

## Investigating the Mediating Role of Marital Conflict About Work-family Conflict and Women's Job Burnout Working in Tehran Hospitals

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### Abstract

**Aim:** This study aimed to investigate the mediating role of marital conflict about work-family conflict and working women's job burnout. **Method:** This research is a descriptive-correlation study. The sample includes 200 women working in Tehran hospitals in 1400, who were chosen through convenient sampling method. In order to collect data, a questionnaire about work-family conflict, job burnout, and marital conflict was used. In order to analyze the data, Pearson's coefficient of correlation was used and AMOS-24 and SPSS-25 were used for path analysis. **Results:** The results indicated that there is a significant positive relationship between marital conflict and job burnout ( $\beta=0.391$ ,  $P<0.001$ ). Work-family conflict also has a significant positive relationship with marital conflict ( $\beta=0.221$ ,  $P<0.001$ ). According to regression and path analysis, work-family conflict cannot prognosticate job burnout on its own and can express job burnout changes through marital conflict ( $\beta=0.086$ ,  $P<0.001$ ). **Conclusion:** Due to their traumatic workplace, working women fall under the influence of work stress, which shall lead to job burnout if marital conflict heightens.

**Keywords:** Work-family Conflict, Marital conflict, Job burnout, Employed Women.

## Introduction

Job burnout is the pathological form of job stress which is developed after the job is done over a period of time and is distinguished with feeling hopelessness, energy reduction, reduction in ability to work, and quality of life (Deh Nabi, 2016). Working people suffering from job burnout cannot act well in their interpersonal relationships, particularly in their job position (Goel, Akarte, Agrawal & Yadav, 2016). The results of the research indicate that the members of the medical staff of hospitals have high job burnout (Patel et al, 2021). So that the results of the research (Ghaffar et al, 2020) show that the burnout among the medical staff members of the hospital is even more than that of the health centers. Organizations are permanently affected by job burnout outcomes, which may result in one's physical diseases, sleeping disorder, family issues, and conflicts between work envelope and personal life (Dimitrios & Konstantinos, 2014). Job burnout creates chronic pressure that is caused by inconsistency between work and job, and people working in hospitals, considering that they have irregular work shifts, there is a possibility of increasing burnout in them (Ghaffar et al, 2020).

Thus, work-family conflict is one of the cases which has a mutual relationship with job burnout. This is bolder in working women sine they bear family responsibilities as well as occupational liabilities. In case there is an inconsistency between job and family responsibilities, work-family conflict may arise (Berkman et al, 2015; Dargahi et al, 2019). Studies indicate that work-family conflict touches working people's public health disparagingly (Kan & Yu, 2016). In fact, work-family conflict includes detrimental effects which could have unfavorable effects on people's working life and this will lessen one's performance in the workplace (Lachowska, 2014). When responsibilities, concerns, and difficulties of job or family life interfere the other, they would be unbalanced and heightens the risk of job burnout (Akbari et al, 2020).

More than negative effects of work-family conflict on one's health and job position, it can negatively influence working people's marital life and lead to marital conflict, too (Choi & Marks, 2008). Marital conflict occurs when there is no chemistry between couples on basic issues and the conflict made can gradually cause tension between them (Dong, Dong & Chen, 2022). This might affect the quality of one's job life (Pirsaghi, Hajihassani, 2012). Results of a study have indicated that there is a significant negative relationship between work-family conflict, work engagement, and marital satisfaction in working women (Van Steenbergen, Kluwer & Karney, 2014). Therefore, work-family conflict makes one have no contentment in both one's family life and job life (Dargahi et al, 2021). There exists a mutual relationship between family and job life and if one of these paramount areas of is not promising, the other areas would be overshadowed. According to the above, job burnout, which is a serious issue in the workplace and can bring much backwash for the person or the organization, can be affected directly or indirectly by interpersonal variables and meddle in one's personal life. Thus, this study was held aiming at determining a mediating role of marital conflict about work-family conflict and job burnout in working women. According to the main purpose of the research and the review of the conducted studies, the main and sub-hypotheses of the research are as follows:

Marital conflicts play a mediating role between work-family conflict and job burnout of women working in the hospital.

There is a relationship between marital conflicts and job burnout in working women.

There is a relationship between work-family conflict and burnout in working women.

There is a relationship between work-family conflict and marital conflicts among working women.

## Methods

The method used in this research was descriptive path analysis. The sample was 200 women working in Tehran hospitals, which were chosen through convenient sampling. Kline (2015) suggested that the number of attendees should be 200 or more for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

### Instrument

#### Marital Conflicts Questionnaire

This questionnaire contain 42 questions built for measuring marital conflicts. Each question is followed by 5 choices which are given 1 to 5 scores each. The maximum score is 210 and the minimum is 42. In this questionnaire, the more is the score, the more is the conflict and lower score signifies fewer conflicts and better relationship. In a research, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.74. This questionnaire has a sufficient content validity. In analyzing the test material, after the introduction stage and examining the correlation of each question with all questions, 13 questions out of first 55 were excluded (Sanai, 2007). In the present study, the internal consistency of the total scale was excellent ( $\alpha=0.77$ ).

#### Work-family Conflict Questionnaire

The eighteen-article standard multi-dimensional work-family conflict questionnaire was drawn up in order to measure the intensity of work-family conflict. This questionnaire takes into account the 6 dimensions of work-family conflict. The answers ranger from choice one (completely disagree) to choice five (completely agree) using Likert scale. Developers of this scale have reported that the amount of reliability coefficients using Cronbach's alpha method are between 0.78 and 0.87 (Carlson et al, 2000). In the present study, the internal consistency of the total scale was excellent ( $\alpha=0.86$ ).

#### Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)

This questionnaire was first developed in 1981 and consisted of 22 questions and the three dimensions including emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and self-adequacy. The questionnaire had been designed based on the seven-degree Likert scale and is measured from 0 to 6 (Iwanicki & Schwab, 1981). In the present study, the internal consistency of the total scale was excellent ( $\alpha=0.89$ ).

### Procedure

Firstly, questionnaires were designed and developed on Google Forms and then, access links were shared with the attendees through special social networking sites. Details on research objectives, voluntary reading, confidentiality of personal information and how to answer the questionnaires were also attached in addition to links. Ethical principles

were all observed in this research. All attendees were informed about the objectives and the procedures.

### Data analysis

*SPSS-25* was used for descriptive analysis (e.g., mean, correlation, standard deviation, kurtosis and skewness) and *AMOS-24* was used for final analysis (multivariate outlier data and multivariate normality and fitness of the model).

## Results

The age average of the sample is 35 years old, the standard deviation is 2.05, the youngest and the oldest attendees were 27 and 41. It is far important to know about descriptive characteristics and distribution form of data before performing statistical analysis. In the present research, skewness and kurtosis were utilized in order to check the normality of the data. Data analysis showed that the skewness between 0.869 and -0.958 and the kurtosis scope between 0.641 and -0.882 were variable. These values showed that data distribution is normal according to the reasonable values of skewness and kurtosis which were  $\pm 2$  and  $\pm 5$  respectively (Tabachnick & fidell, 2012). Table 1 shows mean, standard deviation, marital conflict, work-family conflict, job burnout and the correlation matrix between research variables.

**Table 1. Correlation matrix of research variables**

variables	1	2	3
<b>Work-family conflict</b>	1		
<b>Marital conflict</b>	**0.221	1	
<b>Job burnout</b>	**0.131	**0.391	1
Mean±standard deviation	56.6±36.57	130.3±09.05	40.2±41.80

\*  $P < 0.05$ , \*\*  $P < 0.01$

According to table 1, work-family conflict ( $r=0.131$ ,  $P<0.01$ ) and marital conflict ( $r=0.391$ ,  $P<0.01$ ) have a significant positive correlation with job burnout. Moreover, the relationship between work-family conflict and marital conflict is positive and significant ( $r=0.22$ ,  $P<0.01$ )

Fitness of the proposed model with data is listed in table 2 based on fitness indices (Kline, 2015).

**Table 2. Model fit indices**

Index	$\chi^2$	P	GFI	AGFI	CFI	RMSEA
Value	1.905	0.206	0.991	0.958	0.991	0.056

GFI: Goodness-of-fit; AGFI: Adjusted goodness-of-fit index; CFI: Comparative fit index; RMSEA: Root mean square error of approximation

As shown in table 2, the value of chi-square index is not significant ( $P > 0.050$ ), and all fit indices of the model have also reached the reasonable fit criterion. Goodness of fit index (GFI) and comparative fit index (CFI) are above 0.90, which are reasonable for model fitness. The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) was also 0.056 which is reasonable.

**Table 3. Paths and standard and non-standard coefficients of the model**

	variables	Estimate	Standardized	S.E.	C.R.	P
marital	<--- Work-family conflict	0.106	0.221	0.019	5.545	0.001
	job burnout <--- Marital conflict	0.727	0.391	0.070	10.399	0.001
	job burnout <--- Work-family conflict	0.042	0.047	0.034	1.213	0.225

According to table 3, path coefficient between marital conflict and job burnout is significant and positive ( $\beta=0.391$ ,  $P<0.001$ ). Plus, path coefficient between marital conflict and work-family conflict is significant and positive ( $\beta=0.221$ ,  $P<0.001$ ). It is worth mentioning that path coefficient of work-family conflict was not significant with job burnout after mediation variable involved ( $\beta=P$ ,  $0.047=0.225$ ).

Bootstrap method was taken in order to study the mediating role of marital conflict regarding the relationship between work-family conflict and job burnout. The results are listed in table 4.

path	Estimate	Standardized	P
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Predictor variable	Mediation variable	Criterion variable			Lower Bounds	Upper Bounds	
Work-family conflict	Marital conflict	Job burnout	0.077	0.086	0.057	0.117	0.001

Table 4. estimating indirect paths in the model through Bootstrap method

According to table 4, marital conflict acts as mediating variable in the relationship with work-family conflict and job burnout. Figure 1 shows the final pattern of this research with standard coefficients.

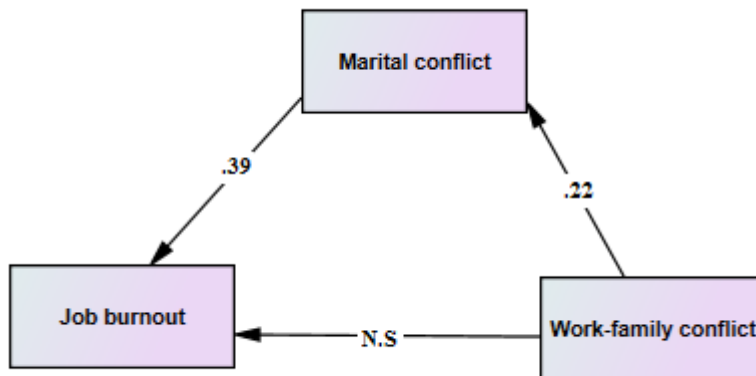


Figure 1. Standard coefficients of the conceptual model of the research

## Discussion

According to the findings, marital conflict acts as mediating variable in the relationship with work-family conflict and job burnout. So, work-family conflict indirectly affects job burnout by affecting and increasing marital conflict.

Through studying other paths and the relation between variables, it resulted that in addition to the significant correlation between work-family conflict and marital conflict in working women, work-family conflict has a direct effect on marital conflict in working

women. Such findings are in line with findings of the research by Choi & Marks, 2008; Dargahi et al, 2021.

Marital satisfaction in working women is the direct index of the couple's status and perception of interpersonal relationships and that work-family conflict is an index of unbalance in job liabilities and family responsibilities and their encroachment upon each other. Aycan believes that the first area harmed after this conflict is marital satisfaction; because it is regarded as the main source of risk for working parents' health, parental and marital liabilities (Aycan & Eskin, 2005). Minnotte, Minnotte & Bonstrom, 2015, studied the effects of facilitating intervention of work-family conflict on life satisfaction. They resulted that both marital and job satisfaction are straightly affected by work-family conflict.

According to the findings, the correlation and relationship between work-family conflict and job burnout in working women has not been significant. It also found out that work-family conflict has not a direct effect on working women's job burnout.

To explicate this finding, work-family conflict brings about tensions and people adopt coping strategy so as to adapt to the situation and overcome the tensions. Burnout is a process in which resistance and opposition become inefficient owing to high tensions and one cannot cope with conflicts. Conflict does not always lead to burnout and often minor conflicts are dealt with using effective strategies. So, several factors can arbitrate between conflict and burnout, which intensifies burnout. In other words, burnout begins with conflict and finally, due to high tensions, people's resistance seems incompetent and this will cause burnout. Thus, it is reasonable that work-family conflict does not have a direct effect and relationship with job burnout because small degrees of conflict in people's life seems normal and that there are systematic confining factors in developing burnout.

According to this research, the correlation and relationship between marital conflict and job burnout in working women is significant. Therefore, marital conflict has a straight impact on job burnout in working women. Such findings are in line with findings of the research by Pirsaghi, Hajihasani, 2012; Van Steenbergen, Kluwer & Karney, 2014; Dargahi et al, 2021).

Since working women shoulder motherhood, marital, childhood, co-working liabilities besides their occupational duties, sometimes they might not be able to carry out some duties well. Intervention of tasks increases marital conflict and since marital conflict is followed by stress, anxiety, tension, absence from work, delay in starting work and leaving work ahead of time (Majan et al, 2021), it is expected that people with higher marital conflicts are at stake of job burnout more. Presumably, people with high marital conflicts spend much time solving and settling these conflicts and when they confront pressures from their job, making right decisions becomes problematic because there are tensions from marital conflict, too. Thus, they lose interest in their work and they also lose their colleagues' support in the workplace due to incompatible manner they adopt because of personal conflicts they have.

Therefore, when work-family conflict emerges, the pressure imposed on the person from one duty influences their other duties. Duties incongruity channels one into depression and a decrease in one's personal relationship at home and eventually, this leads

to emotional signals such as depression, failure, desperation, discouragement and mental erosion (Papastilianou, Kaila, Polychronopoulos, 2009).

## Conclusion

In general, the findings of the current research, being in line with other research findings, showed that work-family conflict can fuel burnout in working women through its influence on marital conflicts and its increase. Therefore, paying attention to work-family balance and managing marital conflicts can be a suitable measure to prevent burnout of women working in the hospital. Being employed in a hospital environment and being female in the statistical population and caution in generalizing the results to other occupations and gender can be among the limitations of this research.

## Disclosure Statements

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