

Work-family conflict among female nurses in the healthcare sector

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Abstract

The research drew on gender role ideology, conservation of resources and social identity theory to explore the relationships between work–family conflict, emotional intelligence, leader–member exchange, employee engagement and job performance. Data were collected using self-report questionnaires from 169 female nurses working in three major hospitals in Sri Lanka. The study found that work–family conflict was negatively related to employee engagement and job performance. However, the negative relationship between work–family conflict and job performance turned out to be positive at a higher level of emotional intelligence. The study further found that the negative relationship between work–family conflict and employee engagement was weaker for those reporting a higher level of leader–member exchange. The study contributes to the extant literature by unearthing theoretical relationships in the healthcare sector. The implications of the study, limitations and directions for future research are also discussed.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, Employee engagement, Job performance, Leader-member exchange, Work-family conflict.

1. Introduction

Gender role theory maintains that men are supposed to be breadwinners and women are to be homemakers (Fortin, 2005). During the recent decade, most of the families follow the trend of dual-earning where both men and women work, sharing the economic burden of the family; it might have a significant influence on their family life (Craig and Powell, 2012; Ward, 2007), nonetheless, women’s family responsibilities have not reduced and thus, females end up in greater difficulties in balancing their work and family responsibilities than males (Lambert et al., 2017). On an equal footing, the tenet of the social identity theory claims that the identity of women inheres in family roles and ipso facto, working women are still expected to take most of the family responsibilities in Eastern countries. Since the prevalence of the traditional ideology is deeply rooted in the culture, working women struggle to balance between their work role and