	.13	-5.86	p < .05
Work family conflict x Level of income	1.01 (0.67, 1.41)	.19	5.60	p = .0000
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> =.2847, <i>MSE</i> =.3986, <i>F</i> (3,120)=15.91, <i>p</i> =.0000				

As shown in Table 1, the interaction term (work family conflict x level of income) is significant, *b* = 1.01, 95 % CI (.67, 1.41), *t* = 5.60, *p* < .05 revealing that the relationship between work family conflict and employee performance is moderated by level of income. Further, a slope analysis was conducted to understand the nature of moderating effect.

The result of the conditional effect of work family conflict on employee performance at low and high level of income is presented in Table 2.

Table No 2: The Result of the Conditional Effect of Work Family Conflict on Employee Performance at Levels of Income

Conditional effect of X on Y at Values of the Moderator

Level of income	Effect	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	LLCI	ULCI
.0000	-.7686	.1312	-5.8580	.0000	-1.0283	-.5088
1.0000	.2749	.1321	2.0813	.0395	.0134	.5363

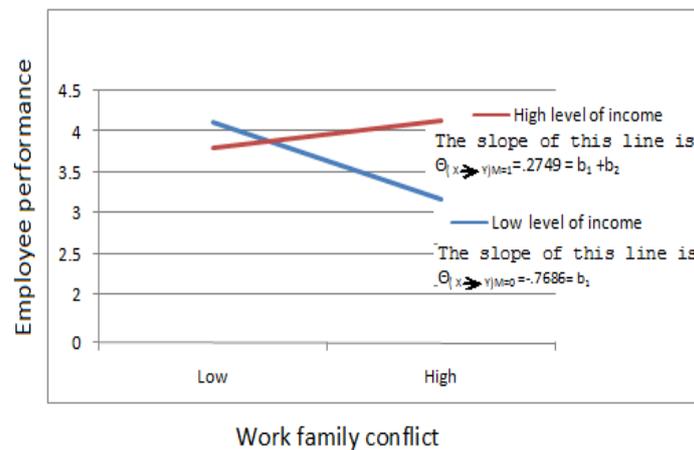
As can be seen from Table 2, results show two different regressions: the regression for work family conflict as a predictor of employee performance (1) when level of income is low (the level of income is noted as .0000); (2) at the high level of income (the level of income is noted as 1.0000). When level of income is low, there is a negative relationship between work family conflict and employee performance, *b* = -.77, 95 % CI (-1.02, -.51), *t* = -5.85, *p* < 0.05 whilst at high level of income, the relationship between work family conflict and employee performance is significantly positive *b* = .27, 95 % CI (.01, .54), *t* = 2.08, *p* < 0.05. Overall, results revealed that there is a significant negative relationship between work family conflict and employee performance at low level of income, nonetheless at high level of income the

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negative relationship between work family conflict and employee performance is statistically significantly became positive.

The analysis produces data for visualising conditional effect of work family conflict on employee performance. Results reported in terms of four conditions: low level of income/ low work family conflict, low level of income / high work family conflict, high level of income/ low work family conflict, high level of income / high work family conflict. For all four conditions predicted scores of employee performance were estimated. The results are depicted in Figure 1.

Figure No 1: Graphical Presentation of Levels of Income as a Moderator between Work Family Conflict and Employee Performance



From Figure 1, it can be seen that at low level of work family conflict, employees show a slightly greater amount of employee performance at low level of income than at high level of income. Nonetheless, at high level of work family conflict, employees report higher performance at high level of income than low level of income.

In overall, significant results revealed that level of income at all levels moderates relationship between work family conflict and employee performance. The negative relationship between work family conflict and employee performance found in many studies (e.g. Ashfaq, Mahmood & Ahmad 2013; Yavas, Babakus & Karatepe 2008; Baum 2007; Karatepe & Kilic 2007; Van Steenbergen, Ellemers & Mooijaart 2007) has turned into positive nature at high level of income. Consequently, the hypothesis that the level of income moderates the relationship between work family conflict and employee performance is supported.

## Conclusion

The overriding important of this research study is the notion that the negative consequence of work family conflict towards employee performance can be ameliorated by the level of income employees received at apparel industries. This nature of relationship leads to proffer the crux of practical implication that organisations should pay magnificent attention on the

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level of pay when employees become negatively entangled in their work and family roles execution. Moreover, this study made a unique contribution to the frontier of work family literature as it focused on moderating role of income of the relationship between work family conflict and employee performance in apparel industries. Elaborately, this research has thrown new light on the role income in alleviating harmful effect of the work family conflict on employee performance. Albeit the research has provided useful insights and contributions to work family conflict, there were some limitations noted. The major limitation was the cross sectional research design that makes it difficult to definitely identify causal relationships and therefore firm conclusions. Moreover, a more detailed study across organisations, occupations and nations with similar culture is warranted for further validation, replication and generalisation.

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