



## IMPACT OF WORK LIFE CONFLICT ON TURNOVER INTENTION

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### KeyWords

Apparel Industry, Sewing Machine Operators, Sri Lanka, Turnover Intention, Work Life Conflict.

### ABSTRACT

Apparel industry is considered as one of the biggest industries in Sri Lanka. However, longer working hours, tighter deadlines and changes in family structure increased the employee responsibilities. Therefore, balance of the work life and family life is a big challenge for employees in the apparel industry. As employees are assets to the organization, apparel companies always try to avoid losing their key performers. Therefore, they provide employees attractive benefits for retaining them. However, employee turnover has become a critical problem for this industry. Therefore, to face that situation, managers of the organizations should give a vital attention on employees' work life conflicts. Hence this study examined the impact of work life conflict on turnover intention among sewing machine operators in the manufacturing apparel companies at Export Processing Zone Koggala. This study empirically evaluated two work life dimensions (Work interference with Family conflicts and Family interference with work conflicts) and their impact on turnover intention. The sample consisted of one hundred sewing machine operators in apparel manufacturing enterprises at Export Processing Zone Koggala. Primary data were gathered through an adopted questionnaire scales developed by Netemeyer, Boles and McMurrian, (1996); Mobley et al., (1978). Descriptive analysis, correlation analysis and regression analysis were used as data analysis techniques. The research findings revealed that significant positive relationship between worklife conflict and turnover intention. Further it was revealed that variance in turnover intention was significantly explained by the two work life conflict dimensions. Further it showed that family interference with work as the most influencing dimension on turnover intention. The findings of the study would be important to the human resources managers of the Apparel industry to develop strategies to minimise work life conflict.

## INTRODUCTION

The most valuable asset of any organization is the human resource and some of the world class organizations have gained competitive advantage through their most valuable human resources (Khan, 2014). Barney & Wright (1997) stated that the firm's people are its most important asset. Therefore employees are considered as the indispensable asset of every organization to obtain the organization's expected success (Barney & Wright, 1997). The importance of human collaboration is imperative as organizations are made up of people, not technology or structure of that organization (Khan et al., 2014). However, at the same time organizations face a severe challenge in retaining these invaluable resources. Hence, obviously top priority of any organization is to retain its human resources and adopt appropriate strategies from time to time in this direction. Therefore, employee retention is a must to obtain the organizational expected growth.

One of the major problems faced by the organizations is that their employees are leaving the organization because of the imbalance of work life (Khan, 2014). This is clearly apparent in the apparel manufacturing industry in Sri Lanka. The annual average turnover rate of the organizations located within the Koggala Export Processing Zone (KEPZ) was around 45% according to the BOI sources (Employment Statistics and Job Bank Registers, 2016). Turnover intention in apparel industry exists at a considerable level (Dheerasinghe, 2009; Labour force survey, 2013). Specially Apparel Industries in the Asia face the challenge of retaining their machine operators for a long time and increase the rate of TI (Khatrri et al., 1999).

Sewing machine operators attached to the apparel industries are well paid- very much above the wages stipulated by the Labour Department, but apparel industries often encounter issues of retaining them for periods longer than about 1 ½ years. This was evident clearly when scrutinizing the records of handling grievances of sewing machine operators at the Board of Investment in Export Processing Zone at Koggala, for the past 5 years. Dheerasinghe, (2009) stated that high labor turnover is one of the major challenges facing in Sri Lankan apparel industry.

The Work Life Conflict (WLC) of employees are challenging for both employees and organizations for smooth functioning of operations. It disturbs the employees' involvements at work place as well as home activities, and creates problems at the family life and work life. Most of the researchers in the field of WLC have covered banking and pharmaceutical organizations and insurance industry, (Erkmen & Esen, 2014; Naeem et al., 2013; Ghayyur & Jamal, 2012). Only few investigated the apparel manufacturing industries in foreign countries (Wang, 2006). However, there is scarcity of researches that examine the impact of WLC on TI in the Apparel industry in Sri Lankan Context. Hence this study is an attempt to examine the impact of work life conflicts (WLC) on turnover intention of sewing machine operators' in apparel industry.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the relationship between WIF and TI of sewing machine operators in apparel manufacturing enterprises in the EPZK.
2. To examine the relationship between FIW and TI of sewing machine operators in apparel manufacturing enterprises in the EPZK.
2. To examine the impact of WLC on TI of sewing machine operators in apparel manufacturing enterprises in the EPZK.
3. To identify the most significant WLC factor that affect the TI of sewing machine operators in apparel manufacturing enterprises in the EPZK.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the relationship between WIF and TI of sewing machine operators in apparel manufacturing enterprises in the EPZK?
2. What is the relationship between FIW and TI of sewing machine operators in apparel manufacturing enterprises in the EPZK?
3. What is the impact of WLC on TI of sewing machine operators in apparel manufacturing enterprises in the EPZK?
4. What is the most significant WLC factor that affect to TI of sewing machine operators in apparel manufacturing enterprises in the EPZK?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of WLC can be categorized into Work Interference with Family (WIF) and Family Interference with Work (FIW). Gutek, Searle, & Klepa, (1991) have explored the consequences of WLC in work and family contexts. Gutek, Searle, and Klepa, (1991) also identified the bi-directionality of WLC, such as conflict can occur the form of work interfering with family (WIF) or the form of family interfering with work (FIW).

## WORK INTERFERENCE WITH FAMILY (WIF)

Greenhaus & Beutell (1985) stated that work life conflict occurs when there are too many responsibilities of work and home imbalance of the life of an employee. Work family conflict (WFC) is a form of inter role conflict in which the general demands of time devoted and strain created by the job interfere with performing family-related responsibilities (Netemeyer et al., (1996). Byron, (2005) found that work related variables had a greater impact on turnover intention (TI) than on FIW variables. In this study work-to-family conflict was assessed using the five items adopted from the scale developed by Netemeyer et al. (1996). They are work demand, Job Stress, organizational support, time spent at work and work involvement.

### **WORK DEMAND**

Insufficient time is a major problem to work and family stress (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Spector et al., (2004), identified a positive weak relationship among working hours and work family conflict. Byron, (2005) observed that shift work and working overtime are also related to the WLC.

### **JOB STRESS**

Work stress is composed of role conflict, role vagueness, role strain, and other dimensions. Most of WFC research models regard role conflict, role vagueness, and role strain as important influential variables. Each of these stress sources may influence WFC (Grzywacz, J. G., & Marks, N. F., 2000).

### **ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT**

Social support could ease off the adverse impacts of life pressure, and further personal adaptation to livelihood. There are three major sources of social support namely organizational support, support of the colleagues and support of the family members. Among them, organizational support is the best kind of social support to employees' work life because organizations control employees' promotions, pay increases and improvement in working conditions significantly (Mokaya, et al., 2013). Beehr, (1985) also claimed that organizational support is very important to subordinates owing to employers' authority to help and support them.

### **TIME SPENT AT WORK**

To the extent that employees perceive that they will garner rewards for time spent working and/or believe that their supervisors expect them to work long hours, they will be likely to spend long hours at work (Smith, 2002). In addition, Thompson, Beauvais, and Lyness, (1999) found a significant correlation between organizational time expectations and employee work hours.

### **WORK INVOLVEMENT**

Workload in the study will be measured by working hours and type of the job. Working hours are defined as number of hours per week an employee work. The normal working hours in most of the countries around the world is 35-37.5-hour work per week (Journal of Business and Management, 2012). However, most of the western countries are now practicing flexible working hours. It is a variable work schedule in which employees can choose when they work, subject to achieving total daily, weekly or monthly hours. Type of job is the second variable to measure workload. In this study, sewing machine operators' position to this variable is examined. Most of the time they perform duties to meet production target dates of shipment schedules. The intensity of work may differ at different orders of various destinations in the world.

### **FAMILY INTERFERENCE WITH WORK (FIW)**

Family to work conflict is an inter role conflict where the participation of individual in the family role make it hard to participate in the work role (Dixon and Bruening, 2005). Work-family conflicts are bidirectional in which employment demands interfere with family demands, tasks or responsibilities. Further family care responsibilities interference with work related responsibilities create some unwanted results like stress, poor health and turnover (Muhammad, 2012). Most of the family demands involving in caring and completing needs of married employee's children. Rothausen, (1999) stated that number of dependent children is an objective indicator of the level of family demands. Lu et al., (2008) and Herman & Gyllstrom, (1997) revealed that married one's experience of FWC is higher than single once. In this study family-to-work conflict was assessed using the five items adopted from the scale developed by Netemeyer et al., (1996). They are family demand, family stress, family support, time spent with family and family involvement.

### **FAMILY DEMAND**

Most of the family demands involving in caring and completing needs of married employee's children. Rizwan, (2014) stated that number of dependent children is an objective indicator of the level of family demands. Lu et al., (2008) and Hochschild (1997) revealed that married one's experience of FWC is higher than single once.

### **FAMILY STRESS**

The individual, who spends a lot of time on family and takes on more exceptions as family role, will feel lack of working time and energy. High-level family demand may require individuals spend more time on family affair, which causes the related stress increases and spills over to work role, and thus increase FIW (Parasurman et al., 2001). Research showed overload of parents' role has significantly positive correlation with WIF and FIW (Frone, et al., 1997).

### **FAMILY SUPPORT**

With reference to the Keith and Schafer, (1980) husbands' working hours are positively related to wives' FWC. Also, husbands of female managers or professionals experienced higher FIW conflict (Greenhaus & Kopelman, 1981), because these women dedicated more time to their careers, thus constraining their spouses to share more home care responsibilities

### TIME SPENT WITH FAMILY

Greater the individuals' non-job responsibilities are (e.g., house cleaning, child care, elder care), the less time they are likely to spend at work as to the Smith et al., (2002). Frone et al., (1997) concluded that spouse assistance with non-job duties was negatively related to family time. This suggests that individuals who have help with non-work responsibilities may spend less time on family duties and may have more time available for work. The relationship between non-job responsibilities and time at work, however, has not yet been examined.

### FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

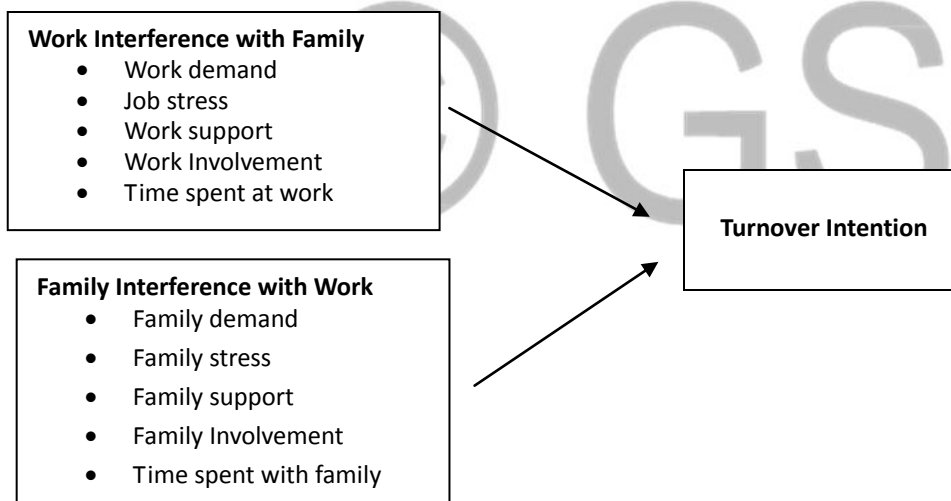
Carlson and Kacmar, (2000) found that employees who were more involved or immersed in the family domain experienced more family interference with work conflict. Greenhaus, Parasuraman, and Collins, (2001) found a positive relationship between family involvement and work-family conflict, a relationship that was stronger for males than females.

### TURNOVER INTENTION

Turnover at work place has received attention by many researchers (Richer, Blanchard and Vallerandi, 2002; Williams, 2003). The employees' turnover intention (TI) finally cause the actual turnover that influence organizational costs in terms of recruitment, selection and training. Dougherty, Bluedorn et al., (1985). Turnover is the volunteer intention of employees to have intent to leave the organization. Many researchers have found positive relationship with WLC and TI (Noor & Maad, 2008; Ghayyur and Jamal, 2012 and Layne, Hohenshil, and Singh et al., 2001), while some are negative on relationship between WLC and JS (Riley 2006). Some researchers have found two forms of WLCs that have positive impacts on TI (Noor & Maad, 2008; Ghayyur and Jamal, 2012 and Layne, Hohenshil & Singh, 2001; Aryee et al., 2005; Grandey et al., 2005), and some researchers have found a positive path coefficient from WIF to FIW using a full measurement model.

### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Source: Netemeyer, Boles and McMurrian, (1996).

Based on the above conceptual model, following two research hypotheses have been developed for this study.

**H1: There is a significant positive relationship between Work Interference with Family Conflict and Turnover Intention.**

**H2: There is a significant positive relationship between Family Interference with Work Conflict and Turnover Intention.**

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As this study investigated the impact of work life conflict on turnover intention of sewing machine operators at EPZK, it refers to descriptive research design and unit of analysis of this study is individual. Twelve Apparel manufacturing companies have been operated under Board of investment within the EPZK. There are 11649 employees working there. Sample consisted of 100 Sewing Machine Operators (SMOs) selected through simple random sample technique. Data was collected through a self administrated structured questionnaire.

## DATA ANALYSIS

**Table 1: Composition of the Sample**

	Frequency	(%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	29	29
Female	71	71
<b>Age</b>		
18-25	31	31
26-35	30	30
36-44	21	21
Above 45	18	18
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	64	64
Unmarried	36	36
<b>Spouse Employed</b>		
yes	54	54
No	10	10
<b>Number of Children</b>		
None	5	7.8
One	25	39.1
Two	26	40.6
Three	8	12.5
<b>Age of the Youngest Child</b>		
Less than 3 years	40	67.8
3 – 5 Years	12	20.33
5-10 Years	5	8.47
10-15 Years	2	3.4
<b>Work Experiences</b>		
Less than 1 year	14	14
1-2 Years	33	33
2-5 Years	16	16
5-10 Years	21	21
More than ten years	16	16

Source: Survey Data, 2017.

Table 2 shows the results of reliability test for the variables. Results show that internal consistency of items to the concept is good since all Alpha values are more than 0.8.

**Table 2: Reliability Statistics for the Variables**

Variables	No of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Work Interfere with Family Conflict (WIF)	5	0.887
Family Interfere with Work Conflict (FIW)	5	0.808
Turn over Intention (TI)	3	0.896

## HYPOTHESES TESTING

**Table 3: Results of the Correlation Analysis**

Dimension	Correlation Coefficient	P-value
WIF with TI	0.673**	0.000
FIW with TI	0.783**	0.000
WLC with TI	0.806**	0.000

\*\* . Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 3 illustrates the results of correlation analysis for the independent and dependent variables of this study. Table 3 reveals that correlation between WIF and TI is 0.673 ( $p = 0.000$ ) which suggests that there is a significant positive relationship between WIF and TI. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 that there is a significant positive relationship between WIF conflict and TI is accepted.

Correlation between FIW and TI is 0.783 ( $p = 0.000$ ) which implies that there is a significant positive relationship between family interference with work conflict and turnover intention. Therefore, the second hypothesis that there is a significant positive relationship between FIW conflict and TI is accepted. Correlation between all the dimensions of WLC and TI is 0.806 ( $p = 0.000$ ). It indicates that there is a significant positive relationship between work life conflict variable and turnover intention.

## IMPACT OF WORK LIFE CONFLICT FACTORS ON TURNOVER INTENTION

**Table 4: Aggregate Impact of the WLC factors**

R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. error of the estimate	F	Sig.
0.809	0.655	0.648	0.48127	92.067	0.000

Source: Survey data, 2017.

The F value is 92.067 ( $P = 0.000$ ). It suggests that two independent variables (FIW and WIF) have significantly explained the 65% of the variance in TI.

**Table 5: Results of Regression Analysis**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B ( $\beta$ )	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-0.102	0.314		-0.326	0.042
WIF	0.402	0.117	0.274	3.436	0.001
FIW	0.625	0.083	0.601	7.541	0.000

Source: Survey Data, 2017.

Family interference with work conflicts (FIW) has emerged as the most significant variable in explaining the turnover intention ( $t = 7.541$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ). As the results of regression analysis, family interference with work conflicts had the strongest effect on turnover intention of sewing machine operators in EPZK with a standardized beta of 0.601.

## Conclusion

The results of this study revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between dimensions of WLC and turnover intention. This result is consistent with Noor & Maad, 2008; Haar & Roche, 2010; Ghayyur & Jamal, 2012; Alsam, et al., 2013; Erkmen & Esen, 2014; Khan, et al., 2014; Long, Tan, Azami, & Fei, 2016. Family interfere with work conflict (FIW) emerged as the most significant variable that affect the turnover intention of SMOs at the EPZK.

Since the respondents for the research was limited to 100 sewing machine operators in 12 apparel manufacturing enterprises in EPZ at koggala, It is suggested that researchers need to pay more attention to different other industries in future studies of work life balance on turnover intention. As well as, further research can be conducted to examine the impact of WLC factors on company performance, productivity, etc. Moreover, future research can focus on exploring the relationship of work-family conflict with organizational commitment, job performance, and other related variables. Further, researcher was recommended to consider other factors like training, motivation, job satisfaction as mediator to determine the mediation effect between WLC and TI.

Based on the findings of this study it is suggested that Board of Governors (BOG) / Directors (BOD) should be sensitive to this issue of WLC. Managers should consider about work place support which can give for machine operators who has faced family issues

(Ghayyur & Jamal, 2012). It is further suggested that family related remuneration, work off opportunities for individuals to spend appropriate time with family, adequate maternity leave for females, child care programs, more financial and nonfinancial rewards for employees are given for those who are fully devoted to their work and achieving targets. Further, the results presented in this study bring valuable information for companies to better understand how they can reduce turnover rate of their employees. As work-family conflict is without a doubt a predictor of turnover intention and by influencing the level of this conflict, companies can better retain their human resources. A way of influence is implementing family- friendly programs and policies that are designed to help employees to better deal with the conflict that arises from performing both family and work roles.

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