

## Work - Family Conflicts in Apparel Industry of Sri Lanka

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### *Abstract*

*Work - family conflict can be explained as “a form of inter role conflict in which the role burdens from the work and family domains are mutually inappropriate in some traditions”. Family is a small and significant unit of the society. As a person, everyone plays a vital role in their families. The study pertains to empirical investigation of the work – family conflicts in the apparel industry of Sri Lanka. The objectives of the study: to examine relationships between variables and to recognize significance variables of the work – family conflicts in the apparel industry. A sample size consists of 267 respondents. The analytical tools of the study are coefficient of correlation and ANOVA. The study identified those five variables. The work - family social respect is one of the issues in this industry. Work - family conflicts were adversely affected to workers’ performance and dissatisfaction of workers in this industry and it creates absenteeism and labor turnover within the industry. The production process of the apparel industry has dropped from the Sri Lankan economy. The work - family conflicts are invisible issues in the apparel industry of Sri Lanka.*

**Key Words:** *Work Demand, Stress, Family Commitment, Personal Role and Perception.*

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### **Introduction**

The family is very small unit in every society and it is the base of the society itself. And it is contributed to develop culture and economy. Family can be defined as “a group consisting of two parents and their children living together as a unit” (The Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1999). As a person, everyone plays a vital role in their families. As an employee also plays a vital part in his/her office or factory. The part of human life is the work; it is defined in same Dictionary as “activity involving mental or physical effort done in order to achieve a result. The work - family conflicts have been identified as one of the issues propelling any society’s damage in various aspects; social, cultural and economic. Administration of the working place is committed to a sustainable development strategy. Protection of the social life of workers, maintenance of working environment and facilities, maximization of organizational economic benefits to the larger cross sections of the business. The Dictionary defines conflict as “a serious disagreement or argument”. Further employee’s health and performance are directly affected by work - family conflicts and inevitable result cannot be avoided from the employee functionalities in organization.

Work - family conflict can be explained as “a form of inter role conflict in which the role burdens from the work and family domains are mutually inappropriate in some traditions” (Fernando, 2011). According to Greenhaus & Beutell (1985), work-family conflict refers to conflicting role pressures between job and family that are incompatible so that participation in one role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in the other. Employee, an individual always identifies him with the roles he/she plays in each

of these domains, and he/she is considered to be the most common and valuable roles. So, experience and outcome of work - family conflicts must be recognized for the work - family balance of employees.

There are many arguments and debate related to the work - family conflict in the world. Reflecting this debate in the field are the numerous theories, models, and hypotheses researchers have offered as explanations for these relationships. Few theories among the relationships have identified for the purpose of understanding the structure of work – family conflict. With the aid of different theories it can be noted that work - family conflict has a boundary and frame explaining the theories such as, (a). Work/Family Border Theory, (b). Role Theory, (c). The Spillover Theory, (d). The Compensation Theory, and (e). The Social Identity Theory (Fernando, 2011).

### Significance of the Study

The term “apparel” can be defined as nonmetallic dress worn by humans. There are some sub categorizes in the apparel industry such as readymade, garment and cloth related wearing item as well as other non-metallic (woolen, fiber, leather, plastic, pearl) wearing items; fiber or plastic helmet, leather – rubber different kind of wearing belt, pearl necklace and other wearing items, jerkin and rubber/plastic wearing dress etc.....

In Sri Lanka has a prolonged history about the apparel industry. But 1977, after introducing open economy, the apparel industry developed rapidly. Especially the Board of Investment (BOI) was played a vital role for the purpose of developing the industry. Even now the apparel industry is important in some respects in community of Sri Lanka; the employment generation, the foreign exchange earnings, many job opportunities are prevailing for blue – collar employees, women found majority of jobs, and the apparel factories in the island wide, being the most important among them. Further, this distinguished feature has caused to absorb vast young vigor amounts of regionally distributed human resource. It has also benefited to achieve some provincial economic balance. Two hundred (200) garment factories programme, which have been launched by the Government (1992) as a part of its Rural Development Industrialization Program, has as its goal the alleviation of poverty in the rural areas through the creation of vast employment opportunities. Especially the apparel industry had a plaid major part in Sri Lankan economy, for the purpose of providing employment opportunities and earning foreign exchange (Annual Reports, 1997). The direct employment generation exceeds 283,000 in 2011

In 2007, the industry has accounted for 43 per cent of total export earnings of the country, recorded a higher growth of 8.3 per cent in 2007 compared to the 4.0 per cent growth recorded in 2006. In 2012, the situation recorded of 23 per cent of total export earnings of the country, accounted a growth of 118.5% per cent in 2012 compared to the 113.8 per cent growth recorded in 2011. Further, the apparel industry has therefore been able to sustain its performance despite the slowdown of these major economies which continue to be key export target markets. Total apparel exports financial income was at \$ 3.36 billion in 2010, \$ 4.03 billion in 2011 and \$ 3.8 billion in 2012. There was a 5.8 percent drop in exports in 2012 (The Central Bank, 1996,1997,2007,2008, 2010, 2011 and 2012)

### Statement of the Problem

One of the factors of success of any organisation depends on how it attracts, develops, and retains its staff/labour force. Either without enough staff, or high labour turnover has indicated as an impotent aspect, which affects an organization inefficiency. According to the Central Bank, operating numbers of factories (projects) were decreased in the past few years: 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013 as 587, 374, 367, 358, and 341 respectively. Secretary General of the Joint Apparel Association Forum (JAAF) Mr. M. P. T. Cooray said that the apparel industry in Sri Lanka has struggled with difficult situations for the retaining and success. The industry faces issues such as labour shortage and cost increase. And the investment in the apparel sector has changed over time. In 2005, when the Multi Fibre Agreement with the US was in place

there were around 800 apparel factories. But exports were low as \$ 2.5 billion. Today there are around 350 factories, but exports total \$ 3.8 billion. Labour turnover is high due to some invisible problems in this industry. 30,000 vacancies were could be seen in 2013 and labour shortage is a serious issue in the apparel industry. One of the major reasons for labour shortage is the attitude of the people and the situation created socials' low respect to the apparel industry. The scenario indicates that, the importance of family in culture values and norms. The result, employee as human beings do whatever they make priority to protect and run for the good of their family. The study is going to find the outcomes of the social low respect of the apparel industry. Especially what are the reasons behind the work – family conflicts ([www.sundayobserver.lk/2013/05/05/fin26.asp](http://www.sundayobserver.lk/2013/05/05/fin26.asp)).

## Literature Survey

The selected literature was conceded to find the variables and back ground of the work - family conflicts of the present study. Elisa J. Grant-Vallone and Stewart I. Donaldson (2001) study revealed that how to balance of working life and family life in an organization. Further, the organizational policies that minimize conflict and encourage balance between individual life and working or office life are needed for employees and not just those who are perceived as having high levels of work demands. Organizations are supported to balance and its impact on these personal behaviours as a business issue that affects all organizations.

Herman and Gyllstrom (1977), studied about sex differences, inter- social role and inter- work role conflict in a university setting. The study concluded that inter - role conflicts were primarily a function of the number of social roles held and there was no number of social roles by sex interaction. And women apparent greater conflict between the work and home related roles than men.

Marks, (1977) has explained empirically Role theory. According to the study Role theory has explained a useful framework to understand how men and women attempt to balance multiple roles. Within role theory, the scarcity hypothesis proposes that the amount of time and energy individuals have is constant. Therefore, an increase in roles results in the increased possibility of role conflict, overload and negative consequences.

In the work-family literature is often examined within a stress and coping framework. Specifically, the effects of three stressors are considered (work pressures, home pressures, and inter role conflict). Greenhaus, & Parasuraman, (1986) examined models of stressors and their contribution to various personal and organizational outcomes. The study explained the work and family interface and its effect on conflict often utilize a framework that grew out of general stress models. And Fernando, W.R.P.K. (2010), explained some factors for exhaustion and stress in Apparel Industry of Sri Lanka. Factors; job involvement, job ambiguity, culture, salary and environment. The study concluded that majority of factors were interrelated and significantly influenced stress, apparel industry workers were suffering from stress.

The study, Carikci Ilker (2002), based on, gender and domain differences in the work -family conflict among men and men managers in Turkey. The study found that women considered their families and family activities much more than men. Women undertake most of the family commitments and responsibilities from child care to parents. These results refer to greater responsibility of women for family matters than men. The sample was 110 men and 137 women.

Alpert, and Culbertson. (1987). There is evidence that the perception of person's lead to the work - family conflict. Attitude of employees and spouse can contribute to conflicts. The situation overloads and has negative repercussion for the well-being and performance of employees. As a result, increased possibility of a conflict, overload and negative consequences.

In summary of literature review, the prier studies have offered different perspectives of the work - family conflicts. The review of literature validated the appropriateness of the variables and a model to answer the research problem

## Research Questions

The study has derived research questions as follows.

1. Do families make priority to protect and run for the blameless of employees' family?
2. What are the families' culture values and norms?

## Objectives

The objectives of the study are;

1. To examine relationships between variables of the work – family conflicts in the apparel industry of Sri Lanka
2. To recognize significance variables of the work – family conflicts in the apparel industry of Sri Lanka.
3. To propose a good recommendation to implement for the work – family conflicts in the apparel industry of Sri Lanka.

## Hypotheses

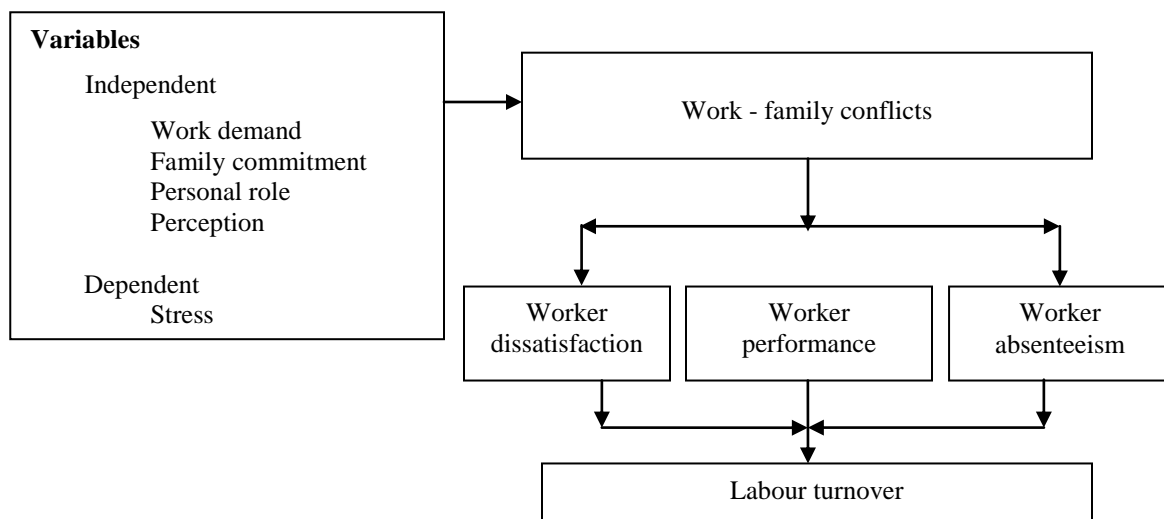
The study had derived hypotheses as follows.

- H<sub>1</sub> = “There is insignificant relationship between variables of the work – family conflict in the apparel industry of Sri Lanka”.
- H<sub>2</sub> = “There is significant relationship between variables of the work demand and perception in the apparel industry of Sri Lanka”.

## Variables of the Study

According to the some significant point of literature review, the study has selected variables as follows. Work demand , Stress, Family commitment, Personal role, Perception

## Conceptual Framework



## Methodology

### Sample

A sample size of 300 (Executives = 50, Workers – Blue collar = 250) respondents was selected on the basis of random sampling from the apparel industry. But only 267 respondents had returned the correct questionnaires.

Table – 01 Sample Size

Occupational category	Inside the EPZ/FTZ	Outside the EPZ/FTZ	Total
Executives	21	21	42 (15.73)
Workers – Blue collar	120	105	225 (84.27)
	141	126	267 (100)

### Variables - Reliability Analysis

The variables as curtailed by split- half method and Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were 0.95 and 0.86 respectively. The Work- Family Conflicts included five variables.

### Procedure

The primary data for the study investigation were collected through questionnaire using the five point Likert scale.

### Statistical Tools

The variables of the study were evaluated by the coefficient of correlation and ANOVA and using the software SPSS version 17.

### Analysis

#### Correlation of Variables

The correlation data is shown in Table – 02; the results of correlation analysis between the different variables of work family conflicts in the apparel industry of Sri Lanka. Further; the significance of the correlation is indicated.

Table – 02 Correlation of Variables

Variables of Work - Family Conflicts	Work demand	Family commitment	Stress	Personal role	Perception
Work demand	1				
Family commitment	0.542*	1			
Stress	0.635*	0.640*	1		
Personal role	0.495*	0.605*	0.630*	1	
Perception	0.445	0.648*	0.387*	0.588*	1

\*- Significant at 5% level, Source: Primary Data

The Table 02 explains that there exists significant correlation between the different variables of the work - family conflict in the apparel industry workers' of Sri Lanka. In short, there exists significant inter correlation between the various work - family - conflict related factors, except work demand and perception among the workers in Sri Lankan apparel industry.

**Influences of variables on the Work - Family Conflicts**

Table – 3 describes the result of ANOVA in terms of Variables of the work - family conflicts, sample groups, sum of the squares, mean sum of squares, degree of freedom, mean squares, F ratio and its significance of the respondents on the work - family conflicts.

Table - 03 Anova for the Work - Family Conflicts

Variables of Work - Family Conflicts	Sample Groups	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	P value and Sig.
Work demand	Between Groups	4.032	3	1.341	4.089	.007
	Within Groups	86.238	263	.328		
	Total	90.270	266			
Family commitment	Between Groups	9.644	3	3.125	3.637	.013
	Within Groups	232.485	263	.884		
	Total	242.129	266			
Stress	Between Groups	3.302	3	1.101	2.963	.033
	Within Groups	97.677	263	.371		
	Total	100.979	266			
Personal role	Between Groups	7.167	3	2.397	3.406	.018
	Within Groups	184.995	263	.703		
	Total	192.162	266			
Perception	Between Groups	2.102	3	.701	2.689	.047
	Within Groups	68.525	263	.261		
	Total	70.627	266			

\*- Significant at 5% level, Source: Primary Data

From the table 3 it is found that the work demand (F = 4.089, p = .007) is statistically significant a 5% level. The comparison of Work demand variable showed that the employees in apparel industry (Mean = 3.385) agree with work - family conflicts. Other variables such as Stress, Family commitment, Personal role and Perception have obtained their p values 0.013, 0.033, 0.018 and 0.047 respectively. The perception value has reached to significant value of 5%. It revealed that an employee's perception or attitudes about every dimension of job or working place. All the p values were less than the 5% (0.05) level and statistically significant. Therefore all the variables were adversely affected to the work - family conflicts. It revealed that employees' labour turnover about every dimension of working place

**Testing Hypotheses**

H<sub>1</sub> = "There is insignificant relationship between the variables to the work – family conflict in the apparel industry of Sri Lanka".

According to the Table 3, the hypothesis, "There is insignificant relationship between the variables of the work – family conflict in the apparel industry of Sri Lanka", is rejected because All the p values are less than the 5% (0.05) level and statistically significant. And all the variables were affected to the work - family conflicts.

H<sub>2</sub> = "There is significant relationship between variables of the work demand and perception in the apparel industry of Sri Lanka".

Giving the Table 2, the hypothesis, “There is significant relationship between variables of the work demand and perception in the apparel industry of Sri Lanka”, is rejected because the variables of work demand and perception are not significant relationship among the workers in Sri Lankan apparel industry.

## Result and Findings of the Study

The important findings of the study, as follows:

- i. The study revealed that majority of variables are associated with work - family conflict in the apparel industry of Sri Lanka.
- ii. The two variables of work demand and perception, they were not interrelated on work - family conflict in the apparel industry of Sri Lanka.
- iii. All the variables; work demand, stress, family commitment, personal role and perception are significant in the work - family conflicts of the apparel industry in Sri Lanka.
- iv. All the variables; work demand, stress, family commitment, personal role and perception are effected to the productivity in the apparel industry of Sri Lanka.
- v. The study revealed that a peoples’ perception or attitudes about every dimension of social stigma of the job or working place in the apparel industry of Sri Lanka.
- vi. There is a significant association between various proportions of work - family conflict and worker performances of the apparel industry in Sri Lanka.
- vii. There is a significant relationship between various dimensions of work - family conflict and worker dissatisfaction of the apparel industry in Sri Lanka.
- viii. There is a significant association between various dimensions of work - family conflict and worker turnover of the apparel industry in Sri Lanka.
- ix. The work - family conflicts in the apparel industry of Sri Lanka are affected in unfavorably to workers performances of the industry.
- x. The work - family conflicts are created path to labour turnover in the apparel industry of Sri Lanka.
- xi. Based on the study, the ‘social stigma’ among families of employees can be recognized in the apparel industry of Sri Lanka.

## Conclusion

The study found that five variables such as work demand, stress, family commitment, personal role and perception, they are playing very vital role for the work - family conflicts in the apparel industry of Sri Lanka. Above variables are associated except two variables; work demand and perception and they have significantly influenced to the work - family conflicts. The work - family social respect attached to the apparel industry is one of the issues. All the variables of the work - family conflicts were adversely affected to workers’ satisfaction in the industry. As well as the variables of the work - family conflicts have created path to low performance of workers in this industry. And the dissatisfaction makes absenteeism and the scenario creates labor turnover within the industry. The work – family conflict is a complex concept, indicating the concern for the employees of the apparel industry irrespective of the level they belong to. Totally, it is influenced to the employees as well as on the organizational consequence. It revealed that a person’s perception or attitudes about every dimension of job or working place. Otherwise, work - family conflicts are invisible issue in the apparel industry of Sri Lanka. Finally, production process of the apparel industry has dropped from the Sri Lankan economy.

## Recommendations

1. The administration of the organization try to understand general issues of employees.
2. Organizational structure can be arranged to balance of work affecting family and family affecting work for the employees.

3. Employees' families are given some help/assignment to release for their physical and psychologically tired.
4. Welfare union can be established. For the purpose of developing relations among all the employees of organization (Ex: Get together parties / trips. New Year festival etc.... can be organized by welfare union).
5. Counselling services can be provided for the employees those who are expecting the help.
6. Some plans for financial help can be organized for the employees.
7. Quality circle unit can be establish for the organization.
8. To give opportunities for spouse to identify employees' working environment and other employees.

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