Impact of Spousal Support on Work-Family/Family Work Conflicts: A Qualitative Study of Married Working Women in Mauritius

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Abstract

With free education, empowerment, and the escalating female labour force, women have been acquiring visibility in many professions that were once reserved for men. There is no denying the fact that there are societal pressures to either attune to the 'family manager' role or remain in the public sphere as working women. This study foregrounds women's experiences at the individual level and employed either on shift or non-shift systems. The primary aim of this study is to investigate how spousal support (or lack of support) impacts on women's work and family life. A qualitative method was favoured probing whether women encountered any conflict in carrying out the dual roles of homemaker and income earner, and how they interpret their experiences in tackling these roles. The research findings predominantly draw upon the interviewees' narratives. In-depth, face-to-face interviews were carried out with married working women working under shift and non-shift systems. Thematic analysis was used to identify the cultural dimension between the office environment and household environment, which have been one of the prominent reasons for family-work or work-family conflict.

Keywords: work-family conflicts, work demands, spousal support, family demands

Introduction

There are two significant focal points in an individual's life, namely, work and family that have become crucial for organizational researches (Dou et al., 2020; ŽNIDARŠIČ & MARIČ, 2021). But, some circumstances depicted that these two terms 'family' and 'work' would never be compatible with each other (cited some references here) thus, raising conflicts between family and work life. The outcomes related to these disputes included low turnover rates, job boredom, and job dissatisfaction, consequently linked to mental distress (such as depression), and spousal dissatisfaction with a subsequent negative impact on job performance in the workplace (Bilodeau et

al., 2020). Mauritius witnessed tremendous changes during the past decades in the socio-economic context and recent decades, there had been an augmenting number of women accessing the labour market. After achieving independence, later governments had pledged to safeguard women's rights in Mauritius and to upgrade women's standard of living as well as the quality of life. Furthermore, progressive changes occurred regarding laws and policies which eventually led to increased equality between women and men and an improvement in the status of women in Mauritius. Girls and women had access to education, health services, and pensions, thanks to the prevalence of a universal welfare state in the country. Throughout yearly surveys in the education sector, it has been noticed that girls surpass boys in education, especially at the secondary level. With the advent of industrialization in the 1970s, employment opportunities were created for women from exposed economic environments and with basic education, with the setting up of the Mauritius Export Processing Zone (MEPZ). The role of women in Mauritius changed expeditiously principally due to industrialization where an extensive inflow of women was engaged by the Export Processing Zone (EPZ) sector during the 1980s. Although Mauritian women were essentially recruited for cheap labour, their employment provided them a certain degree of skill and social freedom. These women were then more present in the professional world owing to their distinguished qualifications and achievement at work. However, even though they were devoting longer hours outside the home, their domestic obligations had not decreased. In Mauritius, given the traits of its patriarchal society, it was generally acknowledged that women had to play an active role in the professional world while simultaneously managing family issues without endangering family stability. The aim of this paper is to investigate factors which triggers work-family and family-work conflicts.

Literature Review

The field of work-family conflict interface had been overshadowed by various researchers and samples from the United States. It was somewhat later that investigations had been carried out to conceptualize (e.g Loscalzo et al., 2019) and examined the work and family realms in other national contexts (e.g Gözükara and Çolakoğlu, 2016). National culture symbolized the fundamental and indistinct values held by most of the population. This culture was acquired in early childhood, whereby it changed at a very slow pace (Al Azzam et al., 2017). It was measured through a plethora of cultural dimensions such as individualism-collectivism, masculinity-femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and power distance.

Work demands

It had been recognized that the work-family conflict was affiliated with the negative resulting of the work within the organisations. The increased work demands such as overtime, and workload affects an individual's health and wellbeing or can lead to depression (Notten, Grunow, and Verbakel, 2017). Increased work demands played a negative role in work-family conflicts. Besides, the other

practices could be the family characteristics or the individual differences which could be in form of family support, the number or the age of children and the differences among the individuals for instance; extraversion could have mixed effects on the work-family conflicts which could be either positive or negative. In this regard, the inconsistent workload of working hours veered towards work-family conflicts (Zhang, Wang, and Das, 2020).

Family Demands

Major conflicts were due to the limitations of resources, which reflected in the competitive environment of the individual. The emergence of work-family conflict had been due to the fight over resources such as home expenditures, objects, conditions, personal characteristics, and energies that strived for retaining protecting and create valued resources in terms of the reduction of conflicts (Ajala, 2017). The demands of the family varied on the number of people living and their age. Moreover, the family demands could also be expanded if the family was more dependent on the individual in terms of the dependency of the childcare or the parental role that could leave an absence; however, the unfulfillment of these demands had a negative influence on work-family conflicts (Bennett, Beehr, and Ivanitskaya, 2017).

Spousal support:

A spouse could be either a husband or wife who could be in the relationship as a partner. Under the traditional way, the family structure shifted from a single-income to a double-income family. It had been observed that spousal support was considered as a potential mediator in the interrelationship among the perceived stressors and role strain, health, and quality of married life (Chrisangika Perera, and Kailasapathy, 2020). It determined that there was a huge role in the relation of spousal support to psychological well-being and marital satisfaction. This was mainly because work-family and family-work conflicts could be minimized effectively with mutual support and understanding

Shift work

There was growing support for the notion that conflicting working time arrangements including shift work, night shifts, inflexible work schedules, fluctuating hours, and long and unsocial hours make up major work-related psychosocial threats (WHO, 2008). It was argued that night or evening work shifts were correlated with work-family interference, notably among women (van Amelsvoort et al., 2004). Moreover, this liaison might be incited by various factors, for instance, rewards, sharing of housework, family support, childcare opportunities, and gender role attitudes to long schedules at work as well as time spent with the family. It was contended that long working hours, most specifically in the absence of proper work-time control (Hughes &Parkes, 2007; Rupert, 2009), were found to interpose with home activities (Loudon, 2008). Contrarily, 'consistency overworking time' seems to be in favour of work-family adjustment (Taris et al., 2006).

Methodology:

This research examines women's lived experiences of work-family/family-work conflicts. In particular, it investigates the following research questions: What is the impact of different work schedules on work-family/family-work conflicts? Do spousal support from work and family domains differentially relate to work-family conflict/family-work conflict? Is working either on shift or non-shift systems impinge directly on work-family/family-work conflicts? Is Hofstede Cultural Dimensions a common feature of the Mauritian society? A qualitative approach was chosen for this research study by collecting and compiling data from various avenues such as in-depth face-to-face interviews. The unit of analysis was employees working on shift and non-shift systems, namely nursing officers, women police officers, educators and officers of the Ministry of Social Security. With regard to this current research study, purposeful sampling was adopted. It proved to be a convenient technique to profoundly scrutinize, explore, discern, and interpret the phenomenon under study through a sample that gave exhaustive information (Merriam, 2002). In-depth face-to-face interviews were conducted with 12 working married women from the four above-mentioned institutions. Furthermore, interviewees were requested to fill up a consent form prior to the start of interviews wherein the purpose and rationale of the research study were clearly described. In-depth and semi-structured interviews were conducted with twelve (12) working married women from the four above-mentioned institutions. The language used was either English or Creole. The inclusion criteria for the study were chosen based on their marital status and should have at least have one child. These criteria were outlined in order to ensure the samples had near similar work and family roles (Aminah, 1996).

Findings

After conducting the in-depth face-to-face interviews, they were all transcribed verbatim in English. However, while some interviewees replied in Creole, caution was taken in order to translate and capture the exact meaning of the sentence. The findings of the transcripts were elaborated under different subheadings relating to the questions asked to the interviewees. Additionally, the generation of codes was done using qualitative data analysis software, namely Atlas.ti 9 for data management.

THEMATIC ANALYSIS

This section elaborates on the various themes that emerged from the interview transcripts. In addition, a distinction between shift and non-shift employees will be expounded under each theme.

Workloads and Work schedules

(i)   *Shift System employees*

The interviewees were asked about their workloads and work schedules. They were further inquired about how workloads and work schedules lead to work-family conflicts.

One respondent averred that the workload at the workplace caused her to get exhausted to the extent of not having the strength to do other things when reaching home.

'I am very often confronted with too much stress at work and when I get back home, I feel drained and just want to sleep'. (Interviewee 4: shift system).

Likewise, the workload of different professionals also experienced family-work conflicts since they spent more time at work or were held back in the office. Consequently, this situation reduced their activeness to get involved with their children and spouse and attend to their needs as well. In that context, one of the respondents averred:

'I experience more work-family demands due to inflexible work schedules and heavy workload'.(Interviewee 1: shift system)

Furthermore, the study revealed that working on a shift system and changing roles from one time to another complicated workload which consequently affected the time allocated to children and spouses and simultaneously caused family-work conflicts. One respondent stated:

'The fact that I work on a shift system and am constantly on the move and on call, this situation proves to be quite difficult for me to engage myself in my family demands'.

(Interviewee 3: shift)

Another respondent declared:

'Unless there is extreme work overload then it can interfere with my family, hence causing work-family conflicts'. *(Interviewee 4: shift)*

(ii) *Non-Shift System employees*

This research study disclosed that even though non-shift employees have fixed time work schedules, it is noted that some respondents do experience heavy workloads, be it at work or at home. One of the respondents advocated:

'I am indeed very often tired. I am drained out due to work overload. When I get back home after a tiring day at work, very often I have to attend family activities like religious prayers or dinner. This causes much of an issue as I have to get my two kids and myself ready and prepare everything for my husband as well- his clothes and so on'
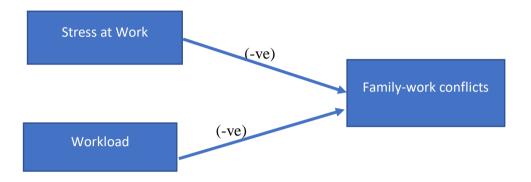
(Interviewee 3: Non-shift)

Another respondent averred:

'My work being of a technical nature is quite demanding and stressful'.

(Interviewee 4: non-shift)

The above indicates the following of those women working under the shift system and non-shift systems.

Spousal Support

(i)   *Shift System employees*

The extent of experiencing work-family/family-work conflicts was asked to the respondents under study. One of them acknowledged that she had to pre-plan her commitments and obligations and set proper time management accordingly. Her spouse, who is also a Police Officer, and herself are acknowledged their corresponding rosters three weeks before. Consequently, she plans all the family commitments and obligations they need to attend to according to their work schedule. She opined that when she is on duty, her spouse takes on the full responsibility of the home and child care.

'My husband is a Police Inspector. We normally take cognizance of our respective rosters three weeks before. I have to plan in advance all the family commitments which we have to attend to according to our availability. When I am on duty, my husband takes full responsibility for the home and the children.' (Interviewee 1).

The majority of the respondents advocated that they did get spousal support and without it, handling work and family commitments would be impossible. In that context, one respondent affirmed:

'I do sometimes experience work-family conflicts. For instance, if I have to stay back in the office and coincidentally my husband who is a Sub Inspector of Police has to stay back in

the office too, then the situation becomes quite difficult for us to manage. We need to inform the children at soonest whereby they will have to manage on their own to prepare their dinner.   *(Interviewee 2: shift system)*

The above verbatim exposes a genuine situation of work-family conflict. Long stretches of work, inflexible hours of work, short notice communication to stay back in the office, and no fixed time to get back home highly contributed to the occurrence of work-family conflicts.

Likewise, a Charge Nurse affirmed:

'As Charge Nurse, we have a fixed pattern of work. For instance, very often I have to take leave from work to attend important commitments such as funerals, or accompanying in-laws to visit a doctor. With regards to family-work conflicts, it is always the wife who has to take leave from work, for example, if a child is ill or during school holidays.'
(Interviewee 2: Shift system)

(ii)   *Non-Shift System employees*

The interviewees under study were asked whether they get spousal support in their everyday life. The research study revealed that two non-shift respondents postulate that regarding spousal support they did not get any help while two others were positive in their affirmations.

For instance, one respondent replied:

'I get very little support from my husband. I have to do all household chores, especially on weekdays when we have to leave home at 7 a.m.'
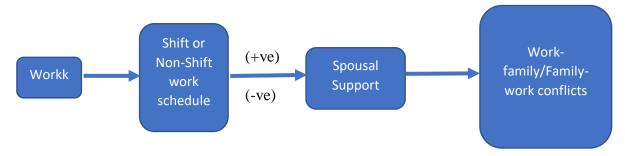
(Interviewee 1: Non-shift)

Another respondent stated:

'Unfortunately, I do not get spousal support. I have to manage on my own. Due to a lack of time on his part for dropping and fetching the kids from school and tuition, my husband has bought a car for me. This is because he has no specific time to get back home every day because of his side business. (Interviewee 3: Non-shift system)

Contrarily, another respondent averred that she gets spousal support in her everyday life.

'My husband is and has been extremely supportive up to now. He contributes fully to the household chores and obligations.'   *(Interviewee 1: Shift)*

Toddler attention and child sickness

This study has revealed that women are majorly in charge of home affairs and get disturbed in many spheres of home issues. These home activities have a way of causing conflict between work and family as one of such way participants mentioned how child health status considerably disturbed their concentration at work.

(i)   *Shift System employees*

Being at workplace and getting informed that your child has fallen sick at school also causes stress.

> *'It is indeed big stress when I get a call from my child's school informing me that she is ill and needs medical care as soon as possible'.*   (Interviewee 4- shift)

The time it took to make arrangements when a child get sick was a major concern as an interviewee claimed:

> *'In a specific case where a child falls sick, I get worried because I have to make arrangements to take urgent leave from work and to get someone to look after my sick child. I eventually have to get back to work after attending to my sick child.'*
>
> *(Interviewee 5- shift)*

(ii)   *Non-Shift employees*

One interviewee averred:
> *'I get preoccupied and anxious whenever my daughter is sick and this consequently causes me to be stressed up at work.'*   *(Interviewee 2- non-shift)*
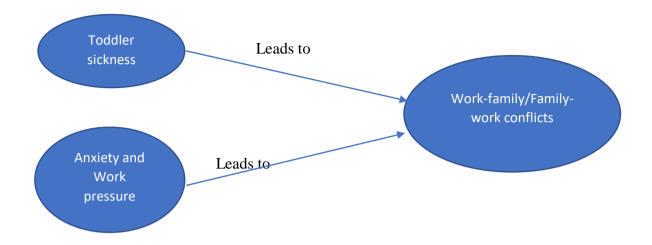
This claim was supported by another respondent who affirmed:
> *'When one of my children is not well, then this situation becomes a stress for me at work'*
> *(Interviewee 1- non-shift)*

The above verbatims showed that women were always worried when they were informed of their children's health status and they were divided into choosing to look after the child or focusing

on their job which many a time the children were given attention due to strong connections mothers shared with their children.

Importance of Family/Time with family

(i)   *Shift Systems employees*

Having lesser time to devote to the family was a common feature and scenario for the respondents as they had no fixed time to get back home. They averred that they spent most of their time at work. In addition, the situation was more complex for the participants whose spouses were in the Police Force too. Comparatively, two Nursing officers whose spouses also work on shift system did face issues of not spending quality time with their children.

One respondent stated:

'I prioritize my family as well, as it is as important as earning money. Therefore, there must be a balance between work and family.'

This study also portrays that giving attention to children despite the tight work schedule certainly reduces work-family conflicts.

In this context, a respondent affirmed:

'I give priority to my family more than any work. This is because my toddler needs me and I need to find time for her'   *(Interviewee 1- shift)*

Similarly, another respondent opined:

'My family is my greatest asset. I always get their support and help especially when I have to do overtime work. They contribute a lot by sparing me the household chores.'

(ii)   *Non-shift employees*

Among the non-shift interviewees, one averred that it was quite hectic and challenging for her to manage work and family domains properly.

One respondent postulated:

'*I am very much involved in my family. I do all the household chores. Even if I don't get time after work, the next day I can take a leave from work to complete my household chores. I don't let my family feel neglected. I can be extremely tired but I take and fulfill my duty as a mother and a wife very much at heart*'.

<div align="center">(Interviewee 3: Non-shift)</div>

However, the other three respondents advocated that they could juggle between the two realms of work and family.

One of them replied:

'*Family and kids are important. I spend as much time with my kids. I make it a must to have dinner together as we do not take breakfast altogether. We spend quality time while having dinner and discuss about daily issues and future projects*'

<div align="center">(Interviewee 1: Non-shift)</div>

Another respondent averred:

'*When I am at work, I focus on school matters, but when I am at home, I look into family matters only. I never take home any office work. On this, I have a clear demarcation. Only if office work is urgent and pressing, do I take work home. But this is a very rare situation.*'
<div align="center">(Interviewee 2: Non-shift)</div>

The third respondent claimed:

'*Regarding my family, I would opt for a rating of 8/10, even though the family is as important as work. But I try to manage my level best in order to strike a balance between the two spheres.*'   (Interviewee 2- non-shift)

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│              │      │  work schedules  │   (+ve)   │ Family-work conflicts│
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Discussions pertaining to emerging concepts

This research study has found that working women in Mauritius have different notions of work-family/family work conflicts. These perceptions are revealed through their various point of view.

Workloads and work schedules

The study revealed that heavy workload, working overtime and inflexible work schedules were among the challenges which are faced by the women under study. Results have shown that the workload of different professionals also endure family work conflict since they spent more time at work and were very often held back in the office due to overtime work. Consequently, this situation greatly restrains them from getting involved and attending to the needs of their spouse and children. Furthermore, the study also showed that working on a shift system and changing roles from one time to another complicated workload which consequently caused work-family conflicts.

Research conducted by Burke and El- Kot (2009) supported the idea that women are required to work exhaustively and have atypical work schedules. Moreover, evidence shows that night shifts were said to be associated with interference between job and family, particularly among women (Van Amelsvoort et al., 2004). Additionally, Zhang, Wang and Das (2020) postulated that inconsistent workloads and working hours veered toward work-family conflicts. Research has shown that increased work demands such as overtime affect an individual's health and well-being which can ultimately lead to fatigue, burn out, and depression (Notten, Grunow and Verbakel, 2017). Growing evidence supported the idea that important job-related psychosocial hazards are caused by inflexible work arrangements such as shift work, night shifts, rigid work schedules, changing hours, and lengthy unsocial hours (WHO, 2018). Without a doubt, high job needs were one of the main causes of conflicts between work and family and its negative impacts on health (Jansen et al., 2004; Simon et al., 2004). Similarly, in research, Bakker (2008) established that employees with higher job expectations were unable to unwind and recuperate from work and fulfill their family obligations.

Spousal Support

The current study reported that spousal support proved to be of utmost importance in order to prevent work-family/family-work conflicts. Results have shown that the majority of the respondents under study averred that they did get spousal support and without it, handling work and family commitments would be unattainable. It has been observed that spousal support was considered a potential mediator in the interrelationship among the perceived stressors and role

strain, health, and quality of married life (Chrisangika Perera and Kailasapathy, 2020). It determined that there was a strong relationship between spousal support and psychological well-being and marital satisfaction. Similarly, Lambert et al., (2017) determined that social support played an active part in the reduction of work-family conflicts for men and women who had been of great emphasis on spousal support and administrative support. Distinctive roles were taking a fundamental part in the spousal support that created many repercussions on work-family/family-work conflicts. Spousal support was based on providing help, advising, and understanding which spouses proffered to each other. In that context, Akkas, Hossain and Rhaman (2015) advocated that the two types of spousal support, namely emotional and instrumental support were comparatively quintessential for supporting and being understanding among each other. Instrumental support was tangible which implied that this could be provided by taking up different household chores and childcare. Similarly, a study conducted by Jamaludin, Ibrahim and Dagang (2018), revealed that the help of instrumental spousal support helps in alleviating the strain of family demands and enabled individuals to allocate more time to work. Spousal support helped in providing relief and directing toward a positive relationship by avoiding irrelevant conflicts.

Toddler attention and child sickness

This study's analysis revealed that women are majorly in charge of home affairs and get disturbed in many spheres of home issues. These home activities have a way of causing conflict between work and family as one of such way where respondents mentioned how child's health status considerably disturbed their concentration at work. Research conducted by Jamaldin et al., (2015) argued that married women with children were expected to accomplish the responsibility of a homemaker, mother, and wife at home and be devoted, proficient, and competent in the workplace. Employed women with children were more likely to report conflicts between family and work as compared to childless married women. Furthermore, the factors affecting the number of conflicts for women with children were the number of children, the ages of children, the number of working hours, and the degree to which social support was provided to women with children. In addition, Ajala (2017) suggested that married working women with children had their duties doubled since they had to handle their professional life besides household chores and childcare. Therefore, too many responsibilities on women's shoulders made them constantly stressed which resulted in work-family/family-work conflicts.

Importance of Family/Time with family

This research study exposed that having lesser time to devote to the family was a common feature and scenario for the respondents under study as they had no fixed time to get back home.

The interviewees averred that they spent most of their time at work. However, the situation was more complex for participants whose spouses also work on shift systems whereby they face issues of not spending quality time with their children.

Lack of time may encumber employees to fulfill family responsibilities and sustain family ties. Previous studies have revealed a consistent link between paid job hours and work-family conflicts (Jamadin et al., 2018). Moreover, employees were frequently expected to work additional hours without prior notice which resulted in significant time and scheduling and thus prevented meeting family commitments. Thus, employees were unable to engross fully in family activities as a result of the possibility of an unanticipated work call. According to Karatepe (2013), there is a link between work-family conflict and unforeseen overtime hours.

Comparison between women working on shift and non-shift systems as a cause of family-work conflict

While evaluating the similarities and differences between shift and non-shift systems related to women who experienced family/work conflict, a clear-cut line was drawn between these two. It was described that women working on a shift system needed to work during odd working hours and had to sacrifice family time. As they experienced personal issues with their family due to lack of time for them, this caused distraction during working hours. This distraction led to less productivity at work and conflicts very often arose. Moreover, it was observed that women were often found at a crossroads of choice, they had to choose between being a good wife/mother/daughter or professional. Often women chose family over work. This indicated that women working under the shift system experienced work/family conflict.

As compared to women working under shift system, those who worked under a non-shift system experienced fewer conflicts as they worked under pre-determined times. They had ample time to properly structure and managed their family whereby they constructed a proper timetable. Therefore, this led to fewer family/work conflicts as everything was pre-determined and planned. Moreover, there was one similarity whereby women, no matter in which working system they worked were often prone to choosing between family and work and they normally chose their family, thus, causing work-family conflict.

4.5   **Computer-aided analysis: ATLAS.ti 9**

4.5.1   *Overview of Atlas.ti 9 Software*

A software called ATLAS.ti allows users to find, code/tag, annotate, and locate characteristics within unstructured data sets. It also has visualization capabilities. Researchers from

a wide range of disciplines utilize the program, which handles data in text, graphical, audio, video, and geographic format.

Imported data are case-based. This indicates that every row of the Excel table imported from the transcripts gets converted into a document. ATLAS's primary role is coding. The data may be categorized by areas of interest, with the main objective being to tag items to describe or arrange them (Atlas.ti, 2023). Data segments are compared and evaluated for similarity throughout the classification process. A single term can be used to describe all comparable components. The software produces a network diagram, which is officially described as a collection of nodes and links within the field of graph theory (Atlas.ti, 2023). A network node may have any number of connections to other nodes.

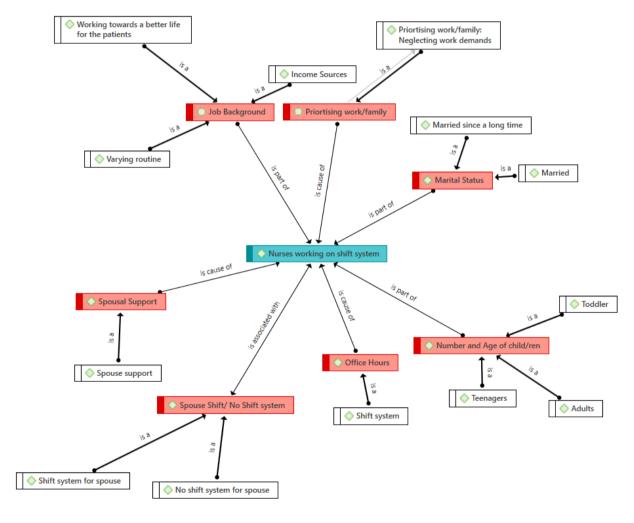### 4.5.2 Network diagram of nurses on shift duty

Figure 1: Network diagram of nurses on shift duty

In Figure 1, it can be observed that nurses are having varied job backgrounds, prioritising between work and family, have married life with children of various ages, and require spousal support are also working on either a shift or non-shift system.

Concerning the job background, it can be observed that most of the nurses agree on a varying routine at work. Similarly, most nurses concur with the fact that most of them prioritise work life rather than family with all of them having a married status. Regarding the number of children, most of the nurses interviewed had more than one child with teenagers and adults. Most of the nurses advocated that they get spousal support with most of the spouses working on a shift system.

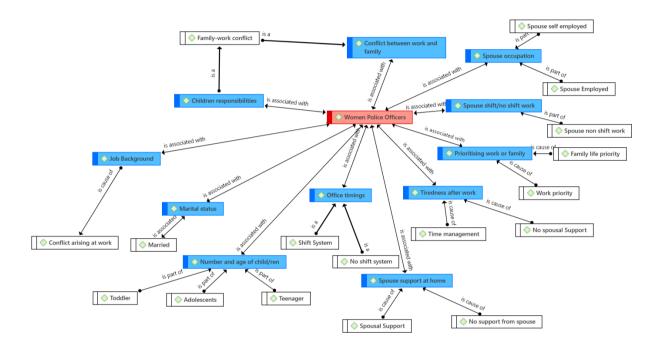4.5.3   Network diagram of women Police officers

Figure 2: Network diagram of women police officers

Figure 2 portrays women police officers who have conflicting job backgrounds, are married and with children of various age groups. The officers are also working predominantly on a shift system with major conflicts arising between work and family life and also managing children. There was no consensus observed on prioritising work life or family life.

Most spouses of the officers were employed on a non-shift work schedule. Many officers also averred that they get spousal support regarding family responsibilities and tackling of household chores. However, two respondents stated that they do not get emotional spousal support when they are tired after work.
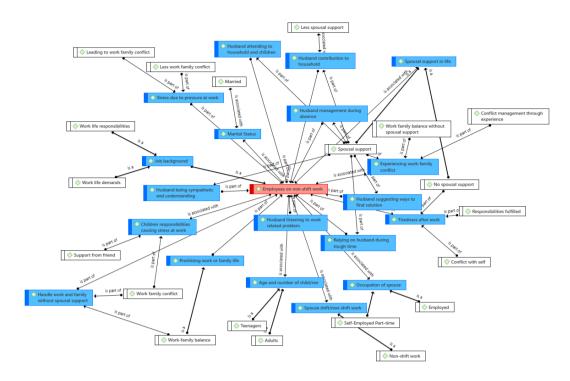
Network diagram of non-shift employees

Figure 3: Network diagram of non-shift employees

This network diagram above illustrates that the job background of employees working on a non-shift system is mainly balancing between work and life and their associated responsibilities with most of the respondents having a married status with children from teenagers to adults. Their spouses are also employed working on a non–shift system. The respondents do admit that they receive spousal support in their everyday life routine. The employees also concur with the fact that they have to balance both work and family life while also admitting to doing the same without spousal support. Most of the respondents agree to having spousal support in dealing with family-work conflicts while having conflict with themselves due to tiredness after work.

Additionally, the interviewees opined that they get full spousal support from their husbands in handling household and childcare responsibilities. They also contended that they got full spousal support during their absence from home and when things get tough at work and have to stay back in office. The respondents also agree that they get spousal support concerning emotional support: love, care, and attention. They also declared that they could discuss work-related problems and family-related issues and could rely on suggestions and support from their husbands.

4.5.5   Comparison between the illustrated network diagrams

Firstly, comparing the work schedules for the different occupations taken in this research study, it can be observed that most of the time, there is a balance that needs to be achieved between the job and family life. Similarly, all the respondents across all the occupations admit to the fact

that they are prioritising work life and require spousal support at home to share children, and household duties.

All the respondents' profiles are that they are married with children and their spouses are employed working at shift and non-shift work. The respondents on non-shift work mostly stated that they face less conflict in managing work and family life as compared to shift employees. Work balance is the key term for consensus between work and family conflicts.

As a result of work pressures, non-shift workers face less conflict in work-family balance as compared to shift workers. Respondents of shift workers also affirmed that due to tiredness after work, they do receive spousal support. There is, however, a divided opinion on this topic among non-shift employees.

Alternatively, all respondents agree on the fact that they all receive spousal support in terms of sharing household chores, tending to children's responsibilities, emotional support, during tough times at work or family life, and lastly coming up with solutions to problems from work and family life.

Theme Map

This is the final processing of the themes and the aim is '*identify the essence of what each theme is about*' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.92)
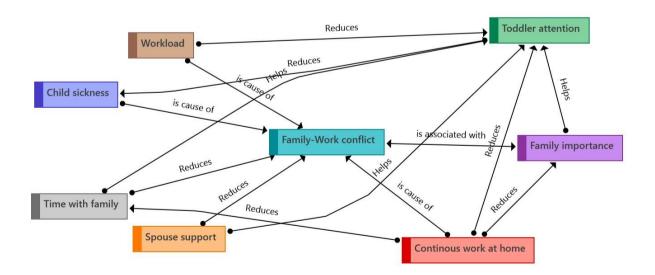

Figure 4 Different aspects of work-family/family-work conflicts

Figure 4 above shows all the emerging themes and their respective relationships as well. For instance, workload and child sickness are both causes of family-work conflicts. In addition, the theme map shows that family importance is in association with family-work conflicts and time with

family reduces family-work conflicts. Moreover, spousal support helps in tackling child responsibilities and reduces family work conflicts as well. Also, spending time with the family helped

Conclusions

According to the findings of the current study, a working couple in a married relationship could assist with spousal progress and use innovative and creative conflict resolution policies and strategies to manage their roles more effectively. According to Lavner, Karney, and Bradbury (2016), useful marital resolving conflicts trends and favorable spousal support were related to marital satisfaction in couples. Similarly, Sinval et al. (2019) discovered that working couples who used more effective coping strategies not only felt more satisfied with their married relationship but also had elevated job satisfaction and commitment.

According to the study findings, nurses who worked morning shifts experienced less conflict between work and family than other groups of nurses who worked the morning, afternoon, and night shifts. Morning shift nurses had the highest cognitive-evaluative component of job satisfaction and the lowest affective component of life satisfaction, while nurses working irregular shifts had the lowest affective component of life satisfaction. These findings supported the notion that shift-work exacerbated the work-family role conflict. They also agreed that the category of shift rotation was important. This was the first study in Croatia that analyzed work-family conflict between caregivers or workers with different shift systems.

Research carried out by Xuanru et al (2020) observed that female workers, like their male counterparts wanted to play a role that goes further than their family commitments. Nevertheless, a large proportion of women joining the labor force as workers were mothers who were expected to balance their wife/maternal responsibilities with their job responsibilities (Koekemoer and Olckers, 2019). They were reckoned to be a mother, a wife, and an employee all at the same time. Working women must balance their family and professional lives. Due to the complexities of these roles, it could be difficult for women to maintain a satisfying personal life while also successfully performing their jobs (Koekemoer and Olckers 2019).

The overall literature shows that spousal support leads to conflict resolution and less work-family as well as family-work conflicts (Lavner, Karney and Bradbury, 2016). In line with the findings of this research study, the above-mentioned researchers demonstrate that spousal support relating to the emotional aspect definitely leads to lesser family-work/work-family conflicts. A lack of spousal support led to an increase in work-family conflicts and family-work conflicts. This was because the working wife was unable to cope with family and work demands simultaneously and

therefore, she tended to lose focus on both domains. This loss of focus led to domestic problems in the household as well as at the workplace.

According to Burke, Weir, and DuWors (1980), the partners of senior administrators saw their husbands' occupational demands as having an impact on their home, such as stress in interacting. In Taiwan, work-family conflict was strongly associated with lower job and family satisfaction. According to the findings, there was an increase in stress and the severity of physical ailments (Lu, 2007). Minor distinctions could have a negative impact on a person's mental health. There was an understanding of the family in the workplace.

In the Mauritian context, societal culture is mostly Asian where the women are expected to fulfill all the household duties such as caring for the children, hygiene, and house cleaning. This indicates that even if the husband and wife are working, the household duties remain on the women's shoulders and when the husbands help to ease the situation to some extent it is considered a big matter and favour from the spouses.

Many researchers used the terms work-family balance (WFB) and work-life balance (WLB) interchangeably (WierdaBoer et al., 2008). Others had used the two terms in different ways. The degree to which an individual was able to balance work and family life was defined as a work-family balance capable of balancing the temporal, emotional, and behavioural demands of both working for a living and caring for one's family (Hill et al., 2001, p.49). Balance was defined as a person's ability to meet their work and family obligations, commitments, in addition to other non-work responsibilities and activities (Ali et al., 2011).

Joining the labour market was found to be very challenging and tasking. Even when they get married, the wife was expected to oversee home affairs as well. (Adisa, Osabutey and Gbadamosi, 2016). This had a great impact on the extent to which women could go in their chosen career path because, apart from getting involved in their careers, women were majorly in charge of home affairs and got disturbed in many areas of home issues. These home activities had a way of causing conflict between work and home as one of such ways participants mentioned how child health status disturbed concentration at work.

This research study showed that women were always worried when they were informed of their children's health status and they were divided into choosing to look at the child or focusing on

their job which many a time the children were given attention due to connections mothers shared with their children. In the Mauritian household, the child's health concerns are the mother's responsibility. This demonstrates that even though it is the husband's child as well still the mother is answerable and responsible for the child's health. It can be observed that mothers have to take leave to take care of the child until the kid gets better and is able to carry his daily activities back again. Even though the woman's career or work is suffering, Mauritian society will declare it as 'a mother's duty' and also the husbands will not be bothered to a high extent (Bilodeau, Marchand and Demers, 2020).

It was also found that giving attention to children despite the tight schedule could certainly reduce the possibility of getting sick in the first place which would definitely reduce work-family conflict. The workload of different professionals also affected family-work conflict since spending more time at work or being overused at the office had a way of weighing individuals down than reducing their activeness to get involved with spouse and children and attend to their needs. Also, working on a shift system and changing roles from one time to another complicated workload which of course affected attention given to children and spouses and at the same time caused family-work conflict.

As per the study's findings, it is observed that women who are overloaded with work in a shift system are faced with difficulty engaging in family events. For example, if a woman works as a nurse, during festivals such as Diwali, Eid-ul Fitr, New year, they will still be expected to be at work, and at the same time, their family will expect them to be at home celebrating with them. They are often stuck between work and home matters because they are often expected to be at both places at the same time. They tend to be in situations where they feel the need to justify their absences. This might of course lead to family-work conflicts were spouses and children were neglected and lack of attention can bring more conflicts.

According to Yang et al. (2000), Americans and Chinese may have different perspectives on work and family, owing to differences in their individualism/collectivist values. Spector et al. (2004) recently examined data collected for a large-scale international collaborative project on work stress. They found that Anglos had a stronger positive relationship between work hours and work/family sources of stress than Chinese and Latinos, despite the fact that in all three samples, work-family stressors were associated with lower job satisfaction and emotional health.

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