

The Relationship between Marital Commitment and Ability of Empathy with Work-Family Conflict in the Male Employees

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Abstract

This research is a descriptive correlational study that is conducted by descriptive method and relational style to assess the relationship between marital commitment and ability to empathy with work-family conflict in the male employees of Dashti county Department of Education. Statistical population included all employed men in Dashti county Department of Education in 2014; the sample was 115 participants, who were selected by simple random sampling. Research tools were consisted of marital commitment questionnaire (Adams and Jones, 1997) and Work - Family Conflict Questionnaire (Carlson et al., 2000) and "Interpersonal Reactivity Index" (Davis, 1983 and 1996). Data analysis was performed by Regression analysis and correlation coefficients. The hypotheses analysis showed that there is no significant correlation between marital commitment and work-family conflict and there is a significant inverse relationship between empathy and work-family conflict, and also the marital commitment and empathy are able to predict work - family conflict.

Key Words: Marital commitment, Ability of empathy, Work-Family Conflict, Male Employees of Department of Education

Introduction

Empathy is the institutional capacity of people that helps them to regulate support relations of joint activities and group coordination. This ability plays a fundamental role in people's social life. In fact, empathy is the motivating force of social behaviors and behaviors that lead to group cohesion. Suitable empathy expressing tools involve having social skills. Empathy is one's alternative emotional response to the emotional reactions of others (Khodabaksh, 2012).

The work-family conflict has two major dimensions of family-work and work-family. The work-family conflict occurs when the demands of work with the energy and commitment reduction, reduces the one's ability to play the family role, and family-work conflict also occurs when family demands consume these resources in such a way that the employee's ability to perform job roles will be

reduced. It is clear that in any state, interference of conflicting demands of job - family roles makes it difficult to do obligations arising out of them (Malekiha, Baghban and Fatehizadeh, 2009).

Work and family are two systems of every person's life that each of them shapes the unique aspect of human behavior and each person must make balance between what each of these two aspects requires from his life. Work-family conflict occurs when the demands of one of these two domains (e.g. work) be incompatible with the demands of other domain (e.g. family) that this conflict could affect the quality of family life and the quality of working life. Researchers have described different types of conflict due to the timing and amount of tension behavior (Arizsamani, Dibaji and Sadeghi, 2011).

Several studies have found that that spouses' marital commitment is an important predictor of a stable and satisfying marriage (Hiyo and Lindzi, 2007). Marital commitment is to an extent that, in which people have a long-term perspective on their marriage, sacrifice to their relationship, take steps to maintaining and strengthening their solidarity and cohesion and they stay with their spouses even when the marriage is not rewarding (Harmon, 2005). people with high marital commitment tend to improve the satisfaction of their working relationship or they are less interested in thinking about alternative opportunities that can weaken their spouses' safety feeling.

Couples who don not reach the necessary maturity about their commitment and have two sided behavioral will be in trouble to pursue marriage and work with others (McCarthy, 1999). According to material presented, this study is looking for this issue whether there is a significant relationship between marital commitment and ability to empathy with work-family conflict?

Research Literature

Marital commitment: Personal commitment, ethical commitment and structural commitment are three-components of marital commitment. The word commitment and compliance means a rational decision which requires a person to be bounded by

certain actions or the state of emotional or intellectual dependence on the desirable ideal. Commitment is a tool that defines security and distance from the partner (Allen and Baucom, 2005). Commitment in marriage has several components: the manner of couples' understanding of the relationship in the past and the duration of the relationship, choosing of continuing behaviors of common life, the degree and breadth of a good relationship and desire to stay in the relationship for a long time, and receiving encouragement to stay in the relationship caused by both spouses (Rezaei et al., 2012).

Types of Marital Commitment

Commitment to Wife (Personal Commitment)

Personal commitment means interest and desire to continue the marital relationship that it is based on attraction and marital satisfaction (Johnson, 1999). A person may feel personally committed because he or she is interested to relationship partner, their relationship or the identity of the couple (Tang, 2006). Lidon and Kulijo (1997) by representation of "passionate commitment" concept, define this dimension as the following: interest and enthusiasm to maintain and sustain it.

Commitment to Marriage (Ethical Commitment)

Commitment to marriage can be based on religious convictions, belief that marriage is sacred, personal sense of pledges dignity and immorality of divorce (Harris, 2005). This commitment leads to activation of moral virtues such as friendship, perseverance and dedication (Kapinus and Johnson, 2003).

Compulsory Commitment (Structural Commitment)

The third dimension of marital commitment is structural commitment, in many theoretical models with compulsory aspects, marital commitment has been raised with different names that include: compulsory commitment, deterrent forces, external pressure, feeling trapped in disability and structural commitment. Structural commitment in marriage implies obstacles and limitations in leaving the marital relationship and feeling obligation to continue that relationship (Harmon, 2005).

Ability of Empathy

In a definition, empathy has been defined as the ability to recognize and understand the other person's perceptions and understanding and the exact transfer of this understanding as an accepting response (Roseshaghghi, 2010).

Types of empathy:

The creation and development of parents' empathy with children need efforts in three important dimensions of cognition, emotion and communication:

1. Cognitive empathy component obliges parents to observe exactly the child's behavior and be aware of the meaning of their observations. Empathy requires the familiarity with the experience and knowledge of the child's behavior and awareness of this behavior impact, such as effects on the thoughts and emotions of child's behavior when dealing with various life issues.

2. Emotional empathy component requires sensitivity to the feelings of children and listening to their words about their own feelings. These feelings appear in form of words, gestures or acts of children. These elements require coordination of parents' intake from of children's affects with children's behavior.

3. Component of communicative empathy is focused on transmission of this point to child that parents understand him, consider the facts about their child's experiences and behaviors and understand exactly his current feelings. In other words, empathy requires to be transferred to the child so that his parents understand him.

Researchers have found that there is a significant positive relationship between teenagers' empathy and behavior of parental support. According to a survey of those Chinese people who live in Hong Kong (ages 16 - 78 years), people who have grown in a coherent family their empathy them has grown and they feel responsibility about the welfare of their parents. According to Baron and Bayern, empathy is an important part of people's self-concept that they involve themselves support behavior. These people described self as responsible people and those who have their own harness and those who want to leave a good impression and patient (Feizabadi and Shahiyari, 2006).

Work-Family Conflict:

One of the most common definitions of work-family conflict that it is cited in many researches is related to Green House and Butel. Based on these definitions, work-family conflict is a interrole conflict in which the emerged pressure of work and familial roles of both sides are inconsistent, this means that participation in the role of work (or family) is difficult because of participation in family roles (Khalid, 2006).

Relationship between work and family life

Relationship between family and work has a gradual evolutionary process in itself. This process starts from the work and family independence and leads to work and family interaction. Finally, this process may lead to a conflict between work and family. Look at the history of the relationship between work and family can specify this process. In the distant past, work was focused on home and family, both men and women and children, by hunting, farming, and building place to live and raising children were spending their lives. With the advent of the industrial revolution (mid-1850s) a slight separation took place between family and work; Men away from home, from morning to night were working in factories, and women were busy with children and were doing housework. So, in this period work and home were independent of each other. After World War II, women were working outside the home; because need for this was felt. The years After 1950s, business problems have pressured families. In this era, the confrontation between labor and management organizations came into existence and its outcome is work and family problems (Nazari, 2007).

The consequences of work - family conflict

Work conflict and work - family conflict, affect the manner of working life and family conflict and family - work conflict affect the manner of a person's family life. Working life and family life manner, together, they predict life satisfaction (Robinson, Bryan and Kelley, 1998). And in terms of Higgins, Dukes Buri, and Irving (1992), the manner of work life is as pervasive structure, that entails the health of an individual's career, the case of work experience with rewards and completion, and away from stress and other negative consequences (Burke, Ronald J 2008). The manner of family life is the concept that embraces person's family health, when his role of as father / mother and wife, along with bonuses and complete, and away from stress and other negative consequences. Life satisfaction concept results from person's satisfaction of having a good career life and family (Malekiha, 1388).

The main hypothesis:

- There is a significant relationship between marital commitment and ability to empathize with work-family conflict in male employees of Department of Education.

Secondary Hypotheses:

- 1- There is a significant relationship between the marital commitment component and work conflict dimensions in male employees of Department of Education.

- 2- There is a significant relationship between the ability to empathy component and work conflict dimensions in male employees of Department of Education.
- 3- Marital commitment and ability of empathy are able to predict work-family conflict.

Method

This descriptive study is done by correlational method. Statistical population included all employed men in Dashti county Department of Education in 2014. Participants' age range was from 24 to 62 years. According to statistics, the total number of male employees in Dashti county Department of Education is 426 people. Based on Morgan table 115 people were selected as the statistical sample. To collect the data, Dimensions of commitment Inventory (DCI) (Adams and Jones, 1997), work-family conflict questionnaire (Carlson et al., 2000) and to measure the empathy, the "Interpersonal Reactions list" (Davis, 1983 1996) questionnaire have been. To analyze the data, correlation and regression analysis were used.

Data Analysis

The main hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between marital commitment and ability to empathize with work-family conflict in male employees of Department of Education.

Table 1: Coefficient of marital commitment and empathy with work-family conflict

Variables	Marital Commitment	Empathy	Work-Family Conflict
Marital Commitment	1		
Empathy	0.261**	1	
Work-Family Conflict	-0.034	-0.205*	1

According to the above table, it can be noticed the there is significant and inverse relationship between empathy and work-family conflict at a significance level of $P \leq 0.05$. But there is no significant relationship between marital commitment and work-family conflict.

The first hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between the components of marital commitment and work conflict dimensions in male employees of Department of Education.

Table 2: Pearson's correlation coefficient between the components of commitment and conflict dimension

Variables	Commitment to wife	Commitment to marriage	Compulsory commitment
	r	r	r
Time-based work-family conflict	0.12	*.20	0.05
Time-based family-work conflict	** .28	0.05	**-.27
Strain-based work-family conflict	0.01	0.10	*-.19
Strain-based family-work conflict	*.23	** .31	-.14
Behavior-based work-family conflict	** .49	0.14	-.02
Behavior-based family-work conflict	** .31	-.08	*-.23

Based on the results of the Pearson correlation coefficient 1: There relation between commitment to wife with behavior-based work-family conflict, behavior-based family-work conflict and time-based family-work conflict at the level of 0/01 and the strain-based work-family conflict at the level of 0/05 is a significant and positive relationship. 2- There is a significant positive relationship between commitment to marriage and strain-based family-work conflict and time-based work-family conflict. 3. The compulsory commitment respectively has to a significant negative relationship with time-based family-work conflict, behavior-based work-family conflict and strain-based work-family conflict.

The second Hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between the components of ability to empathy and work conflict dimensions in male employees of Department of Education.

Table 3: Pearson’s Correlation coefficient between the components of empathy and dimensions of work-family conflict

Variables	Empathic concern	Perspective	Personal sad
	r	r	r
Time-based work-family conflict	0.01	-.105	0.106
Time-Based family –work conflict	** .28	0.15	**0.24
Strain-based work-family conflict	-0.099	0.11	-0.003
Strain-based family-work conflict	-0.19	** .63	**0.49
Behavior-based work-family conflict	0.05	0.14	-.02
Behavior-based family-work conflict	** .31	-0.007	**0.29

Based on the results of the Pearson’s correlation coefficient between empathy and conflict dimensions it was shown that among the empathy components, perspective acceptance component with strain-based family-work conflict and personal sadness with time-based family-work conflict component and behavior-based work-family conflict and family-work conflict behavior-based there is a direct and significant relationship, there was no significant relationship in other dimensions.

The third Hypothesis: Marital commitment and ability of empathy are able to predict work-family conflict.

Table 4: Stepwise regression analysis predicting work-family conflict

Step	Predictive variable	R	R2	b	The standard error	Beta	T	Significance level
The first	Empathy (general)	0.45	0.20	0.40	0.18	0.45	2.16	0.033
Marital commitment	Personal sadness	0.39	0.15	1.48	0.39	0.34	3.75	0.000
	Commitment to wife			0.74	0.21	0.31	2.3	0.001
	Compulsory commitment			-0.18	0.08	-0.20	-2.28	0.024

As it can be seen in the table above, in the first step 20% of marital commitment and ability of empathy are able to predict work-family conflict, and in the second step 15/0 are able to predict the criterion variable. Beta coefficient for personal sadness variable from of empathy components with the highest predictive ability is equal to 0/34.

Discussion and conclusion

The main hypothesis:

Results of Table 1 shows that between marital commitment and empathy at a significance level of $P \leq 0.01$ there is a direct and significant relationship and between empathy and work-family conflict at a significance level of $P \leq 0.05$ there is a significant inverse relationship. But there is no significant relationship between marital commitment and work-family conflict. Although no study was about the relationship between these two variables but was contrary with Malekiha’s (2008) study which showed that work-family conflict management training is effective on marital satisfaction.

To illustrate this hypothesis it can be said when people have work-family conflict they have more stress and anxiety and this leads to reducing the balance in the family and increasing pressure of work and family domains roles and finally the ability of empathy will be reduced. In fact we can say when people who have work-family conflict, have distress in the families. That reduces the responsibility of the people and eventually reduced the ability of empathy.

The first hypothesis:

Results of Table (2) on the relationship between the components of marital commitment and conflict dimensions showed that among the components of the marital commitment, commitment to wife component with time-based family-work conflict

and behavior-based work-family conflict and family-work conflict and commitment to marriage component with behavior-based family-work conflict and compulsory commitment component and strain-based family-work conflict there is a significant correlation and there was no relationship in the other dimensions that this result is inconsistent with Malekiha's et al. (2008) study which showed that changing work hours was effective on work-family conflict.

To illustrate this hypothesis it can be said people who are committed to their spouses have low of time-based family-work conflict and behavior-based work-family conflict. In other words, when one has commitment to his or spouse will be more responsible and less stress and tension will be taken place in the family. And the probability of time-based family-work conflict and behavior-based work-family conflict is reduced.

The second hypothesis:

Obtained results from Table 3 "Pearson's correlation coefficient about the relationship between empathy and conflict dimensions" showed that from empathy components, perspective acceptance component with family-work conflict strain-based and personal sadness component with time-based family-work conflict and behavior-based work-family conflict and behavior-based family-work conflict has a significant and direct relationship and there was no significant relationship in the other dimensions no consistent investigations with these findings were found.

In the case of people who have higher personal sadness, time-based family-work conflict and behavior-based work-family conflict will rise. When people have higher personal sadness, cannot interact with others and also do not have the ability to understand others' feelings and have lower sense of responsibility. Finally, have more time-based family-work conflict and behavior-based work-family conflict.

The third hypothesis:

As it can be seen in Table 4, the stepwise regression indicates that marital commitment and empathy are able to predict work-family conflict. A study has not been conducted to examine these two variables together. However, Baker and colleagues (2005) showed that work-family conflict has the power to predict job satisfaction.

To explain these findings it can be said the most important thing in the lives of men that the change in it make those people suffering from the mental stress is their job and stressed all the men's relations

of outside the workplace, such as the marital commitment and intimacy.

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