

# Home as a Workplace: Demographic Profiles and their Implications to Work-Family Conflict

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Abstract. The COVID-19 pandemic profoundly affected businesses, organizations, and educational institutions. Private school employees were compelled to telecommute due to quarantine restrictions, increasing the risk of work-family conflict. This study investigates if demographic variables impact workto-family and family-to-work conflict levels and explores common challenges telecommuting employees face. The study is under the comparative study design. T-test and frequency distribution were utilized as statistical treatment. The results also indicated significant differences in the levels of family-to-work conflict (p=0.001) between males and females, as well as in work-to-family conflict (p=0.000) and family-to-work conflict (p=0.005) levels between managerial and non-managerial employees. The study also found common challenges employees encounter when working from home, including difficulty maintaining and managing productivity, lack of physical interactions and socialization with co-workers, feelings of loneliness and isolation, and difficulty in getting and staying organized. The research contributes theoretically by examining the concept of work-family conflict, specifically in telecommuting during the COVID-19 pandemic. It builds upon existing theories, such as role theory, to explore how conflicting demands from work and family spheres affect employees working from home. The findings offer valuable insights into human resource management practices. The study suggests that organizations should consider implementing family-friendly HR practices, training and development initiatives, and other programs tailored to address telecommuting challenges and work-family conflict.

**Keywords:** Family-to-work conflict; Telecommuting; Work-family conflict; Work-to-family conflict.

#### 1.0 Introduction

Even before the pandemic, telecommuting had already become an increasingly prevalent work method, attracting significant interest from researchers and scholars. Studies in telecommuting have spanned various fields, including human resources management, industrial-organizational psychology, organizational communications, leadership studies, information technology, and ergonomics. This broad focus highlights telecommuting's versatility and growing importance in modern workplaces. As a result, interest in telecommuting and other flexible working arrangements intensified in the 21st century, with many companies adopting telecommuting to facilitate global virtual teams, enhance employee productivity and efficiency, reduce commuting time, and promote better work-life balance.

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated this trend dramatically. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared a global pandemic on March 12, 2020, COVID-19 caused profound health and economic disruptions worldwide. In response, the Philippine government implemented an Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) starting on March

16, 2020, which was later extended and supplemented by other community quarantine measures. While necessary to curb the virus, these policies significantly impacted the workforce, compelling employers and employees to adopt alternative work arrangements such as telecommuting. Data from the Global Talent Survey (2020) illustrates this shift: Before the pandemic, only 31% of the global workforce worked remotely, compared to 51% during the pandemic's onset. In the Philippines, pre-pandemic telecommuting rates were even lower, with only 16% of the workforce working remotely. However, this figure rose to 42% in 2020, overtaking the 32% of employees who continued to work on-site. Notably, remote work was more prevalent in digital and knowledge-based industries (70%) than in professions requiring physical presence, such as manufacturing or healthcare (34%).

In light of these developments, the Philippine Department of Labor and Employment issued Labor Advisory No. 9, Series of 2020, to provide guidelines for implementing flexible work arrangements. This advisory aimed to help employers and employees navigate the challenges posed by the pandemic, offering telecommuting as a viable solution to maintain productivity and safety. While telecommuting was initially perceived as a solution to workfamily conflicts, allowing employees to manage both domains more effectively, the reality has proven more complex. Telecommuting blurs the boundaries between work and family roles, creating potential conflicts. Workfamily conflict, as conceptualized by Kahn et al. (1964) through role theory, arises when the demands of work and family roles clash. Researchers such as Carlson et al. (2000) and Netemeyer, Boles, and McMurrian (1996) distinguish between work-to-family conflict (WFC) and family-to-work conflict (FWC). WFC occurs when work obligations hinder family responsibilities, while FWC emerges when family demands interfere with work performance.

Interestingly, while telecommuting facilitates greater family involvement, this often comes at the expense of work productivity. For instance, Mukanzi and Senaji (2017) highlight that WFC frequently manifests when employees struggle to balance professional tasks with family obligations. Conversely, Weer & Greenhaus (2014) note that FWC occurs when family pressures undermine work efficiency. Thus, telecommuting presents both opportunities and challenges, reshaping the work-family dynamic. The challenges of telecommuting extend to the education sector, where the pandemic disrupted traditional teaching methods, affecting over 1.6 billion students and teachers globally (Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021). Teachers required to telecommute faced heightened work-family conflicts, juggling professional responsibilities with family obligations within the same space. This imbalance could significantly impact teachers' performance and psychological health, ultimately affecting their students (König, Jäger-Biela, & Glutsch, 2020). Given the critical role of teachers in societal progress, understanding and addressing their work-family conflicts is essential.

This study aims to contribute to the growing body of research on telecommuting by exploring the overlapping responsibilities of work and family during the pandemic. Focusing on employees in private academic institutions, the study examines the demographic factors influencing work-to-family and family-to-work conflicts and identifies common challenges telecommuters face. The findings can inform human resources and organizational strategies to support employees in navigating these conflicts effectively.

## 2.0 Methodology

# 2.1 Research Design

This research utilized a comparative study design. It is deemed the most appropriate method for identifying the significant differences between the different demographic groups' family-to-work and work-to-family levels. A significant difference would also mean there is a measurable difference between the groups.

#### 2.2 Research Locale

The study was conducted in private educational institutions in Tarlac City that enabled telecommuting for their teaching and non-teaching personnel.

#### 2.3 Research Participants

The study involved 96 respondents. The researcher employed the complete enumeration method to gather data from all the respondents.

#### 2.4 Research Instrument

The researcher employed the Work-Family Conflict Scale (WFCS) developed by Carlson, Kacmar, and Williams (2000). This scale is widely regarded as one of the most reliable tools for evaluating the multifaceted concept of work-family conflict. Additionally, the researcher designed a customized questionnaire to address the specific issues faced by employees working from home, which was included in the survey instrument's final section.

According to the initial validation conducted by Carlson et al. (2000), the reliability of the WFCS surpassed the standard acceptance threshold of 0.70. Specifically, Cronbach's alpha values were reported as follows: time-based WIF (0.87), time-based FIW (0.79), strain-based WIF (0.85), strain-based FIW (0.87), behavior-based WIF (0.78), and behavior-based FIW (0.85). The subsequent validation performed by Vieira et al. (2013) further reinforced the scale's structure through first- and second-order confirmatory factor analyses. Their findings highlighted the scale's robust discriminant validity, convergent validity, and internal consistency across its subscales.

## 2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

In order to collect relevant data from the respondents, the researcher sought permission from the Principal, Administrator, and the Rector of the respondent school to conduct a study on the school's employees. The researcher utilized Google Forms, where every item was encoded. It is an efficient tool because the data were tabulated after each respondent answered the form. Then, the questionnaires were distributed through email communications.

#### 2.6 Ethical Considerations

The researcher asked for the respondents' consent to participate in the study. Should they wish not to participate or withdraw from participation, the researcher accepted their decision. Moreover, the researcher secured the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses, and the results will only be used for academic purposes.

## 3.0 Results and Discussion

Demographic profiles are the classifiable characteristics of the respondents. Table 1 depicts the demographic profiles of the respondents described in terms of gender, civil status, and work positions. The table shows that 38.54% or 37 respondents were female. On the other hand, 61.46% or 59 of the respondents were male. Regarding civil status, the survey respondents were 68.75% or 66 single individuals and 31.25% or 30 married individuals. Lastly, 36, or 30.77% of the respondents hold managerial or executive positions and designations, while 81, or 69.23%, have no executive or managerial functions; thus, they are considered non-managerial employees.

**Table 1.** Demographic profile of the respondents

Demographic Profile Variables		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	37	38.54
	Female	59	61.46
Civil Status	Single	66	68.75
	Married	30	31.25
Work Position	Managerial	31	32.29
	Non-Managerial	65	67.71

As shown in Table 2, regarding the FWC levels, female respondents reported higher levels, with a greater mean than males, who had a lower mean level. Female employees tend to prioritize family responsibilities over work roles, as they perceive their primary responsibility as caring for their family members. Their "mother" or "sister" roles are more salient and central in their personal and professional domains. The difference in FWC levels between females and males is statistically significant. Moreover, the data indicate a p-value of 0.01 for comparing males' and females' FWC levels, which is lower than the 0.05 significance threshold, confirming a significant difference between the two groups. This finding aligns with previous research, including studies by McElwain, Korabik, & Rosin (2005), Eagly & Wood (2012), Lyu & Fan (2020), Shockley et al. (2017), and Ng et al. (2009), which concluded that females are more likely to experience higher and significant levels of family-to-work conflict.

<b>Table 2.</b> Test of difference: WFC and FWC based on sex				
Variable	P-value	Interpretation		
Work-to-Family Conflict (WFC)	p = 0.208	Not significant		
Family-to-Work Conflict (FWC)	p = <.05	Significant		

Although the results show that males reported higher work-to-family conflict (WFC) levels, the difference is not statistically significant. Specifically, the data show a two-tailed p-value of 0.208 for the WFC levels of male and female respondents, indicating no statistical difference between the two demographic groups. This result is consistent with findings from studies by Ahmad (2008) and Ugwu, Amazue, and Onyedire (2014), which provide empirical evidence that gender is not a strong determinant of differences in work-to-family conflict levels.

Table 3 presents the significant differences between single and married respondents' WFC and FWC levels. The data reveal that single respondents experienced higher WFC levels than their married counterparts. This may be attributed to the notion that single individuals are often more eager to work overtime to build their careers and demonstrate high performance. As a result, they tend to sacrifice time for their families to meet or exceed work expectations and responsibilities. These findings are consistent with the study by Kim et al. (2019), which demonstrated that longer working hours, often leading to work-to-family conflicts, are more prevalent among single individuals.

<b>Table 3.</b> <i>Test of difference: WFC and FWC based on civil status</i>				
Variable	P-value	Interpretation		
Work-to-Family Conflict (WFC)	p = 0.31	Not significant		
Family-to-Work Conflict (FWC)	p = 0.51	Not Significant		

Regarding FWC levels, married respondents exhibited higher mean levels than single respondents. Married individuals tend to experience greater family-to-work conflict, likely due to the added family responsibilities and expectations from their spouse, children, and other family members, which may spill over into their work domain. This aligns with Mjoli et al. (2013), who noted that family-to-work conflict increases as family obligations expand through marriage. Regarding statistical significance, the table shows a two-tailed p-value of 0.31 for the WFC levels of single and married respondents, indicating no statistically significant difference between the two groups. Similarly, the data indicate a p-value of 0.51 for the FWC levels of single and married respondents, which is higher than the 0.05 significance threshold, confirming a non-significant difference.

The marital status differences in WFC and FWC are surprisingly non-significant. Additionally, much of the previous literature on this topic has been inconsistent. Several studies (e.g., Nomaguchi, 2014; Noor, 2014; Beauregard, 2006) used participants from the general population without adequately matching them on key professional and personal variables, which may have contributed to non-significant findings. According to Oscharoff (2011), marital status alone (being single or married) is not a strong predictor of significant differences in WFC or FWC levels. It is possible that systematic differences, such as industry type and position level, have influenced prior findings. Future research should conduct an in-depth analysis of factors such as spousal support, marital satisfaction, and the number of children's marital status (Oscharoff, 2011).

As shown in Table 4, regarding the work-to-family conflict (WFC) levels, the data show that employees in managerial positions or designations exhibit higher mean levels. This can be attributed to the additional work pressures, expectations, and commitments associated with managerial roles, such as Principals, Assistant Principals, Non-teaching Supervisors, Academic Supervisors, and Subject Area Heads. Managerial positions often require working beyond the standard hours, which spills over into the domestic domain, adversely impacting family life (Quick et al., 2004; Chawla & Sondhi, 2011). Furthermore, managerial employees who receive designation fees or honoraria may feel compelled to meet the heightened expectations of their roles and deliver high-quality output or performance, often resulting in overtime work that affects their family responsibilities.

Table 4. Test of difference: WFC and FWC Based on work positionVariableP-valueInterpretationWork-to-Family Conflict (WFC)p < 0.05SignificantFamily-to-Work Conflict (FWC)p < 0.05Significant

Conversely, non-managerial employees, such as subject teachers and rank-and-file office staff, report higher levels of family-to-work conflict (FWC). This could be explained by their comparatively lighter workload, which makes them more likely to accommodate demands or requests from their family members. As a result, these demands interfere with their work responsibilities. A confirmatory interview further supported this finding, indicating that employees with lighter workloads are more prone to such experiences (Huang, 2004).

The t-test results reveal that the difference in WFC levels between managerial and non-managerial employees is statistically significant. This finding aligns with previous studies (Carnicer et al., 2004; Duxbury & Higgins, 2003) that highlight the broader and more complex scope of managerial work compared to non-managerial roles. Managerial employees shoulder significant responsibilities, including technical and organizational decision-making for the school. Consequently, they demonstrate a greater commitment to time and physical presence at organizational activities, leaving them with fewer hours for personal and family life. This leads to a higher degree of conflict between work and family roles for managers than non-managers (Beauregard, 2006; Nielson et al., 2001; Kelly et al., 2011). Similarly, the difference in FWC levels between managerial and non-managerial employees is also statistically significant. This significant difference can be attributed to the nature of non-managerial jobs, which typically involve lighter workloads and more schedule flexibility. This flexibility allows non-managerial employees to accommodate family demands, thereby increasing their experience of family-to-work conflict.

Table 5. Common problems/challenges experienced by employees during WFH

Problems	Frequency	Rank
Difficulty in maintaining and managing my productivity.		1
Lack of physical interactions and socialization with my co-workers.	79	2
The feeling of loneliness and isolation	79	3
Difficulty in getting and staying organized	76	4
Lack of gap on communication with my co-workers	63	5
Lack of informal learning opportunities such as coaching, mentoring, or job shadowing	55	6
Tendency to go to work even when ill	51	7
Frequent experience of stress and burnout	46	8
Lack of supervision and support from my supervisors	40	9
Lack of emotional support from my co-workers and supervisors	40	9
Slow or intermittent internet connection	27	10
Decreased feeling of being recognized in work	24	11
Lack of quiet and comfortable working environment	20	12

First on the list is the difficulty in maintaining and managing productivity. While some studies suggest remote workers are more productive, this is not true for every telecommuter. According to some employees working from home, they are prone to engaging in counterproductive activities. Specifically, they are frequently distracted by tasks such as surfing social media, watching YouTube videos, browsing the internet, or even napping during working hours, facilitated by the easy accessibility of technology. As a result, employee productivity levels may decline, and backlogs may become unmanageable.

Ranked second is the lack of physical interaction and socialization with co-workers, closely tied to feelings of loneliness and isolation. These two issues are inherently interconnected. Due to lockdowns and the implementation of telecommuting, employees are confined to their homes, cutting off informal interactions and personal communications with colleagues. In the remote work model, employees accustomed to working in office or group settings may feel lonely and isolated. They may become emotionally detached from their organization and co-workers if they perceive a lack of connection with peers. For instance, one of the main advantages of working in a school setting is the social engagement with co-teachers and students. While employers aim to prevent excessive socializing from impacting productivity, it is evident that daily interpersonal interactions positively influence workers' mental health and morale.

The physical separation of the workforce and the reliance on communication technologies such as Google Hangouts, Google Meet, and learning management systems can also create challenges in communication and collaboration. Telecommuting eliminates in-person communication, which is not easily replaced by video or voice calls. Consequently, miscommunication or misunderstandings can become common issues. Additionally, employees miss out on spontaneous encounters, often leading to innovative ideas. Informal learning opportunities

are another aspect employees miss in this work modality. In face-to-face settings, coaching, mentoring, and job shadowing are more accessible because supervisors and managers are physically present. With telecommuting, however, employees may hesitate to seek these interventions, assuming that their supervisors and managers are also preoccupied with responsibilities at home and work. Other relevant problems that employees encounter when working from home are the following: the tendency to go to work even when ill, frequent experience of stress and burnout, lack of supervision and support from supervisors, lack of emotional support from co-workers and supervisors, decreased feeling of being recognized in work, slow or intermittent internet connection, and lack of quiet and comfortable working environment.

## 4.0 Conclusion

The significant difference between the FWC levels of females and males can be attributed to the fact that females are more likely to experience higher and more pronounced family-to-work conflict due to traditional role orientations. Conversely, marital status alone is a poor predictor of either direction of work-family conflict. Additionally, the data revealed that the differences in WFC and FWC levels between managerial and nonmanagerial employees are statistically significant. This can be explained by the varying levels of work pressure, demands, and schedule flexibility associated with different job positions. Due to the nature of telecommuting as a work setup, the challenges encountered by employees working from home are primarily rooted in the lack of physical interaction with co-workers and supervisors. While this work arrangement has advantages and disadvantages, it became evident that employees and organizations were not fully prepared to adopt telecommuting as an alternative to on-site work. Proper communication protocols, comprehensive training, and organizational support are critical to minimizing the negative impacts of telecommuting and maximizing its potential benefits. Based on these findings, the researcher recommends that companies ensure the implementation of effective and comprehensive family-friendly HR policies and programs, encourage employees and supervisors to refrain from sending work-related communications outside working hours, and task HR and department managers with reviewing the distribution of responsibilities and workloads to ensure employees have realistic work expectations. Lastly, companies should conduct regular evaluations of the effectiveness of telecommuting for those who choose to implement it as part of their work modality.

Future research endeavors can address the limitations of this study and broaden its scope. Replicating this study in various industries beyond the private education sector is strongly encouraged. Additionally, comparing and contrasting findings obtained through the same instruments across different provinces or global regions would provide valuable insights. Further studies should also explore the underlying or moderating factors influencing or predicting work-family conflict among telecommuters. Specifically, researchers should consider demographic variables such as age, marital status, household size, income, and job-related factors like organizational support, autonomy, work schedules, and job flexibility.

#### 5.0 Contributions of Authors

 $This paper is solely \ authored. \ The \ author \ conducted \ editing, \ writing, \ data \ analysis, \ and \ encoding.$ 

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#### 7.0 Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflicts of interest concerning this article's research, authorship, and publication.

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