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Article

The Impact of Work–Family Conflict and Burnout on Satisfaction and Turnover Intentions Across a Middle Eastern and a European Country

Tara Tavassoli ¹  and Albert Sunyer ^{2,*} 

¹ Department of Management, Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, 08034 Barcelona, Spain; tara.tavassoli@upc.edu

² Department of Management, ESEIAAT, Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, 08222 Terrassa, Spain

* Correspondence: albert.sunyer.torrents@upc.edu

Abstract: This study investigates the role of work–family conflict (WFC), family–work conflict (FWC), and two dimensions of burnout (emotional exhaustion and cynicism) in mediating the relationships between work demands and job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and turnover intention across a Middle Eastern country and a European country. The study uses two samples including 263 full-time employees from both countries. The quantitative analysis using structural equation modeling (SEM) revealed that higher levels of work–family conflict (WFC), and family–work conflict (FWC) were associated with lower levels of job satisfaction and life satisfaction. Additionally, burnout showed negative effects on job and life satisfaction, and a positive relationship with turnover intentions across nations. Differences were also found between country samples, with employed women from the Middle Eastern country experiencing higher dual-role conflict and lower satisfaction.

Keywords: work–family conflict; family–work conflict; burnout; job satisfaction; life satisfaction; turnover intentions; cross-national research



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1. Introduction

Middle Eastern societies are currently evolving from traditional to modern lifestyles (Karimi, 2009; Beigi et al., 2012). This social transformation involves changes in both the work and the family domain (Karimi, 2009). As the traditional social roles of caregiving women and breadwinning men transition into more modern roles in which women pursue their professional careers and job aspirations, some issues affecting the work–family interface may emerge (Yang et al., 2000). However, only a few studies have focused on how these social changes impact the interface between work and family roles in Middle Eastern countries (Yang et al., 2000).

These social and demographic changes are occurring in Iran as well (Beigi et al., 2012). According to the World Bank, the percentage of employed females in Iran grew from 10% in 1991 to 14.4% in 2023 (World Bank, 2024), and the literacy rate of 15–24-year-old women grew from 96.74% in 2005 to 98.93% in 2022 (UNESCO, 2022). Because of these sociodemographic changes, conflict between job and family roles may arise in Iranian employees (Karimi, 2008). Namayandeh et al. (2011) explored work-to-family conflict (WFC) and family-to-work conflict (FWC) among female nurses in Iran and revealed that Iranian women who work full time face both domestic and job pressures. Even though more housewives participate in responsibilities out of the home (Rastegarkhaled, 2004), the discrimination in women’s employment in Iran can be attributed to the male-dominant

culture in this society (Bahrami et al., 2023). Although the majority of Iranian women are educated and participate more in the workplace, they still have to fulfill domestic tasks such as childcare and housekeeping, meaning that role expectations for Iranian women are different from those for women from Western countries (Karimi, 2008). Therefore, they face higher demands from their job and family responsibilities (Karimi, 2009). Additionally, married employees are more exposed to experiencing work–family conflict than single employees since their time and energy are limited. Single employees have fewer family responsibilities and are less prone to experiencing WFC (Beigi et al., 2012). Moreover, globalization has come to Iranian society in the last few decades, which has led to higher competition in the global market (Karimi & Nouri, 2009).

The cultural aspect of every society influences attitudes, values, and duties related to WFC (Yang et al., 2000). For instance, the concept of “family” in Middle-East is different from that in Western cultures and is a substantial factor in Iranian culture. A traditional family in Iran includes parents and other relatives such as grandparents, aunts, and uncles. Usually, a person has frequent visits and contact with other family members, and there are some commitments towards other relatives (Karimi, 2008). Therefore, the identity of a person is tied to the identity of his or her family (O’Shea, 2003). Considering the central position of family in Iranian culture, the intensity of potential conflicts between family and work roles might be different from that of Western cultures (Karimi, 2008).

Another difference between Iran and Western cultures is the “time” factor. Hofstede (2001) mentioned that time is a significant factor in Western societies compared to in Eastern societies. Usually, in Eastern societies, individuals pay more attention to their work. Therefore, employees spend longer hours at the workplace (Fackrell et al., 2013). In particular, Iranian employees regularly work 44 h per week on average, compared to the standard 40 h work week in Europe (Araghi, 2002). However, most employees work more than 44 h; for instance, women can work 45 h per week and men can work up to 57 h per week (Karimi, 2009). In light of these characteristics of Iranian society, more research is needed in the field of cross-cultural WFC in Iran (Taghizadeh et al., 2021).

The main goal of this research is to gain a deeper understanding not only of work–family conflict and burnout among employees, but also of their potential effects on satisfaction and turnover intentions across cultures. For this purpose, this study will focus on the relationships between both directions of work–family conflict (work-to-family and family-to-work) and two core dimensions of burnout (emotional exhaustion and cynicism) as antecedents of satisfaction and turnover intentions. Emotional exhaustion refers to the feelings of being drained of one’s physical, cognitive, and emotional resources, while cynicism captures the attitude of being disengaged from various aspects of one’s job (Maslach et al., 2001).

Extending work and family research across nations is an important endeavor because most current research only covers Western countries, and the results may not transfer directly to other cultural contexts (Ollier-Malaterre, 2016; Karimi, 2009). The main goal of this study is to analyze the work context from a cross-national perspective by comparing a Middle Eastern country (Iran) with a European country (Spain). For this purpose, this study will explore some factors from the work context (work demands) and their relationships with work–family conflict and burnout in both countries. Finally, this study will analyze and compare the impact of these factors on employee satisfaction and turnover intentions across countries.

2. Literature Review on Work–Family Conflict: Its Antecedents and Outcomes

Work and family are the most important parts of many people's lives. However, high demands from the work and family domains may create work–family conflict (Lambert, 1990). Work–family conflict (WFC) is described as an incompatible inter-role conflict in which demands from work and family do not fit. The conflict occurs when pressures from work and family domains are incompatible, and this incompatibility prevents participation in different roles (Greenhaus & Powell, 2003). The significant characteristic of WFC is a lack of fit between one's home and job duties (Abbott et al., 1998). Employees who face multiple roles in the home and the workplace experience difficulties participating in all activities, and consequently, WFC is increased (Wattoo et al., 2020). The negative outcomes of conflict for individuals are depression, anxiety, lower level of life satisfaction, and divorce, and for organizations they are absenteeism, lower productivity, and higher turnover intentions (Rode et al., 2007).

In particular, conflict between the work and family domains arise when one domain affects the other domain (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). Higher conflict may cause exhaustion, job dissatisfaction, withdrawal behavior, and reduced focus (Warokka & Febrilia, 2015). Employee satisfaction is a relevant factor that may lead to positive outcomes for organizations (Dev & Sengupta, 2017). On the personal domain, earlier studies showed a negative influence of conflict on employees' well-being (Frone et al., 1992), task performance (Mora et al., 2023), and affect (Brandão & Matias, 2024), as well as a negative impact on life satisfaction, marital satisfaction, and mental well-being, including health issues (Demerouti et al., 2001; Chandola et al., 2004). For example, Ahmad (1996) investigated the influence of WFC on job and family satisfaction in Malaysia. She found that WFC was negatively related to both job and family satisfaction, so WFC had negative consequences for individuals and organizations and could be critical concern for both.

WFC has been associated with scarcity theory, which states that personal resources like energy or time are limited and that allocating more resources to one role means allocating fewer resources to another role (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). Therefore, conflict is more likely to be experienced by family members who actively participate in work and family roles at the same time (Greenhaus & Powell, 2003).

Work–family conflict moves in two directions: work-to-family conflict (WFC) and family-to-work conflict (FWC) (Karimi, 2009). WFC occurs when demands from work interfere with family demands, while in contrast, FWC happens when family demands interfere with work demands (Frone et al., 1997; Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999). Some factors such as limited time and energy for fulfilling work and family roles have been associated with work–family conflict, which needs to be better understood (Boyar et al., 2008). Work–family conflict has also been associated with burnout syndrome (Leiter & Durup, 1996; Kossek & Ozeki, 1999). Some studies have revealed that relationships might exist between work–family conflict, burnout, and health issues (Demerouti et al., 2001; Major et al., 2002). Conflicting job demands and high job expectations may lead to burnout. Burnout may occur at any job, although it may increase as a result of work conditions like high job demands, severe client problems, and high customer demand (Maslach et al., 2001). This research interest is to first shed light on the antecedents and consequences of WFC and burnout in a Middle Eastern country (Iran), and then to compare these results with a European country (Spain).

Work demands are defined as pressures from extreme workloads and time limitations such as rush jobs and deadlines (Yang et al., 2000). Work demands are related to work stressors such as high work pressure, emotional demands, and overtime pressure (Bakker et al., 2004). High work demands use up an individual's intellectual and physical resources,

and they may eventually create burnout (Hakanen et al., 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Maslach et al. (2001) found that individuals who experienced strong work demands, such as overtime hours or exceedingly demanding clients, were consistently prone to feeling burnout, especially emotional exhaustion. When individuals work in a high-pressure environment, they may spend extra energy on performing tasks, and exerting that extra energy may consequently lead to exhaustion (Bakker et al., 2004). Accordingly, we predict that work demands are associated with burnout across countries. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 1. *Work demands are positively related to (a) emotional exhaustion and (b) cynicism across countries.*

Spending more time at work means that individuals have less time for other non-work activities (Frone et al., 1997). A lack of time for family activities makes it difficult for individuals to meet their family responsibilities (Voydanoff, 2005). Therefore, greater demands from work may limit an individual's time, energy, and attention, thereby creating conflicts between the work and family domains (Michel et al., 2011). Accordingly, some researchers argue that greater work demands may lead to fatigue and irritability; thus, higher levels of work demands can be related to work–family conflict (Parasuraman & Simmers, 2001; Carlson & Kacmar, 2000). Therefore, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 2. *Work demands are positively related to both dimensions of conflict, labeled (a) WFC and (b) FWC, across countries.*

Burnout can decrease employees' energy and may generate negative attitudes toward the company, making employees prone to working ineffectively (Singh et al., 1994). Some research found that burnout was related to decreased job satisfaction (Maslach et al., 2001), while other studies noted that it could lead to stress, emotional exhaustion, and a cynical viewpoint toward work, all of which were found to be associated with lower levels of job satisfaction (Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004; Maslach et al., 2001). Job satisfaction was conceptualized as individuals' feeling toward their profession (Dev & Sengupta, 2017). Burnout may affect individuals negatively and decrease employee confidence. Accordingly, employees may have less energy for problem solving and may reduce their efforts on the job. As a result, feelings of burnout could be negatively associated with employees' satisfaction. Based on these arguments, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 3. *The two dimensions of burnout, (a) emotional exhaustion and (b) cynicism, are negatively related to job satisfaction across countries.*

Burnout makes employees feel exhausted, disappointed, and broken down, which in turn may lead to serious negative outcomes such as reduced life satisfaction (Hayes & Weathington, 2007). Hayes and Weathington (2007) showed that burnout creates personal distress such as emotional exhaustion, sleep disturbance, and marital problems, all of which negatively impact life satisfaction. Some scholars found that individuals experienced some negative consequences of burnout in their personal lives, such as anxiety, depression, or other mental health issues. Hakanen et al. (2006) found that emotional exhaustion and cynicism among employees created negative life outcomes that were associated with reduced health. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 4. *The two dimensions of burnout, (a) emotional exhaustion and (b) cynicism, are negatively related to life satisfaction across countries.*

Several scholars found that burnout was a critical reason behind turnover intentions (Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004; Podsakoff et al., 2007). In this sense, burnout influenced employees' concern about their organization and increased the possibility of withdrawal behaviors (Bakker et al., 2004; Colligan & Higgins, 2006; Freitas et al., 2023; Pandey et al., 2019). Initially, when individuals experienced burnout, the rate of absenteeism and physical isolation increased, and employees avoided contact with their colleagues and customers. Eventually, they could leave their jobs, organizations, or even careers (Bedeian, 2007; Watt & Piotrowski, 2008). Leiter and Maslach (2009) found that cynicism caused psychological withdrawal, which was related to social withdrawal from work. Based on these arguments, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 5. *The two dimensions of burnout, (a) emotional exhaustion and (b) cynicism, are positively related to turnover intentions across countries.*

As mentioned above, work–family conflict occurs when demands from one domain are not compatible with demands from the other domain. Thus, this conflict may affect both job and life satisfaction. Burke (1988) considered a sample of police officers and found that a high level of WFC led to less job satisfaction. Similarly, Bacharach et al. (1991) considered a sample of nurses and engineers, which revealed that work interfering with family was associated with less job satisfaction. Thomas and Ganster (1995) also showed that work interfering with the family domain was negatively associated with job satisfaction. Increased levels of WFC and FWC were related to less job satisfaction (Adams et al., 1996; Pandey et al., 2019; Parasuraman & Greenhaus, 2002). As a consequence, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 6. *The two dimensions of conflict labeled (a) WFC and (b) FWC are negatively related to job satisfaction across countries.*

Empirical research has reported that both WFC and FWC negatively influence life-related outcomes (Adams et al., 1996). For instance, Mauno and Kinnunen (1999) found that conflict at work was negatively related to personal life satisfaction. Major et al. (2002) indicated that job conflicts may negatively affect mental health and life satisfaction. Michael et al. (2004) confirmed negative relationships between both forms of conflict (WFC, FWC) and life satisfaction. Barnett and Gareis (2002) reported that work conflicting with life tasks was associated with poorer satisfaction with personal life. Other scholars also found a negative relationship between WFC and life satisfaction. For example, Higgins et al. (1992) considered 220 employees and found that work conflicting with family was associated with low life satisfaction. Other studies found that both work–family conflict and family–work conflict were negatively associated with happiness (Lu et al., 2006; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998; Barnett & Gareis, 2002). Based on these arguments, we expect a negative relationship between both forms of conflict and life satisfaction. Thus, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 7. *The two dimensions of conflict labeled (a) WFC and (b) FWC are negatively related to life satisfaction across countries.*

Previous studies suggest that when the job domain interferes with the family domain, turnover intentions increase (Frone et al., 1992; Balmforth & Gardner, 2006). This may happen because some employees may feel that leaving their jobs is a solution to resolving their work–family conflicts (Bellavia & Frone, 2005; Boyar et al., 2003). In this sense, Shaffer et al. (2001) found that both WFC and FWC were associated with turnover intentions, and Haar (2004) found that high work–family conflict encouraged individuals to leave their

organization. Thus, we expect positive relationships between both dimensions of conflict and turnover intentions across countries, and we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 8. *The two dimensions of conflict labeled (a) WFC and (b) FWC are positively related to turnover intentions across countries.*

Figure 1 illustrates the hypothesized theoretical model.

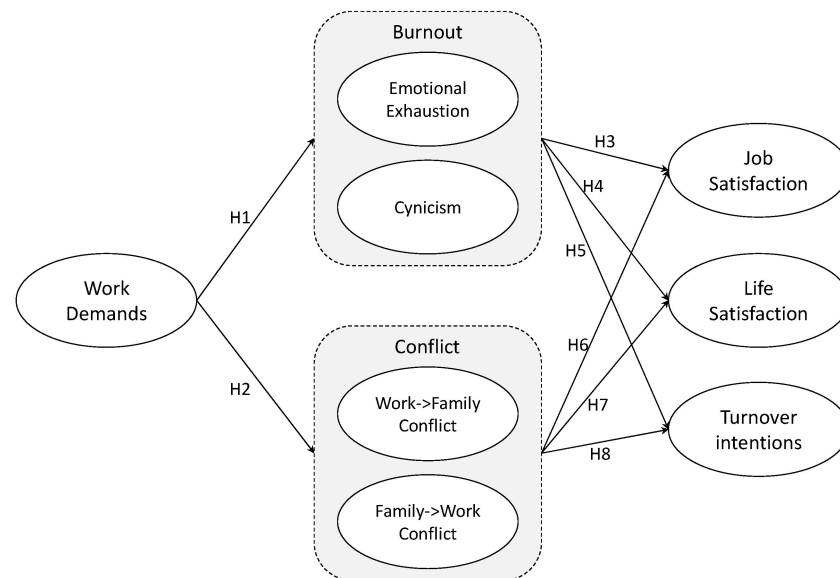


Figure 1. Theoretical model and hypotheses.

3. Methods

3.1. Samples and Procedures

The research design took a quantitative and confirmatory approach. Data were collected from two countries (Iran and Spain) using questionnaires to build two separate samples. The questionnaires were sent to 410 individuals who were full-time employees of various companies (210 from Iran and 200 from Spain), and 263 questionnaires were fully answered (136 from Iran and 127 from Spain). In the Iranian sample, the average age was 39.7 years, 25% of the participants were female, and 75% were male. In the Spanish sample, the average age was 39.7, 50% of the participants were female, and 50% were male. A summary of demographic variables is shown in Table 1. The questionnaires were translated into each country's language (i.e., Persian and Spanish) and back-translated to English. All questionnaires were printed on paper and delivered with a pre-paid envelope. A brief introduction was provided with instructions explaining the overall purpose of the study, the institution details, and the research team that was carrying out the study. The respondents were aware that the surveys were anonymous and that only aggregate data would be analyzed.

Table 1. Summary of demographic variables ($n = 263$).

Iran ($n = 136$)			Spain ($n = 127$)		
Variable	Count	Percentage	Variable	Count	Percentage
Gender			Gender		
Male	102	75	Male	63	49.6
Female	34	25	Female	64	50.4

Table 1. Cont.

Iran (n = 136)			Spain (n = 127)		
Variable	Count	Percentage	Variable	Count	Percentage
Marital status			Marital status		
Single	21	15.4	Single	99	78
Married	115	84.6	Married	28	22
Age			Age		
≤25 years	8	5.9	≤25 years	7	5.5
26–40 years	71	52.2	26–40 years	66	52
≥41 years	57	41.9	≥41 years	54	42.5
Education			Education		
Under high school	20	14.7	Under high school	9	7
Diploma	34	25	Diploma	14	11
Bachelor's	80	58.8	Bachelor's	77	60.6
Postgraduate	2	1.5	Postgraduate	26	20.4
Parental status			Parental status		
Parent	83	61	Parent	84	66.1
Non-parent	45	33	Non-parent	43	33.9
Working hours			Working hours		
≤20	1	0.7	≤20	4	3.1
21–34	22	16.2	21–34	17	13.4
35–44	43	31.6	35–44	68	53.5
45–65	35	25.7	45–65	35	27.6
≥65	35	25.7	≥65	3	2.4
Sector			Sector		
Private	20	14.7	Private	83	65.4
Public	110	80.9	Public	42	33
Nonprofit org.	6	4.4	Nonprofit org.	2	1.6
Family size			Family size		
≤2	46	33.8	≤2	115	90.6
2–4	27	19.9	2–4	10	7.9
≥4	63	46.3	≥4	2	1.5

Note: There were 8 missing values for the parent variable in the Iranian sample.

3.2. Constructs and Scales

All scale items ranged from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Cronbach's alpha for all scales reached acceptable reliability within every sample (reported below). Both samples were analyzed separately in order to test scale reliability and factor validity. After testing for measurement invariance, the hypotheses were tested independently for each sample using path analysis in AMOS.

Job satisfaction was measured using a 3-item measure by Judge et al. (2005). The scale items are "Most days I am enthusiastic about my work," "I feel fairly satisfied with my present job," and "I find real enjoyment in my work." The Cronbach alpha was 0.76 for Iran and 0.89 for Spain.

Life satisfaction was measured using Diener et al.'s (1985) scale, with items including "In most ways my life is close to ideal," "The conditions of my life are excellent," and "So far I have gotten the important things I want in life." The Cronbach alpha was 0.79 for Iran and 0.73 for Spain.

Turnover intentions were measured using 3 items from the scale developed by Kelloway et al. (1999), with items including "I am thinking about leaving my organization," "I am planning to look for a new job," and "I intend to ask people about new job opportunities." The Cronbach alpha was 0.83 for Iran and 0.88 for Spain.

Burnout was measured by 6 items from the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach et al., 1996). Three items measured the dimension of exhaustion: "I feel used up at the end of the workday," "I feel tired when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job," and "Working all day is really a strain for me." Three other items measured the cynicism dimension: "I have become less interested in my work since I started this job," "I have become less enthusiastic about my work," and "I doubt the significance of my work." The Cronbach alpha was 0.83 for Iran and 0.90 for Spain.

WFC was measured using the 3 items of the strain-based scale of work interference with family from [Carlson et al. \(2000\)](#). These items are “When I get home from work, I am often too frazzled to participate in family responsibilities,” “I am often so emotionally drained when I get home from work that it prevents me from contributing to my family,” and “Due to all the pressures at work, sometimes when I come home, I am too stressed to do the things I enjoy.” The Cronbach alpha was 0.77 for Iran and 0.87 for Spain.

FWC was measured using the 3 items of the strain-based scale of family interference with work from [Carlson et al. \(2000\)](#). These items are “Due to stress at home, I am often preoccupied with family matters at work,” “Because I am often stressed from family responsibilities, I have a hard time concentrating on my work,” and “Tension and anxiety from my family life often weakens my ability to do my job.” The Cronbach alpha was 0.72 for Iran and 0.74 for Spain.

Work demands were measured using the 3 items by [Yang et al. \(2000\)](#): “I often feel that I am being run ragged from work,” “I am given too much work to do,” and “I have more work to do than I can do well.” The Cronbach alpha was 0.68 for Iran and 0.85 for Spain.

4. Results

4.1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Invariance Test

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed using AMOS v.24 for the Iranian and Spanish databases. The measurement models had good fit to the data, meeting all minimum requirements ([Williams et al., 2009](#)); $\chi^2 = 477.187$, $DF = 221$, $p\text{-value} = 0.000$, $CFI = 0.84$, $RMSEA = 0.093$ for Iran and $\chi^2 = 362.770$, $DF = 223$, $p\text{-value} = 0.000$, $CFI = 0.92$, $RMSEA = 0.071$ for Spain. The correlations between latent variables are shown in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2. Iran correlation matrix of the studied factors.

	FWC	Cynicism	WFC	Turnover Intentions	Work Demands	Life Satisfaction	Job Satisfaction
Cynicism	0.365 **						
WFC	0.353 **	0.520 ***					
Turnover intentions	0.277 *	0.607 ***	0.265 *				
Work demands	0.267 *	0.692 ***	0.774 ***	0.451 ***			
Life satisfaction	−0.330 **	−0.140	−0.167	−0.199	−0.107		
Job satisfaction	−0.423 ***	−0.741 ***	−0.523 ***	−0.736 ***	−0.702 ***	0.473 ***	
Emotional exhaustion	0.526 ***	0.660 ***	0.615 ***	0.469 ***	0.835 ***	−0.159	−0.707 ***

*** $p\text{-value} < 0.001$, ** $p\text{-value} < 0.01$, * $p\text{-value} < 0.05$.

Table 3. Spain correlation matrix of the studied factors.

	FWC	Cynicism	WFC	Turnover Intentions	Work Demands	Life Satisfaction	Job Satisfaction
Cynicism	0.078						
WFC	0.353 **	0.103					
Turnover intentions	0.120	0.243 *	0.034				
Work demands	0.269 *	0.284 **	0.363 ***	0.127			
Life satisfaction	−0.333 **	−0.169	−0.314 **	−0.190	−0.090		
Job satisfaction	−0.221 *	−0.477 ***	−0.090	−0.499 ***	−0.226 *	0.401 ***	
Emotional exhaustion	0.276 *	0.917 ***	0.352 **	0.137	0.471 ***	−0.232 *	−0.374 **

*** $p\text{-value} < 0.001$, ** $p\text{-value} < 0.01$, * $p\text{-value} < 0.05$.

Measurement invariance was tested to check whether the respondents of the two countries answered the questionnaire equally (Bou & Satorra, 2010). The likelihood ratio test measures the χ^2 difference between the two models (Cheung & Rensvold, 2002). Performing a measurement invariance test is important for cross-cultural research (Chen, 2008; Fontaine, 2005), since this test investigates whether different groups (e.g., Iran and Spain) define the scale items the same way (Fischer et al., 2009; Milfont et al., 2010). Initially, we performed a configural test, created two groups (Iran and Spain), and acquired good model fits for the unconstrained and fully constrained models. After that, we applied a Chi-square difference test for both samples and found that the groups were not equal. Therefore, we performed two structural analyses separately, one for each sample. Table 4 shows the results for the measurement invariance test.

Table 4. Invariance test between country groups: Iran and Spain.

Overall Model	Chi-Square	df	p-Value	Invariant
Unconstrained	867.433	460		
Fully constrained	995.689	490		
Two groups' difference	128.256	30	0.000	No

4.2. SEM Analysis and Results

SEM analyses were performed to examine the influences across country samples. These analyses allow similarities and differences between countries to be seen. The SEM results are presented in Table 5. The hypotheses were tested using SEM on AMOS v.24. The analyzed model included work demands as the predictor; emotional exhaustion, cynicism, WFC, and FWC as the mediators; and job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and turnover intentions as the outcomes. The structural models had good fit to the data, meeting all minimum requirements: Chi-square = 528.672, DF = 233, CFI = 0.82, RMSEA = 0.097 for Iran and Chi-square = 389.212, DF = 233, CFI = 0.91, RMSEA = 0.073 for Spain.

Table 5 shows the analysis results. For the Iranian sample, Table 5 shows that work demands were significantly related to emotional exhaustion (path coefficient = 1.111, p -value < 0.001) and cynicism (path coefficient = 1.003, p -value < 0.001). Work demands were significantly associated with WFC (path coefficient = 0.955, p -value < 0.001) and FWC (path coefficient = 0.429, p -value < 0.001). Emotional exhaustion and cynicism were significantly related to job satisfaction (path coefficient = −0.314, p -value = 0.047 and path coefficient = −0.734, p -value < 0.001, respectively). Cynicism was significantly related to turnover intentions (path coefficient = 0.885, p -value < 0.001). FWC was significantly related to life satisfaction (path coefficient = −0.492, p -value = 0.008). These results confirm hypotheses H1.a, H1.b, H2.a, H2.b, H3.a, H3.b, H5.b, and H7.b for Iran.

Table 5 also shows the results for the Spanish sample. The results show that work demands were significantly related to emotional exhaustion (path coefficient = 0.274, p -value < 0.001) and cynicism (path coefficient = 0.296, p -value < 0.001). There were significant relationships between work demands and WFC (path coefficient = 0.219, p -value < 0.001) and FWC (path coefficient = 0.156, p -value = 0.007). Regarding the outcomes, cynicism was significantly negatively related to job satisfaction (path coefficient = −3.099, p -value = 0.040) and life satisfaction (path coefficient = −1.179, p -value = 0.044) but positively related to turnover intentions (path coefficient = 2.690, p -value = 0.023). Finally, we found significant relationships between FWC and life satisfaction (path coefficient = −0.217, p -value = 0.078) and job satisfaction (path coefficient = −0.283, p -value = 0.024). Therefore, these results confirm H1.a, H1.b, H2.a, H2.b, H3.b, H4.b, H5.b, H6.b, and H7.b for Spain.

Table 5. Structural model results for both studied countries.

Iran	Estimates	S.E	C.R	<i>p</i> Label
H1.a Work.Demands→Emot.Exhaustion	1.111	0.188	5.902	***
H1.b Work.Demands→Cynicism	1.003	0.186	5.401	***
H2.a Work.Demands→WFC	0.955	0.186	5.130	***
H2.b Work.Demands→FWC	0.429	0.124	3.462	***
H3.a Emot.Exhaustion→Job.Satisfaction	−0.314	0.158	−1.983	0.047
H3.b Cynicism→Job.Satisfaction	−0.734	0.153	−4.792	***
H5.b Cynicism→Turnover.Intentions	0.885	0.184	4.806	***
H7.b FWC→Life.Satisfaction	−0.492	0.184	−2.671	0.008
Spain	Estimates	S.E	C.R	<i>p</i> Label
H1.a Work.Demands→Emot.Exhaustion	0.274	0.083	3.313	***
H1.b Work.Demands→Cynicism	0.296	0.087	3.421	***
H2.a Work.Demands→WFC	0.219	0.061	3.591	***
H2.b Work.Demands→FWC	0.156	0.058	2.694	0.007
H3.b Cynicism→Job.Satisfaction	−3.099	1.510	−2.051	0.040
H4.b Cynicism→Life.Satisfaction	−1.179	0.585	−2.016	0.044
H5.b Cynicism→Turnover.Intentions	2.690	1.185	2.270	0.023
H6.b FWC→Job.Satisfaction	−0.283	0.125	−2.255	0.024
H7.b FWC→Life.Satisfaction	−0.217	0.123	−1.763	0.078

*** *p*-value < 0.001.

5. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether WFC, FWC, and burnout have a similar influence on the studied outcomes (job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and burnout) across a Middle Eastern country and a European country. The results show some similarities between both cultures and a few differences between the studied samples. One of the similarities is sociodemographic changes (e.g., more participation of women in the workplace) in both countries, which led to an increased possibility of perceiving conflict between work and family roles. The results show that demands coming from the work domain are strongly associated with burnout (emotional exhaustion and cynicism in both countries) and work–family conflict (both directions in both country samples). Another similarity across cultures is the impact of burnout on individuals. These results reveal that burnout is negatively associated with job satisfaction and life satisfaction in both countries, such that burnout reduces job satisfaction and life satisfaction. In addition, cynicism from burnout is positively related to turnover intentions in both countries, meaning that burnout is a significant driver to leave a job. These findings align with other studies that have investigated the impact of work demands on burnout in other national contexts (Bakker et al., 2004; Maslach et al., 2001). Furthermore, this research adds the family domain, which extends existing studies on occupational stress and burnout and their impact on job satisfaction and turnover intentions (Freitas et al., 2023), providing a more nuanced perspective on the spillovers between family and work roles.

This research expands existing work–family conflict research by including antecedents and outcomes that were previously understudied in cross-country analysis. An important contribution of this study is that the relationships between work demands, job satisfaction,

life satisfaction, and turnover intentions are moderated by burnout, WFC, and FWC, meaning that conflict between the family and work domains has negative effects in individuals' personal lives (Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004). The results of this study confirm that higher levels of work demands increase burnout, WFC, and FWC. At the same time, burnout and work–family conflict increase turnover intentions while reducing job and life satisfaction. These findings align with recent national research on the impact of WFC and FWC on well-being (Moreira et al., 2023) and on turnover intentions and job satisfaction (Warokka & Febrilia, 2015), and extends existing research across nations, including burnout as a relevant factor. These results help us better understand the interactions between mediators and outcomes, because it confirms that employees in both countries who experience burnout and conflict between the work and life domains are less satisfied with their job and life and are more prone to quitting their jobs.

Since work and family issues are associated with the cultural specificity of a society, according to Yang et al. (2000), there are some aspects of the Iranian culture that affect individuals' viewpoint towards the job and family domains and that create a few differences with European culture. In Iran, most women believe their family is a priority over their careers. Iranian women are mainly responsible for family duties, and men are not expected to participate in household chores such as looking after children or elderly relatives. Therefore, women with a job in Iran must fulfill their occupational duties without any reduction in the share of their duties (Taghizadeh et al., 2021). Another difference is the number of working hours in Iran being higher than the average working hours in Europe. In this study, most of the Iranian employees spend more time at work than the Spanish employees (Table 1 indicates that 51.4% of employees work more than 45 h per week) and are more likely to experience higher conflict between job and home responsibilities (Karimi, 2009).

The results of this study (Table 5) reveal these cultural differences between country samples. The findings show significant and negative relationships between two dimensions of burnout (emotional exhaustion and cynicism) and job satisfaction in Iran, confirming that employees' burnout significantly impacts their job satisfaction. However, the findings show only a strong and negative relationship between one dimension of burnout (cynicism) and job satisfaction for Spanish employees. Despite social changes in Iran in recent decades (e.g., more employed women in the workplace) and evolving family structure (e.g., a higher number of dual-earner families), there are still traditional roles, organizational policies, and discrimination in the workplace for Iranian women that restrict their talents and careers (Bahrami et al., 2023). Furthermore, the perspective of women in Iran indicates that they feel that family is their main domain, which they have to sustain in all circumstances, and they feel guilty if they cannot spend time with their children, husband, or elder relatives (Zarra-Nezhad et al., 2010). In this social context, role expectations for Iranian women are more challenging than for Spanish women, so Iranian working women may face greater problems balancing their work and personal roles if they do not receive enough family and organizational support.

6. Conclusions

This research contributes to the research on WFC/FWC and burnout in several ways. First, this study reinforces the research on WFC/FWC and burnout by introducing work demands as an antecedent and job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and turnover intention as outcomes. Second, the results highlight the importance of considering burnout, WFC, and FWC as mediators. Third, this is one of the first investigations that examines the impact of burnout, WFC, and FWC in Iran and compares it with a Western country. In summary, this study helps to better understand the impact of burnout, WFC, and FWC on personal life and job outcomes, extending work–life research across nations (Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2020).

The study findings show that work demands are strongly related to burnout, WFC, and FWC, indicating that when job demands increase, conflicts between life and job responsibilities also arise and create negative reactions. These findings align with recent studies in national contexts (e.g., Bahrami et al., 2023; Moreira et al., 2023; Taghizadeh et al., 2021). Additionally, our findings extend previous understanding showing that greater work demands not only increase conflicts between one's work and personal life, but also lead to burnout syndrome, resulting in employees feeling less satisfied. These effects are mostly the same across the two studied countries, but with differences associated with cultural specificities.

This study has some limitations. One limitation is the potential bias or inaccuracy of self-reported data, and another limitation is the sample sizes and the country selection, which might limit the generalization of results to larger geographical regions. Future research could extend this study's results to other countries in the studied regions—in particular, to other Middle Eastern countries that are evolving from traditional to modern values of society. Extending comparative research on Middle Eastern countries would increase the diversity of cross-cultural studies. Moreover, this study had 25% female responses from Iranian workers. Future research would benefit from more responses from women, moving closer to the rate of men's responses. These suggestions are avenues for future research in this field.

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