CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews studies that discuss the relationship between work and family. The main focus is on conceptual frameworks and theories used in the research studies reviewed. Some of these concepts and theories will be adopted in this study which attempts to examine the multiple roles of Malaysian college lecturers pursuing higher education juggling work and family demands. However, the additional conflicts brought on by assuming the role as a student are borne by the informants because of the prospects of career growth in institutions of higher learning.

The study seeks to contribute to the work-family conflict literature by examining the impact of work-family conflict on the additional role in pursuing higher education faced by these professional working women. The study investigates conflict from two directions which have been identified as a bi-directional construct of work-family conflict (Williams and Alliger, 1994), i.e. work can interfere with family (referred to as work-to-family conflict or WFC) and family can interfere with work (referred to as family-to-work conflict or FWC) (Frone, Yardley and Markel., 1997). Thus, this contribution to the existing body of research on work-family conflict literature is the interference of work with studies and vice versa. Also, the interference of family with studies and vice versa is an added source of conflict or strain.

2.2 THE WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT LITERATURE

Based on the structural functionalist perspective, gender roles refer to the behaviour prescribed for the female and male members of a society (Parsons, 1951). The role division is functional for women and men and in society as a whole. In many ways, a woman's gender role as childbearer, caregiver, and homemaker has dictated that her gender role should be domestic. In contrast, a man's gender role as breadwinner in the family ensures physical and financial security for the women and children. It also allows the institution of a society to function smoothly. Due to the societal norms of not associating a man's functions with the burden of childbearing and domestic tasks, a man can devote his full attention to the world of work (Parsons, 1951).

In many societies, especially in the more traditional ones, such as Asran societies, a woman choosing outside paid work over her family may not be looked upon in a favourable light. From the social point of view, a woman's work involvement or work requirements will influence her traditional role performance in the family. A woman's role in the family and the work domains are not complimentary but cause tension. Thus, women have to face and adapt to the interrole conflict (Frone and Rice, 1987) in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respects. The above mentioned definitions are most commonly used by most researchers on work-family conflict (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985).

Research related to work-family conflict literature has developed from the earlier traditional view of work-family conflict as an uni-directional construct to the current view of multi-dimensional construct. As mentioned by Kinunen and Mauno (1998), "previous research has mainly relied on assessing interference from work to family only" (p. 158). The early societal values consider that a woman's additional role in work affects her role performance in the family and this is in line with the classic gender role expectation theory. Frone, Russell, and Cooper (1997) concur, suggesting there is a methodological limitation involved with the measurement of work-family conflict with a single directional focus.

As a result of the limitations discussed above, the bi-directional nature of work-family conflict was then recognized by many researchers (Adams, King, and King 1996; Frone, Russell, and Cooper 1992; Fu and Shaffer, 2000; Gutek, Searle, and Klewpa 1991). As Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) have noted, continued changes and demands in the nature of work suggest that work-family conflict has intensified. A woman's role in economic activities has increased significantly. Conflicts originating from the work domain may have a negative effect on the family domain. For example, an inflexible work schedule prevents the performance of domestic household tasks satisfactorily. Conversely, conflicts originating in the family may have negative organizational consequences, such as when the illness of an elderly parent results in absenteeism at work (Fu and Shaffer, 2000).

A more recent development is consideration being given to the multi-dimensional facets of work-family conflict. According to Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), work-family conflict exists under three conditions which in turn produce three distinct categories of work-family conflict, which may be time-based,; strain-based or behaviour-based.

Time-based conflict occurs when multiple roles compete simultaneously for an individual's time, and the time spent on one activity prevent proper completion of other activities. In this analysis, the time-based conflict is also linked to role overload and role conflict, in which the overload may produce strain and conflict. Work sources of time-based conflict are factors such as extended working hours, an inflexible work schedule, or a heavy workload. Family sources of time-based conflict include having young children or other dependents, large families, or both spouses working full-time (Elloy and Smith, 2003).

Strain-based conflict may be the product of work or home stressors, which can lead to stress symptoms of tension, anxiety, fatigue, depression and irritability (Hertz, 1986). When the strain produced by one domain affects performance in another, strain-based conflict results. Sources of strain-based conflict tend to centre on work per se rather than on the organizational environment, and are linked to role ambiguity, low levels of social support from organizational sources and career development problems (Elloy and Smith, 2003).

Behavioural expectations of one source that are incompatible with the expectations of another source can create behaviour-based conflict. For example, specific patterns in role behaviour may be incompatible with expectations regarding behaviour in another role (Elloy and Smith, 2003). In another words, the behaviour and expectations required of an individual at work may be incompatible with behaviour desired at home within the family domain.

A review of past studies indicates that the most popular view of the relationship between work and family is the spillover theory. The spillover theory (Staines, 1980) argued that the effects of one domain "spill over" into the other domain and these spillover effects can be positive or negative. Positive spillover involves the spread of job satisfaction and stimulation at work to high satisfaction at home. In negative spillover, problems and conflict at work drain the individual, making it difficult for her to participate adequately in family life. However, most researchers have reported more negative aspect of the spillover in their studies.

2.3 BASIC CONCEPTS, DEFINITIONS, AND THEORIES

Work-family conflict is defined as a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respects. In other words, the role demands stemming from one domain (work or family) are made more difficult with role demands stemming from other domain (family or work) (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985). Each of these domains carries specific work characteristics or family characteristics. Most researchers (Adam, et al., 1996; Frone et al., 1992); analyzed work or family characteristics that give rise to

work-family conflict which produces varying outcomes on a working woman's well being.

a. Work Characteristics

Time Pressure leads to work-family conflict and is related to time-based work-family conflict. It occurs because the time devoted to one role makes it difficult to meet the requirements of the other (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

Time Pressure can be measured by the number of hours spent on work and schedule flexibility. Scheduled flexibility refers to the ability to alter one's work schedule to meet work and family obligations (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Past research studies have shown that long working hours as well as schedule inflexibility correlated positively to work-family conflict (Aryee, 1993).

Work Stressors lead to strain symptoms such as anxiety, frustration, tension and irritability (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Jones and Fletcher (1996) reported that work stressors affect family life in the form of unpleasant moods that have spilled over from work to family.

To sum up, work characteristics and work role pressure is significantly related to work-family conflict. Role overload, role conflict and role ambiguity too have adverse effects on work-family conflict (Aryee, 1992; 1993).

b. Family Characteristics

Parental obligations can affect work-family conflict, as parents need to spend more time at home nurturing their children. Parental obligations is measured by the number of children and their ages. Younger children will demand more of parents' time and larger families are likely to be more time demanding than smaller families. Increased parental obligation results in higher work-family conflict (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985).

Family Support by supportive family members helps to buffer the work-family conflict experienced by working women. A pro-feminist sex-role attitude from spouses can reduce work-family conflict for the working wives (Greenhaus & Heutell, 1985). Aryee (1992) found that spouse support reduces work-family conflict for Singaporean women professionals (Lee and Choo, 2001).

c. Outcomes of work-family conflict

Jobs satisfaction is a state of being pleased with one's job. Negative emotions that have spilled over from the work into the family domain can result in work-family conflict and frustration (Lee and Choo, 2001).

Most researchers found work-family conflict has a negative influence on job satisfaction (Arora, Hartman, and Stoner, 1990; Aryee, 1992; Pleck, Staines, and

Lang, 1980; Kopelman and Greenhaus, 1983; Lee and Choo, 2001). This means to say that when work-family conflict existed, the working women experienced less job satisfaction.

The **marital relationship** will be affected to a certain degree by woman working, as her occupation may deprive her from spending time with her spouse. Aryee (1992) reported a negative relationship between work-family conflict and marital satisfaction for Singaporean women professionals.

The **life satisfaction** of a person in terms of the personal job satisfaction and family happiness will be affected by the degrees of work-family conflict. To sum up, work-family conflict prevents a person from fulfilling both work role and family role well, satisfactorily.

All work characteristics (time pressure, work stressors) and family characteristics (parental obligations, spouse support) have different degrees of impact on work-family conflict. In terms of sources of work-family conflict, Lee and Choo (2001) in their study on Singaporean women entrepreneurs, reported that work stressors have the greatest impact on job-spouse conflict.

The Multiple Roles

According to Kahn, Wolfe, Snoek, and Rosenthal (1964), roles are the result of expectations of others about appropriate behaviour in a particular position. Role theory (Merton, 1968) suggests that conflict occurs when individuals engage in multiple roles that are incompatible.

Much of the research on work-family conflict has been based on the premise that multiple roles inevitably create strain (Frone, et al., 1992; Chapman, Ingersoll-Dayton, and Neal, 1994., Allen and Grigsby, 1997), as suggested by role theory (Merton, 1968) and role scarcity (Goode, 1960). However, researchers have found evidence that work and family roles are not independent of each other. In fact, according to the spillover theory (Staines,1980), it is believed that the two roles affect each other. For example, attitudes at work become ingrained and carried over into home life or vice versa. Research also shows that spillover can have positive or negative effects (Crouter, 1984).

The effects of the spillover can be related to the role enhancement hypothesis, which proposes that an individual's supply of energy is abundant and expandable (Marks, 1977). Multiple roles can be life enhancing. That is, the greater the quality of a person's multiple roles (for example, having an interesting, challenging job and a happy home life), the greater their self-esteem (Barnett and Hyde, 2001).

The present study aims to use some of the concepts and theories mentioned by previous researchers. They will helps to reinforce the findings of this study.

2.4 THE IMPACT OF WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT ON WORKING WOMEN

Researchers indicate that employed women are over-committed and find combining work and family conflictual and stressful (Cowan, 1983; Fuchs, 1989 in Moore and Gobi, 1995). They experience role conflict as a result of performing diverse social roles that demand incompatible behaviour (Davis an Robinson, 1991).

Societal and parent perception of gender roles attribute higher importance to a woman's family roles as mother, partner, and homemaker; and down grade the importance of their work roles as a breadwinner and professional. From the perspective of the gender role theory, social values allot more time on the ongoing day-to-day domestic activities and less time for paid work.

When there is role conflict, the professional working woman gives more importance to her role as a professional. Traditionally, the majority of working women have opted for a selected number of largely female-typed occupations, such as teaching, nursing, and .secretarial jobs. Normally, women turn to these female-typed occupations to minimize conflict with family roles as these occupations tend to be more time-flexible. However, status enhancements in these occupations are more difficult to attain (Moore and Gobi, 1995).

In a recent study in South Korea, Park (2000) focused on married women professors whom by virtue of their investment in higher educational training, are likely to

perceive their work as another primary role. The study assessed role gratification or role enhancement and role strain of the women professors compared to the ordinary housewives. It was found that married women professors have more nontraditional gender-role attitudes when compared with housewives. In addition, the study indicates that transnational resocialization from foreign experiences in a Western society has positive effects on role gratification among the married women professors (Park, 2000).

To Park (2000), socialization or enculturation is defined as "the process by which individuals are thought to function as members of a given society" (Loewen, 1975). Research (Park, 2000) has shown that gender attitudes as well as political, and religious attitudes can be resocialized by adult activities, such as the transnational experiences of these women professors who may have lived in a Western society and thus have resocialized their perceptions on gender roles. The foreign experiences in a Western culture have positive effects on role gratification among the women professors. They tend to have different views on gender roles that gave them more confidence in themselves, contributed to the development of stronger personalities and better feelings on the status of a female professor in male-typed occupations. These women professors do not have any sense of guilt and even not ascribe to traditional role expectations.

The findings on assuming of double role sets show that these women professors in South Korea experienced more role gratification as well as more role strain than the full-time housewives did (Park, 2000). It is understood that the group of married

women professors may have had a strong motivation for work, and they experienced satisfaction when a good balance was maintained between the demands of work and home. However, the balance between both roles may have been affected by the interplay of cultural norms and social characteristics of the society. This finding is supported by another study by Yi (1993) which found that even when a woman has a professional job outside the home and has achieved much, she also tries to carry out her household responsibilities and the central duty of improving the family status through her children's educational achievements (Liao, 1998). This pressure also reflects separate gender role demands. Hence, these South Korean married women professors may have self-expectations based on their cultural socialization, thus creating strains for themselves.

Most research displays the link between work and family (domestic labour) and its impact on a woman's career outcomes thus resulting in a negative relationship between work and family. In contrast to the normal findings, there is a study on Jewish women by Moore and Gobi (1995) based on the major hypotheses that family roles contribute more to role conflict than work roles. The findings of their study showed that Jewish women employed in a male-typed occupation (university professors) spent less time on family and domestic roles, and increased their hours of work. Consequently, their burden at home decreased while their burden at work increased. As a result, these women reported less work-family conflict.

In academia, O'Laughlin and Bischoff (2001) examined the aspects of academic positions that make balancing parenthood and academia uniquely challenging.

Several types of work-family conflict have been identified in academia (O'laughlin and Bischoff, 2001). Time-based conflicts occur when time pressures from one role make it impossible to comply with the expectations of another role. Strain-based conflicts occur when the stress of one role impacts on one's performance in another role, and behaviour-based conflict occurs when behaviour expected in one role is incompatible with behaviour expected in another role. Overload and stress related to work-family conflict have been found to be associated with a variety of negative outcomes including health risks and depression for individuals, as well as business costs of poor morale, decreased productivity, and greater absenteeism and turnover (Duxbury & Higgins, 1994).

Working at home may create behaviour-based conflict, as the focus and energy needed to fulfill work expectations is likely to conflict with demands for attention from children and/or spouses. Strain-based conflict may be especially relevant for academicians, as job characteristics of academic positions generally involve a high degree of ambiguity and autonomy, as well as tension, worry and frustration related to disappointments, unfulfilled expectations and coping with a multitude of responsibilities. New academicians may be particularly susceptible to "spillover" as feelings of incompetence, fears of negative evaluation, and anxiety regarding job security are "taken home" on a regular basis. As a mean of coping with feelings of job-related anxiety, academicians may work even longer hours, resulting in greater family-based stress as expectations of family members are neglected.

Related to both time and strain-based conflict, is the expectation that one will fulfill multiple role demands within the academic position. Thus, individuals in academic positions are likely to be juggling roles within the work setting as well as between work and family roles, increasing the likelihood of work to family interference as well as role overload.

Poelmans (2001), in his study of work-family conflict on managerial couples in Spain touches on the changing trend of research methodology used by scholars in the field of work-family conflict in the last 25 years. In the past decade or so there has been an increase in studies employing qualitative methods involving in-depth interviews rather than quantitative methods. More recently, the focus of study has also shifted from the individual as the subject of study to couples in a family, especially those studies that have addressed the work-family conflict between husband and wife (for examples: Jones and Fletcher, 1993; 1996). Lastly, Poelmans points out that past studies have always been centered around a few recurring variables such as work and family involvement, work and family stress, job and life satisfaction, social support, and turnover. With this, Poelmans has contributed a new variable in the study of work-family conflict, that is the decision-making problem among couples.

In his study, Poelmans (2001) focus on managerial couples in Spain, where one or both members have managerial responsibilities. He examined work-family conflict from the aspects of time-based, and strain-based conflict. The results justify some of the conventional variables in work-family conflict rese   ⁻ss, job

satisfaction, time-based and strain-based work-family conflict, and socio-demographic factors (Allen et al., 2000; Ernst & Ozeki, 1998; 1999 in Poelmans, 2001). In addition, the findings (Poelmans, 2001) also reveal certain themes like personal values and priorities, decision-making and choices in situations of work-family conflict, the quality of the relationship of the couple, the time people actually spent with their children, job characteristics, and learning.

According to Poelmans (2001), these results suggest that instead of conceptualizing work-family conflict as an inter-role conflict (the dominating theoretical approach in the field), one could frame it from three aspects: i) as an individual decision-making problem which is based on personality, values and situational factors; ii) as a problem of accommodation and negotiation between the two members of a married couple; or iii) combining (i) and (ii), as a decision-making problem in which the central problem solver involved several dependent 'actors' (spouse, parents, employer, and others), plus taking initiatives and decisions in a process of continuous interaction.

Poelmans (2001) explained these results by drawing on the importance of the equity theory , which claims that individuals decide to give priority to work or family depending on rewards and contributions. For example, an individual will make her decision to accept or refuse a promotion (reward) depending on her extra responsibilities being demanded in work (contribution). In this context, Poelmans (2001) suggested a more complete theory that goes beyond the economic exchanges that the equity theory stresses. The social exchange theory take into account social

changes that are more difficult to quantify but may be essential for work-family conflict which is an important social phenomenon in an individual's life. Thus, the social exchange theory would be more suitable to explain the underlying values and beliefs of an individual which served as the main theme in Poelmans' study.

2.5 WHEN MOTHERS BECOME STUDENTS

Much research has been done on the stresses and barriers that mothers face when deciding to return to college. However, little research has been done on the effects on the family, and work that follow a parent's decision to enroll in college. Linda Burns and Chrys Gabrich (2001) conducted a study to identify changes in the family system that occurs when the mothers enroll in college. More specifically, the study plans to investigate how being a student affects the role as parent, as well as how parenting affects performance in the college or the university classroom. The results revealed that adult students have the expected difficulties of balancing the responsibilities of family, work, and studies. But, at the same time, they experience positive changes from their enrollment in school, particularly with respect to their children.

The negative effects of the mothers' enrollment in college nearly all centre on their not having enough time with their children. Some mothers noted that they tended to be too tired, more mothers reported that they lost their patience easily with their children. Others are more concern that they are not maintaining previous standards

with respect to domestic chores such as cooking and housekeeping.

Mohney and Anderson (1988) found that role demands in family responsibilities in addition to career or job demands, are a major obstacle for married women pursuing higher education, and often impedes their successful adaptation of the additional role of being a student.

2.6 CONCLUSION

The work-family conflict literature developed from the earlier traditional view as a uni-directional construct, which is working outside home will definitely affect the home performance of a woman. Then, with social changes, women's work outside the home is considered a norm in the economic development of a country. Bi-directional construct of work-family conflict appears till today. Work can interfere in a family and vice versa. Recently, researchers focused on multi-dimensional construct that includes time-based, strain-based, and behaviour-based factors of work-family conflict.

From the aspect of research methods, the conventional way of quantitative methods has now included some qualitative measures like in-depth interviewing of informants to supplement the information on the topic being studied. Lately, we see the ethnographic approach of research methods in some studies of work-family conflict. Poelmans' (2001) study on managerial couples in Spain is a good example.

In terms of the theoretical framework, the most popular view of the relationship between work and family is the spillover theory: the effects of one domain (work or family) 'spill over' into another domain (family or work) as a result of three distinct categories of work-family conflict, namely time-based, strain-based, and behaviour-based. The analysis of gender role attitudes in the role theory play a vital part in work-family conflict whereby a woman's care of the home is always indispensable even if she is a professional working woman earning a good income that can afford domestic help. In addition, the balancing of both roles may have been affected by the interplay of cultural norms and social factors.

When work-family conflict includes an extra domain of study, professional working women experienced greater constraint in the form of work-family-study conflict. Little research has been done on the effects on these women's work and their family. Most of the studies are from the western countries, such as Burns and Gabrich's study (2001) on changes in the family system when mothers become students. Mohney and Anderson (1988) found that role demands in family responsibilities in addition to job demands are a major obstacle for married women pursuing higher education.

As a contribution to the field of work-family-study conflict literature, this study examines the impact of work-family conflict on professional working women's additional role as a student in higher education. A study on Malaysia's multi-racial society gives a different background of social norms and values of individual ethnic groups that affect the work-family-study conflict.