



WORK/FAMILY BORDER THEORY OR WORK-LIFE SPILLOVER THEORY: A META-ANALYTICAL APPROACH TO TURNOVER INTENTION

İŞ/AİLE SINIR TEORİSİ VEYA İŞ-YAŞAM YAYILIMI TEORİSİ: İŞTEN AYRILMA
NİYETİNE DAİR META-ANALİTİK BİR YAKLAŞIM

İsmail ÖZDEMİR¹

Abstract

This study aimed to compare with the work/family border theory to work-life spillover theory in an organizational role theory and attribution theory perspective. This study also aimed to list the work-family interface variables and the variables regarding organizational roles by using a meta-analytical review technique. 89 suitable studies were found. The effect sizes of work-family balance on turnover intention is nonsignificant, the effect size of work-life balance, work interfering with family and family interfering with work on turnover intention was *small*, and the effect size of the rest of the relationships were *medium*. The findings supported work-life spillover theory, but not work/family border theory. Type of industry was a significant moderator for the relationship between role conflict and turnover intention.

Keywords: Work/family border theory, work-life spillover theory, work-family interface, turnover intention, role theory, meta-analysis.

Öz

Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, örgütsel rol kuramı ve yükleme kuramı perspektifinde iş/aile sınırı kuramını iş-yaşam yayılım kuramıyla karşılaştırmaktır. Bu çalışma aynı zamanda iş-aile arayüzü değişkenlerini ve örgütsel rollere ilişkin değişkenleri bir meta-analitik inceleme tekniği kullanarak listelemeyi amaçlamıştır. Bu kapsamda yapılan araştırmada, 89 uygun çalışma bulunmuştur. İş-aile dengesinin işten ayrılma niyeti üzerindeki etki büyüklükleri anlamsız, iş-yaşam dengesi, işin aileyi etkilemesi ve ailenin işe karışmasının işten ayrılma niyeti üzerindeki etki büyüklüğü *küçük* ve geri kalan ilişkilerin etki büyüklüğü *orta* düzeydedir. Bulgular, iş-yaşam yayılma teorisini desteklemiş, ancak iş/aile sınırı teorisini desteklememiştir. Sektör türü, rol çatışması ve işten ayrılma niyeti arasındaki ilişki için önemli bir moderatör olarak ortaya çıkmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İş/aile sınırı teorisi, iş-yaşam yayılımı teorisi, iş-aile tutumları, işten ayrılma niyeti, rol teorisi, meta-analiz.

¹ Ass. Prof. PhD, Istanbul Gedik University, Faculty of Sports Sciences, Department of Sports Management, ismail.ozdemir@gedik.edu.tr, Orcid: 0000-0001-6478-9168

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Introduction

Role theory concerned the issues regarding roles in the social life and it evolved into organizational role theory explaining and examining the results of role allocation, conflicts and other incidents regarding the roles. Katz and Kahn (1966) improved this theory in the social psychology perspective and adopted role theory to the organizations.

Role allocation is a significant concern for the managers in an organization. The conflict and ambiguity of roles is something that managers should avoid. These kinds of situations are indicators of weak management. But some kind of conflicts regarding roles cannot be arranged by the managers. For example, work-family conflict is something that managers cannot get intervened.

The allocation of the roles determines the allocation of responsibilities and authorities in an organization. The social position of an employee can also be affected by the characteristics of a job including the roles. There are different expectations from the employees with different jobs. The roles also affect the respect of the employees to each other (Biddle, 1986). They determine the status of the employees and their relationship between each other.

The clarity and allocation of the roles affects the success of the organizations and performance of the employees (Ro & Lee, 2017). Moreover, the allocation of the responsibilities should be evaluated together with the necessary authorities to determine the best ways to perform the tasks related to these responsibilities (Yang et al., 2013) without neglecting the roles of the employees (Madera et al., 2014). The roles can cause negative emotions due to the factors such as role conflict or role ambiguity.

Work-family interface can also cause some other issues regarding the roles of the employees. The expectations of an employee's family and expectations of the work may contradict. The employee may fail to perform his duties to his family due to his responsibilities regarding his job (Haar, 2004). It also may be the opposite and the employee may fail to perform his duties regarding the job due to his responsibilities to his family. These situations cause stress and the employee will tend to eliminate one of these stressors.

The family life of an employee includes various obligations. These obligations can interfere with work-life if the managers or the position may have no flexibility. Consequently, the responsibilities may vary and cause conflict.

As long as the employees keep on working with negative emotions, these prolonging negative emotions will start causing a pressure. They will try to avoid this pressure and tend to quit. According to attribution theory, the employees tend to leave an organization if they attribute their negative emotions to the organization (Harvey, Harris, & Martinko, 2008). The issues related to the organization increases the turnover intention of the employees. Similarly, work-family conflict that is not completely related to the organization also affects turnover intention positively (Yıldız, Yıldız, & Ayaz, 2021). The incompatibility between family and job roles causes negative emotions. Role strain theory (Goode, 1960) emphasized that the employees want to fulfill their roles and they experience stress when they cannot. But there are two contradicting theories regarding work-family interface: Work/family border theory and work-life spillover theory.

Work/family border theory claims that the employees pass the invisible border that is assumed to be standing between work and family lives on workdays and they live two different lives (Clark, 2000; Donald & Linington, 2008). When this theory is reviewed together with an attribution-based perspective, it is possible to expect the negative impact of work-family interface to be less than some other organizational factors such as role conflict.

Work life spillover theory defends that any conflict between work roles and family roles will be contagious (Dilworth, 2004) and they will affect the whole life of the employees (Zedeck & Moiser, 1990; Zedeck, 1992). According to this theory, the impact of work-family interface will be more than it was assumed by work family border theory.

The forementioned two theories have different perspectives. They focus on two different claims. The results of the previous studies can provide evidence for the claims of these studies. This study will make a review to provide such a data that will support these theories.

The objective of this study is surveying the effects of variables regarding the organizational roles and work-family interface on turnover intention. The technique that was chosen for this study is meta-analysis. The results will be compared to each other and the supported theories will be discussed. Finally, the work-family border theory will be compared to work-life spillover theory.

Conceptual Relationships

The responsibility and authority balance is the first step to increase the performance of a company (Heritage et al., 2016). The importance of this balance can be changing from an organization to the other, but it is still a dominant factor affecting the operations of the companies among the others (Shin et al., 2020). Depending on the structure of the organization, job or the sector, the balance between responsibilities and authorities varies (Chong & Monroe, 2015). If the extent of the authority and the details of responsibilities are known by the employees, their roles will be clear (Gaither et al., 2008). The degree of this awareness is referred as “role clarity”. The opposite of this situation is “role ambiguity” (Courcy et al., 2019). If the expectations from the employee, objectives of the organization or job together with their due dates, responsibilities and duties of the employee are not clear, the role ambiguity increases.

The employees may have different roles in an organization. Sometimes the requirements of these roles may contradict. This is known as role conflict (Ferdik & Hills, 2018). Furthermore, the employee may have some other roles that are no related to the organization. Such roles are known as family roles. The integration of work roles and family roles cause “work-family interface”.

Work-family interface is the challenge of integrating the roles regarding the job and the other roles regarding the life outside of work. The contradicting roles regarding family and work may cause a conflict. One’s job can make it difficult to meet the responsibilities of that person related to his/her family. If the work role affects the family role negatively, work to family conflict occurs. The conflict caused due to the negative effect of family role on the work role is work to family conflict. It refers to the difficulties caused by the family roles in performing the tasks of a job.

Distributing the roles is an important process for the managers, but choosing the right employees for a job is another significant process. Decreasing such conflicts by using the right policies and employees is a challenging task for the managers. But if work-family border theory is supported, the work-family interface of the employees will not be a concern for the managers.

Hypothesis Development

Main theory regarding the roles is the role stress theory and it defines the conflicts and relationships regarding the roles (Kahn et al., 1964). The negative emotions that are results of an employee’s role are role stress. Role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload are

different types of role stress. Morrissette and Kisamore (2020) conducted a meta-analysis of the relationship between role stress and organizational commitment. The meta-analysis of Örtqvist and Wincent (2006) also surveyed this relationship and some other relationships regarding some outcomes of role stress. Meta-analysis of Alarcon (2011) studied the relationship between role stress and burnout.

Role stress arises from the stressors related to the roles of an employee. Role stagnation, role conflict, role overload, and role ambiguity are some variables of organizational role stress theory. Job and organization sector, social sector, intra-psychic sector, inter-role distance, role erosion, role isolation, personal inadequacy, self-role distance, and resource inadequacy are some other dimensions of organizational role stress.

Role overload refers to too many responsibilities regarding a role or a couple of roles. The extent of role overload is related to the perceptions and capability of the employees. It affects the satisfaction provided by a role. Role overload increases the turnover intention (Nazneen & Bhalla, 2014).

Role stagnation is the perception of being stuck in a position without having an opportunity to get promoted. The role stagnation changes from a position to the other and from an organization to the other. But the perceptions of the employees also affect the role stagnation. Kunte et al. (2017) suggested that it is a significant antecedent of turnover intention.

Work-family conflict is also a predictor of intent to quit and this relationship was studied in a meta-analysis (Yıldız, Yıldız, & Ayaz, 2021). But a meta-analysis study searching the effect of the variables regarding work-family interface on turnover intention or the relationship between the variables regarding the roles and turnover intention in a broader perspective does not exist. These relationships will be surveyed to evaluate the work-family border theory, work-life spillover theory and other studies regarding organizational roles and work-family interface. Consequently, the following hypotheses are offered:

H1: The effect size of the relationships between the variables regarding roles and turnover intention is significant.

H2: The effect size of the relationships between work-family interface variables and turnover intention is significant.

Morrissette and Kisamore (2020) surveyed the moderating effect of occupational type and culture on the relationship between organizational job stress and organizational commitment. This study found type of industry and continent as possible moderators for the effect of role conflict and role ambiguity on intent to quit. A meta-analysis study always aims to determine the moderating effect of possible variables. Continent will be used instead of country as the allocation of countries to the collected studies is not suitable for a moderator analysis. Thus, the moderating effect of the determined variables will be tested by using the suitable data sets.

Methodology

Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines are followed to conduct this research (Moher et al, 2009). The studies were chosen according to the criteria shown below:

The studies should include correlation values for the surveyed relationships.

The data should not be used in a previous study.

The research should be conducted in work/family border theory, work-life spillover theory, work-family interface, turnover intention.

ProQuest, ScienceDirect, and Scopus databases are searched for this meta-analysis study. Articles, proceeding papers, doctoral dissertations and master's theses were reviewed.

89 studies met the inclusion criteria and they were added to this meta-analysis. The author coded the studies with a professor of quantitative methods. The effect sizes, Pearson correlation coefficients, name of the authors, publication years, type of industry, occupational type, workplace, and country of the studies are coded. The collected studies are evaluated and their quality is assessed by using the suitable rating scale (Zangaro & Soeken, 2007). The studies could be scored as low, medium, and high by using this scale. None of the studies were scored as low, one study was scored as medium, and all the other studies had a score that is assessed to be high.

The heterogeneity analysis, tests of publication bias were carried out. The effect sizes of the relationships were found and their significance was tested. Lastly, the moderator analysis was carried out to test the moderating effects of region and type of industry.

Publication bias tests are carried out for all the collected 31 studies. The groups including studies less than 4 were not added into publication bias tests. Duval and Tweedie's trim and fill test was used together with the Egger's regression test.

The data sets regarding the effect of extra-role performance, role stress, role modeling, family-work enrichment, work interfering with family and family interfering with work on turnover intention are not added to publication bias tests. Because all of the included 2 studies and their number was not adequate. The heterogeneity of all the data sets was tested.

Findings

Heterogeneity, Publication Bias, and Effect Sizes

The results of heterogeneity analysis were shown in Table 1. According to these results, all the data sets regarding the surveyed relationships were heterogeneous. The number of the correlation values used in each data set was also indicated in this table. I^2 can be accepted as the degree of heterogeneity. It varies between 0 and 100.

Table 1. Heterogeneity Analysis Results/Effect Sizes

Antecedents	I^2	k	r
Role conflict	84.643*	31	0.323*
Role ambiguity	95.434*	36	0.258*
Role overload	92.405*	5	0.303*
In-role performance	91.214*	4	-0.258*
Extra-role performance	93.185*	2	-0.347*
Role stress	89.519*	2	0.251*
Role modeling	90.347*	2	0.412*
Work-family conflict	91.228*	29	0.357*
Family-work conflict	85.724*	11	0.33*
Work-family enrichment	98.278*	6	-0.26*
Family-work enrichment	0	2	-0.235*
Work-family balance	98.693*	4	0.008ns
Work interfering with family	99.540*	2	0.031*

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Family interfering with work	99.446*	2	0.084*
Work-life conflict	79.34*	3	0.217*
Work-life balance	98.693*	9	-0.086*

*: significance at 0.01 level

The heterogeneity of the collected data including the correlation values of the relationship between family-work enrichment was also tested. This data is not heterogeneous and the other data sets included heterogeneity. Random effects model is used to find the effect size of the relationships as the population of this research is conducted for greater populations. The effect sizes of the relationships are shown in Table 1 included the effect size of the surveyed relationships. The effect size of work-family balance on turnover intention is statistically nonsignificant, all the other surveyed relationships have a significant effect at a 0.01 level of significance.

In role performance is also known as task performance. It is the ability of the employees to meet his/her tasks related to his/her job. Some of the tasks are not among the tasks of a job, but they contribute to the success of performance related to a job. The ability to perform such tasks is extra role performance. Role stress refers to the negative and disturbing emotions regarding a job. Role modeling is a way to motivate the individuals to take more risk, to work more hard by inspiring them.

Work-family enrichment is the contribution of one's job to be a better and a more contributing family member. Family-work enrichment refers to the positive impacts of one's family on his/her job performance. Work-family balance can be accepted as a kind of satisfaction resulting from a balanced situation including family and work roles. Work interfering with family and family interfering with work are two dimensions of work-family conflict.

Work-life conflict evaluates the conflict between the private life and work-life of an employee. It is similar with work-family conflict, but it has a broader perspective. In the same manner, work-life balance is similar with work-family balance, but it assessed the balance between private life and the work life of the employee instead of family life.

The data sets are used for publication bias test. Table 2 showed the test results of Duval and Tweedie's Trim and Fill Test. These results did not determine a study that needs to be trimmed and it was not necessary to trim any of the collected researches. Egger's regression test was also used and the results showed no publication bias as the aforementioned values did not exceed 0.033 that is accepted to be the threshold (Egger et al., 1997).

Table 2. Other Antecedents of Turnover Intention Regarding Employee Roles

Antecedents	Sample size	r	Study
Role stagnation	282	-0.20	Kunte et al., 2017
Role novelty	65	-0.21	Rageb et al., 2013
Management role stress	862	0.48	Xu et al., 2018
Parental role reward value	345	-0.22	Schmidt&Lee., 2008
Family expectation	200	0.298	Sarah et al., 2019
Family embeddedness	175	-0.63	Li et al., 2019
Family fit	175	-0.59	Li et al., 2019
Family links	175	-0.2	Li et al., 2019
Family sacrifice	175	-0.56	Li et al., 2019
Family supportive supervisor	271	-0.53	Liu et al., 2020

Family-member commitment	96	-0.62	Mahto et al., 2020
Family-friend support	1121	-0.26	Zhou et al., 2020
Positive work-home interference	418	0.22	Sok et al., 2018
Negative work-home interference	418	-0.18	Sok et al., 2018

Table 2 indicates the correlation values between turnover intention and its other antecedents regarding roles and work-family interface together with the studies confirming these relationships. Role stagnation is perceived when the employees think like they have no chance of promotion. Role novelty is the potential of a role to cause unexperienced duties and tasks. Management role stress refers to the overall stress of the managers caused by the stressors regarding their role. Parental role reward value refers to the commitment to the children and commitment to the role of being a parent.

Family expectation variable show the effect of the expectations of one's family. Family embeddedness refers to the perception and connection of employee's family members to the organization, and the contribution of the organization to them (Ramesh & Gelfand, 2010). Family fit, family links, and family sacrifice are the subscales of family embeddedness. Family supportive supervisor concept is measured with a scale assessing to what extent the supervisor supports the employees' efforts to build healthy family relationships. Such supervisors facilitate the connection between employees and their families.

Family member commitment refers to the commitment of the employee to his/her role in the family. Family and friend support refers to the social support of family and friends. Positive work-home interference is the positive effect of the interaction between home life and work life (Frone, 2003; Sok et al., 2018). Negative work-home interference is the negative interaction between home life and work life and the contagious negative emotions (Sok et al., 2018).

Moderator Analysis

The allocation of the studies was suitable to test the determined possible moderators. These moderators were region, country, publication year, type of occupation, and industry. The data set surveying the relationship between role conflict and turnover intention was eligible to test the moderating effect of industry. But it was necessary to remove a study from the data set to make the data suitable for a moderator analysis.

Table 3. Moderator Analysis Results/Role Conflict-Turnover Intention

Concepts	k	N	r	CI		Q _b
				lower limit	upper limit	
Moderator (industry)	30	20,644				0.114*
CRM	2		0.373	0.316	0.427	
Education	4		0.422	0.383	0.460	
Finance	3		0.315	0.136	0.474	
Health	6		0.358	0.290	0.423	
Information&technology	2		0.136	0.045	0.225	
Public	2		0.265	0.207	0.321	
Tourism	7		0.354	0.257	0.445	
Various	4		0.254	0.036	0.449	

*: significance at 0.01 level

30 studies including 20,644 subjects were used for the moderator analysis. Table 4 showing the results of the moderator analysis suggested that industry is a significant moderator for the relationship between role conflict and turnover intention. The effect size varies as shown in table 3 and information and technology industry seem to have the lowest scores and it is highest in the education industry.

Discussion

Work-family life spillover theory explains how one's job get involved into the whole life of an employee. This theory claims that it is inevitable to see that there is a connection between work life and family life. Contrarily, work/family border theory claims that employees distinguish these two concepts: work life and family life. Moreover, according to this theory, the borders between these two parts of one's life are obvious and the distinction between these two terms is very exact.

The analysis results supported work-family life spillover theory. If work/family border theory was true, the effect size of work-family conflict and family-work conflict on turnover intention would be less than the effect size of role conflict on turnover intention as the conflict of organizational roles will be attributed to the organization more than the conflict of family and work roles. Consequently, the results did not support work-family border theory.

Role theory claims that the behavior or attitude of the individuals is based on "how their roles are defined and how they evolve" (Matta et al., 2015). This claim is supported as turnover intention is a job attitude, the surveyed relationships are significant and almost all the effect sizes are medium. These results show that how work or family roles are defined affects turnover intention.

The effect sizes of family interfering with work, work-interfering with family, and work-life balance on turnover intention are small (Cohen, 1988). The effect size of the relationship between of work-family balance and turnover intention is nonsignificant. The balance between work and family roles and how they interfere with each other has a small or no effect on turnover intention as long as there is no effort or negative emotion. The study of Watanabe and Falci (2016) suggested similar results as it could not determine a significant relationship between work-family balance and turnover intention. Moreover, it suggested that work-to-family negative spillover has a significant effect on turnover intention. The results showed that supported by attribution theory, the harmony between work and family is not attributed to work, but the negative consequences are attributed to work and turnover intention increases. Thus, the work-life spillover theory is supported.

Work-life conflict has a spillover effect and claimed that conflicts can cause spillover effect as the tendency of experiencing a negative spillover is higher (Dilworth, & Kingsbury, 2005; Jarvis et al., 2005; Dilworth, 2004). The effect size of remaining positive work-family interface and negative work-family interface are medium

This study aimed to compare the effect of variables regarding the organizational roles to the work-family interface variables. Some of them had similar effects with each other, for example, the effect sizes of role ambiguity ($r=0.26$) and in-role performance ($r=-0.26$) that are variables regarding organizational role are the same with work-family enrichment that is a work-family interface variable ($r=0.26$). Role stress ($r=0.25$) and family-work enrichment ($r=-0.24$) also have very close effects sizes with the aforementioned ones.

The variables regarding the organizational roles and the work-family interface variables are listed together with their effects and effect sizes on turnover intention. The effect sizes of all the variables regarding organizational roles were medium. Park and Min (2020)

used 10 studies and Kim and Kao (2014) used 3 studies to find the effect size of the relationship between role ambiguity and intent to quit. They found the power of each effect size as medium. This study was the only meta-analysis using so many studies surveying these relationships and listing the effect of such variables on turnover intention.

The moderator analysis showed that the relationship between role conflict and turnover intention is moderated by industry significantly. Role conflict can be usual for the employees working in this industry as this is a relatively new industry. Moreover, the positions in this industry are changing every day and the employees may expect to confront a role conflict. Hence, a role conflict may not turn into intent to quit in this industry easily.

The highest effect size of the relationship between role conflict and turnover intention is in the education industry. This industry has a more traditional structure and the job descriptions were determined clearly for decades. Thus, role conflict may be unacceptable for the employees working in this industry and an experience of role conflict may easily end up with a higher turnover intention.

The other part of this study listed the work-family interface variables together with their effect and effect sizes on turnover intention. A meta-analysis study surveyed the relationship between work-family conflict and turnover intention and it was the only surveyed relationship of this study (Yıldız, Yıldız, & Ayaz, 2021), but our study listed the 17 work-family interface variables including work-family conflict together with 7 effect sizes on turnover intention and 10 correlation value between them and turnover intention.

This meta-analysis study showed that the effect sizes of work-family interface variables on turnover intention was medium or small. Work-family balance can be accepted as a kind of satisfaction resulting from a balanced situation including family and work roles. The effect size of the relationship between work-family balance and intent to leave was nonsignificant. The reason of this result can be the results of the collected studies: 2 studies determined a negative correlation between these two variables, and 2 studies determined a positive correlation between them.

Limitations and Future Research

Cook's distance, and covariance ratios were used to determine outliers (Viechtbauer & Cheung, 2010). Two studies surveying the relationship between work-life balance and turnover intention were determined as possible outliers, but they were not removed as they did not pass the threshold and there was a limited number of studies in this data set. Future studies may provide more valid results if the number of the studies surveying these relationships increase.

Some Studies considered in this research included correlation values between some other work-family interface variables and turnover intention, but they did not confirm these relationships. If these relationships are confirmed and future studies prove that these variables are significant antecedents of turnover intention, future meta-analysis studies can use the correlation values given in table 4. These studies were not used in this meta-analytic review as the variables are not confirmed as a significant antecedent of turnover intention.

Table 4. Unconfirmed Relationships Between Turnover Intention and Some Other Variables

Variable	Sample size	Correlation	Name of study
Family bond	96	-0,29	Mahto et al., 2020
Work-family support	6673	-0,417	Yang&Chen,2020
Control variable			

Family size	100	-0,11	Haar, 2004
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Conclusion and Implications

According to Katz and Kahn (1978), organizations are “open systems making the roles more obvious” that are affected by “acts or events regarding especially the members of that organization”, and these acts and events can be related to the family of the members. Organizational theory cannot define the roles of the individuals without their family as their roles and behaviors will be evolved with it (Matta et al., 2015). Hence, work-family interface is an inevitable concept of organizational role theory.

The findings of this study were used to compare work/family border theory and work-life spillover theory. Attribution theory was also used to evaluate the findings. The findings did not support work/family border theory, but they supported work-life spillover theory.

This study also listed the effect sizes of the work-family variables and the ones regarding organizational roles on turnover intention. The results of this study can be used by researchers who plan to study the variables of this study or especially the surveyed relationships of this study. Moreover, the human resources managers can use the results of this study to monitor the effects of the factors related to the employee roles. Other managers can also use the results of this study to design policies aiming to reduce turnover intention of the employees.

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