

# A Study on the Influencing Factors of Chinese Married Women's Work-Family Balance

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## ABSTRACT

Three child policy was proposed by a meeting of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee on May 31, 2021. However, opinion polls on the policy show few families are willing to have a third child. In today's society, women need to assume various social roles. The three-child policy has a direct impact on women's roles in the family, and such changes will also affect women's roles in the work field. Such role conflicts or imbalances can create work-family conflict and family-work conflict. This paper will analyze the status of work-family balance of married women and its influencing factors. The author interviews some married women of different ages. The interview questions mainly focus on married women's thoughts on bearing children under the three-child policy. It can be concluded that family-work imbalance can affect professional women's work, which is the main reason why modern women do not want to have three children or even children. Governments need to provide policy compensation to reduce the adverse effects of childbirth on women.

**Keywords:** *Work-Family Balance, Chinese Married Women, Three-Child Policy, Work-Family Conflict (WFC), Family-Work Conflict (FWC)*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In 2015, the Fifth Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China launched a comprehensive two-child policy, which also led to a sharp increase in production costs, and women with higher family and job requirements. Numerous studies have shown that after child care, education and other responsibilities associated with women's career development whole cycle, if the balance of failed to take appropriate measures, will not only affect women's career development, implementation will also hinder the childbearing willing [27]. This is also the reason why this year's three-child policy has not received an ideal response. The problems and risks brought by the three-child policy may increase compared with the two-child policy. Work-family balance is an urgent issue for women in the new era.

In this article, the author interviews some married women of different ages. The interview questions mainly focus on married women's thoughts on bearing children under the three-child policy, and try to analyze the status of work-family balance of married women and its

influencing factors. Starting from the definition of work-family balance and combining with the literature, this paper will explain the life phenomenon of married women in the interview with different family balance models, analyze the factors affecting work-family balance from three perspectives, and finally draw relevant conclusions and possible solutions. This paper can help the society understand the problems that married women in contemporary China face in balancing family and work, and promote the society and enterprises to pay attention to the role conflicts of women in society and family, so as to propose more policies and methods to improve women's response to the three-child policy.

## 2. WORK-FAMILY BALANCE

In the early years, there was no precise definition of work-family balance, which was a vague concept for many authors. It meant that work and family life were in harmony to some extent. Super [24] pointed out that everyone had multiple different roles in life, and balancing these roles was required by most individuals in their daily life Work family balance in fact is to keep the balance of the responsibilities of family life [24]. Then

Michael in 2003 based on some empirical research about work family balance two relatively accurate concept The first means that there is no conflict between work and family roles or interfere with another perspective is a positive interaction, such as strengthening and working families overflow working families.

With regard to work-family balance, earlier studies have also proposed six basic models to explain the relationship between work and family, which can be broadly classified as causal and non-causal [19]. Three non-causal models hold that variables in family work are correlated, but no causal relationship exists, including the segmentation model, congruence model and identity or integrative model. On the contrary, the other three causal models hold that variables in one field of work and family will have a causal effect on factors in the other field, namely spillover Model, Compensation Model and Resource Drain Model[6].

These models are also highly adaptable in today's life.

In this interview, when asked about the opinions of the 10 married female participants on the three-child policy, none of them expressed their willingness to have a third child, and most of them even resisted having one or two children. They generally expressed that they did not have enough time and energy to take care of their children, especially women who already had children expressed that they did not want to go through the process of taking care of their children and training them to receive adequate education all over again. Because there is a very paradoxical phenomenon, in the process of child growth, the mother is indispensable, but a woman's optimal childbearing age and career promotion are also in conflict. Statistics show that the salary of some urban working women will increase slowly or even hardly due to childbirth. Women will lose their advantages in career development due to missed opportunities at work or interrupted accumulation of work experience and professional skills due to childbirth [4]. Therefore, child care has a negative impact on women's careers that cannot be ignored [9]. Family work conflict occurs when a woman's family role affects her work role. Similarly, spillover model believes that there will be certain similarities between family and work, such as values and attitudes, etc. In an interview, a 35-year-old woman said that when she and her husband go home after a day's work, both of them will be tired and sometimes even bring negative emotions from work home, which seriously exacerbates family conflicts. On the contrary, there is another 45-year-old woman who does not have a stable job. She thinks that when she does more housework, her husband and daughter feel comfortable at home, she will get a sense of achievement. This also corresponds to the compensation Model, that is, an individual's pursuit of satisfaction in another domain in order to make up for an unmet need in one domain in order to achieve a certain psychological balance.

### **3. FACTORS AFFECTING WORK-FAMILY BALANCE**

In the study of family-work relationship, work-family conflict is the main research object. The widely used definition of work-family conflict comes from Greenhaus and Beutell[7], who believe that there are forms of conflict between roles in the field of work and family, and different role needs cannot be met simultaneously. According to this definition, it is not difficult to see the bidirectional nature of work-family conflict, that is, the full expression of work role affects family role is work-family conflict (WFC), and conversely, family-work conflict (FWC)[22].

FCW and WFC are likely to have negative effects on family life, such as lower life satisfaction, reduced happiness, and greater family conflict. For married women, these negative effects may also affect their physical and mental health[22]. At the same time, as employees, experiencing family work conflict can cause women to have negative emotions and negative job performance at work[11]. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the factors that affect work-family balance.

First of all, there is no doubt that, as explained above, bearing children is one of the big factors. Women's employment time is directly related to their children. The more children a woman has, the less time she has to work. However, as the children grow older, women's employment time will also increase. Such conflicts largely come from the fact that professional women do not have adequate reproductive security. The loss of time spent during pregnancy and childbirth in the workplace seems to be borne entirely by women in a household, further exacerbating gender inequality in the workplace. To a certain extent, spouse sharing can relieve women's pressure in taking care of their children. With the relevant regulations of Hebei Province as an example: in accordance with the legal provisions of the couple to give birth to children, in addition to enjoy the maternity leave stipulated by the state, extended maternity leave of 60 days, and give the spouse nursing leave of 15 days. According to a study by Cambridge University, the smell of a father's speech sends a message to his newborn baby, which is good for their sensory development and later strong character. Of course, paternity leave for men is good for maternal health. Because maternity leave is a time when women are physically frail and often under heavy psychological stress, having a husband by their side allows them to receive better care. Therefore, China has gradually implemented paternity leave for men. A more common form of child care in the current era is intergenerational care, in which the parents of both spouses take on most of the child care work to enable these women to participate in the labor market, and this is also the child care mode that has the greatest impact on the employment of married women [15].

Secondly, Mincer [18] was the first to study the female labor participation rate from the perspective of the division of labor within the family, and confirmed that this factor was influenced by the husband's wage level. With the increase of household debt, the labor supply of married women also increases, and the household debt is significantly positively correlated with the labor supply of married women. In other words, the greater the family economic pressure, the greater the impact on women's employment choices. In fact, it was also found in the interview that among the ten married women interviewed, eight were professional women, and they said that the proportion of their investment in the family was opposite to the ratio of the couple's salary, that is to say, if the woman's income is lower, she will have higher family care compared with her husband. This is also in line with the theory of Becker's family decision model. Married women's time allocation choice depends on the comparative advantage of the couple's salary, and women with relatively low salary should increase their housework time input. The same is true of the family bargaining power mentioned in the co-operative game model, where women with stronger bargaining power share less housework.

Thirdly, of course, apart from the factors of social welfare and family situation, the individual personality of married women can also affect family work balance. Individual differences can lead to different results when facing similar family work balance problems. Emotional Exhaustion (EE), a dimension of job burnout, is a mental state of physical and emotional exhaustion caused by stress[17]. According to Resource Drain Model, the person's positive emotions is a limited resource, in the work of emotional consumption can make staff produce negative emotions or even offensive, such negative emotions can promote the generation of work family conflict. Likewise, experience of work family conflict will have emotional exhaustion, a series of negative emotions and will be reflected in the work, form a vicious circle[11]. Mastering emotional regulation may be the way to solve this problem. An individual's preference for work-family compartmentalization is an important factor determining the permeability and partition of work-family boundary[14]. Individuals with high work-family compartmentalization preference have work-family boundaries that are more tightly demarcated and less permeable[10]. Such employees are better able to control the effects of emotional resource depletion in the work domain, or use non-work emotions to supplement, such as friendship[12].

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Through interviews and literature, this paper studies women's family-work balance and its influencing factors under the three-child policy. In the interview, when asked "what do you think is the relationship between family and

work?", more than half of the women think it is tiring to balance family and career, and believe that only a harmonious family can be successful in work. The reason for this is that the work-family conflict mentioned above can take a toll on your career. However, another perspective is to understand the relationship between work and family from the perspective of women. For these people, family may be more important, which is also influenced by the traditional cultural concepts of our country. At the same time, according to gender display hypothesis, married women will extend their housework and working hours to avoid the risk of divorce, and even women are willing to increase their housework even though they have higher wage bargaining power [20].

At present, married women face a lot of pressure and obstacles in family and work balance. Under the three-child policy, women's resistance to the policy and their own interests cannot be guaranteed. These situations need to be solved from the individual, family structure and social welfare security.

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