

# Sociological Analysis of the Conflict between Work and Family Roles in Dual-employee Families

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**Abstract:** The conflict between work and family roles in dual-career families has always been an important research topic in the field of sociology. This paper discusses the root causes, influencing factors and solutions of this problem from the perspective of sociology. It is found that social expectations and traditional gender role concepts play a key role in dual-employee families, which leads to the conflict between work and family roles. Society usually expects men to bear the economic responsibility, while women mainly bear the responsibility of family care, which often leads to the career development challenges of family members in dual-employee families. The division of labor planning within the family also has a significant impact on the conflict between work and family roles, which requires coordination and balance to ensure that housework and care responsibilities are reasonably shared. External support measures, such as nurseries, domestic nannies and domestic helpers, can reduce the burden of conflict between work and family roles. In addition, social policies, such as paid maternity leave, flexible working arrangements and nursery subsidies, can also alleviate this conflict to some extent. This study is helpful to better understand the conflict between work and family roles in dual-career families, and provides a useful reference for making more effective policies and family internal planning. The research in this field is still developing to cope with the changing social and family dynamics.

**Keywords:** Dual-employee Families; Family Roles; Sociological Analysis.

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## 1. Introduction

Dual-career families have always been one of the research topics in the field of sociology. In this family structure, both husband and wife play the role of professional workers, and at the same time they also need to fulfill their family roles. This dual role conflict has always been a controversial and discussed topic, because it involves the balance between family life and career [1]. With the development of modern society, more and more couples choose to participate in professional work at the same time, which may be for economic reasons, the pursuit of professional satisfaction, or other factors. However, this family structure is often accompanied by conflicts between work and family roles, because it is not easy to find a balance between work and family. This issue is particularly striking for sociologists, because it involves complex issues in many fields such as gender, family dynamics, social policy and labor market [2-3].

The purpose of this thesis is to make an in-depth sociological analysis of the conflict between work and family roles in dual-employee families. We will explore the root causes of this problem, including social expectations, gender roles, occupational stress and family needs. Through in-depth study of the conflict between work and family roles in dual-career families, we are expected to provide more suggestions for the society on how to better support this family structure, promote gender equality, improve the quality of family life, and provide more development opportunities for individuals. This study is of great significance for understanding the family dynamics and career planning in modern society.

## 2. A Study on the Relationship among Role Orientation, Work-family Conflict and Quality of Work and Life

### 2.1. Research Design

In order to get a preliminary understanding of professional women's understanding and positioning of their roles, we conducted individual interviews with 25 professional women in the early stage of questionnaire design. The interview was conducted by combining face-to-face interviews with online meetings, and the interview results were recorded by notes and electronic manuscripts. Then 500 male and female subjects were investigated. A total of 500 questionnaires were distributed, and 497 valid questionnaires were recovered, with an effective recovery rate of 99.4%.

There are three variables involved in this study, including: work-family conflict, female role orientation and quality of work and life. In order to avoid the centripetal effect in answering, all subscales in this study are answered by 6-point scale. Namely "1- strongly disagree", "2- disagree", "3- slightly disagree", "4- slightly agree", "5-agree" and "6- strongly agree".

The data analysis methods used in this study mainly include descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. All data were processed on SPSS26.0.

### 2.2. Result Analysis

Through the average and standard deviation of each variable, we can understand the distribution of each variable (Table 1). Because the male sample taken in this study aims to understand the differences of attitudes between male and female subjects towards female role positioning, we only ask for answers on the female role positioning part for the male sample.

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics of each variable

|                 | Variable name               | mean  | standard deviation |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|-------|--------------------|
| first part      | Work family conflict        | 4.692 | 0.835              |
|                 | Family interferes with work | 3.172 | 0.944              |
|                 | Work interferes with family | 3.745 | 0.948              |
|                 | mutual interference         | 4.694 | 0.562              |
| the second part | Job role orientation        | 4.892 | 0.933              |
|                 | like to contest             | 2.942 | 0.528              |
|                 | Job responsibility          | 3.797 | 0.841              |
|                 | Family role orientation     | 3.128 | 0.531              |
|                 | Obedience and concession    | 3.463 | 0.583              |
|                 | familial responsibility     | 2.988 | 0.88               |
| the third part  | Quality of working life     | 4.94  | 0.676              |
|                 | quality of life             | 2.928 | 0.922              |
|                 | workmanship                 | 3.804 | 0.694              |

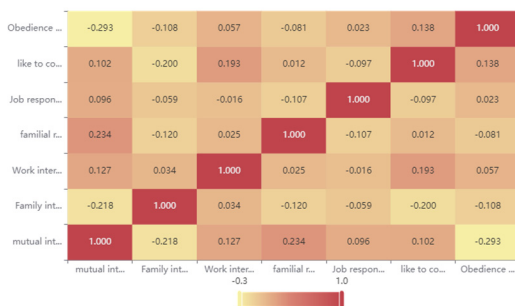
In terms of work-family conflicts, women have a low evaluation of the conflicts they face. The average score of family interference work is 3.172, and the standard deviation is 0.944; The average interference from work to family is 3.745, with a standard deviation of 0.948; The average score of work-family interaction is 4.694, and the standard deviation is 0.562. The average scores of the three items are all 3.5 points lower than the midpoint.

In order to preliminarily understand the relationship between female role positioning and work-family conflict, and to understand its relevance, we have verified the correlation between female role positioning and work-family conflict, and the results are shown in Table 2. Figure 1 shows the value of correlation coefficient in the form of heat map, which is mainly expressed by color depth.

**Table 2.** Correlation analysis between female role orientation and work-family conflict

|                             | mutual interference | Family interferes with work | Work interferes with family | familial responsibility | Job responsibility | like to contest | Obedience and concession |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| mutual interference         | 1(0.000***)         | -0.218(0.129)               | 0.127(0.379)                | 0.234(0.103)            | 0.096(0.507)       | 0.102(0.481)    | -0.293(0.039**)          |
| Family interferes with work | -0.218(0.129)       | 1(0.000***)                 | 0.034(0.812)                | -0.12(0.405)            | -0.059(0.683)      | -0.2(0.163)     | -0.108(0.455)            |
| Work interferes with family | 0.127(0.379)        | 0.034(0.812)                | 1(0.000***)                 | 0.025(0.861)            | -0.016(0.915)      | 0.193(0.180)    | 0.057(0.694)             |
| familial responsibility     | 0.234(0.103)        | -0.12(0.405)                | 0.025(0.861)                | 1(0.000***)             | -0.107(0.462)      | 0.012(0.935)    | -0.081(0.576)            |
| Job responsibility          | 0.096(0.507)        | -0.059(0.683)               | -0.016(0.915)               | -0.107(0.462)           | 1(0.000***)        | -0.097(0.504)   | 0.023(0.875)             |
| like to contest             | 0.102(0.481)        | -0.2(0.163)                 | 0.193(0.180)                | 0.012(0.935)            | -0.097(0.504)      | 1(0.000***)     | 0.138(0.340)             |
| Obedience and concession    | -0.293(0.039**)     | -0.108(0.455)               | 0.057(0.694)                | -0.081(0.576)           | 0.023(0.875)       | 0.138(0.340)    | 1(0.000***)              |

Note: \*\*\*, \*\* and \* represent the significance levels of 1%, 5% and 10% respectively.

**Figure 1.** Thermogram of correlation coefficient value

It can be seen that the influencing factors of work-family conflict are mainly composed of objective factors and subjective factors, and the mechanism of subjective and objective influencing factors in work and family is opposite; Objective work pressure will enhance the conflict between work and family, and objective family pressure will enhance the conflict between family and work; Subjective job role orientation will reduce the conflict between family and work, while subjective family role orientation will improve the conflict between work and family. Paying attention to the

work role on the basis of maintaining the family role is conducive to alleviating the work-family conflict of professional women, but to really improve the quality of work and life, it needs the harmonious development of the work role and the family role.

### 3. Causes of Conflict between Work and Family Roles in Dual-employee Families

#### 3.1. Occupational Stress

Members of dual-career families usually bear more professional pressure, because they need to perform well in their work to meet their professional requirements and expectations. This may include long working hours, high competition and pressure for career advancement. High occupational stress will lead to work-family conflict, because individuals need to spend more time and energy on their careers, thus reducing their participation and support in the family [4-5].

Occupational stress in a dual-employee family means that two adult family members are working outside, and they need

to balance the pressure of work and family responsibilities. Dual-career families need to effectively manage work and family time to ensure the completion of work tasks and take into account family responsibilities. This may require careful planning and coordination. If two members are in different workplaces, they may face professional conflicts, such as overtime work, business trip, tight working deadlines, etc., which may cause pressure on family life [6]. Long-term dual-career life may lead to fatigue and exhaustion, because they need to go back and forth between work and family, and there is not enough rest time. Dual-career families may feel emotional pressure because they lack time to devote themselves to family relationships. Intimacy may be neglected, leading to tension.

### 3.2. Family Needs

Family demand conflict in dual-employee families refers to the competition and conflict between work and family responsibilities of two adult family members [7]. These conflicts can cover many fields, including the following aspects:

**Child care:** In a dual-employee family, if there are children, you need to take care of their needs. Children's daily life, school activities and medical care need the input of family members. When two members are working, it is necessary to coordinate the care of children, which may lead to conflicts.

**Housework:** Families need regular housework, including cleaning, shopping and cooking. In a dual-employee family, who will bear these responsibilities may lead to conflicts, because both members have jobs and external responsibilities.

**Personal time:** Every family member needs time to relax and pursue personal interests. In a dual-employee family, finding enough personal time may become a challenge, because work and family responsibilities occupy most of the time.

**Family time:** Maintaining a harmonious family relationship requires spending time together, participating in family activities and interactions. Dual-career families may find it difficult to keep enough family time because of limited time, which may lead to conflicts of family needs.

### 3.3. Social Expectations and Gender Roles

There may be conflicts between social expectations and gender roles in dual-employee families, which involve social expectations of family members and traditional concepts of gender roles [8-9]. Society often expects parents to share responsibilities in the family, including taking care of children, housework and finance. However, under the traditional concept of gender roles, men are usually regarded as the main economic supporters, while women are regarded as the main family caregivers. This social expectation may lead to the conflict of gender roles in dual-income families. In a dual-employee family, both members are working, but society may require men to bear more economic responsibilities, while women bear more family responsibilities. This may lead to conflicts between career and family to meet social expectations.

In a dual-employee family, both members may pursue career promotion, but society may have higher expectations for men's career promotion because they are usually regarded as the main financial supporters. This may pose a challenge to women's career development. The traditional concept of gender roles may lead to an unbalanced division of labor in the family, in which women bear more housework and care

responsibilities, while men bear more economic responsibilities. This may lead to conflicts within the family.

### 3.4. Working Hours and Flexibility

In a dual-employee family, working hours and flexibility may lead to conflicts, because both members work outside and need to balance working hours and personal life.

**Inconsistent working hours:** two members may be in different working places and have different working schedules, which may include different working hours and holidays. This uncoordinated working hours may lead to time mismatch between family members, making it difficult to spend time together.

**Overtime and work stress:** Sometimes, work stress, overtime and irregular working hours may cause family members to feel tired and anxious. This may have a negative impact on family life, especially when more intimate time is needed.

**Child care:** If the family has children, the conflict of working hours may lead to child care problems. For example, children need supervision after school, but both parents are still working.

**Flexibility requirements:** Dual-employee families may need more work flexibility to meet family needs, such as children's school activities and medical appointments. If the working hours are not flexible enough, it may lead to conflicts.

### 3.5. Lack of Support Measures

In dual-income families, the lack of adequate support measures may lead to various conflicts and difficulties. As both members are working, there may be a lack of family support, such as housework, child care and sharing of family responsibilities. This may lead to family conflicts and fatigue. If there are children, the lack of proper childcare or care arrangements may lead to conflicts between work and family needs [10]. Without enough support, parents may feel anxious and burdened. Lack of support may hinder the career development of family members, especially those who want to pursue higher career goals. It may make it difficult for family members to balance work, personal life, leisure and self-care. This may lead to fatigue, stress and a decline in quality of life. Lack of time to engage in intimate relationships may lead to emotional tension and conflict, because both members are busy with work and family.

## 4. Solutions to the Conflict between Work and Family Roles in Dual-employee Families

The solution to the conflict between work and family roles in dual-career families is a comprehensive plan, which aims to help family members effectively manage the balance between work and family responsibilities, so as to alleviate conflicts and enhance the happiness of families and individuals. The following is a solution path:

**Common communication:** Family members should establish good communication channels to discuss the distribution, expectations and needs of work and family responsibilities. Regular family meetings can help you define each other's expectations and goals.

**Family values and goals:** Family members should discuss the core values and goals of the family together to determine what is most important to the family. This helps to determine family priorities.

Determine the division of responsibilities: work out a division plan of family responsibilities together, including housework, child care, finance, etc. In the division of labor plan, we should consider each member's personal ability and career goals.

Flexible time management: Family members can plan schedules together to ensure that everyone has enough time for work and family. This may require sacrificing some personal time to make more time for family.

External support: consider external family support, such as nurseries, family nannies, domestic helpers, etc., to reduce the burden of family responsibilities. This can create more free time for family members.

Support career goals: Family members should support each other's career goals, regardless of gender. Encourage everyone to pursue career success and share family responsibilities.

Self-care: Family members should keep in mind the importance of self-care. Everyone should have time to relax, exercise, pursue hobbies and social activities in order to maintain physical and mental health.

Flexible adaptation: Family members need to be flexible to adapt to changes and emergencies. In some periods, it may be necessary to increase work or family responsibilities, while at other times, the burden can be reduced.

Adjustment plan: regularly evaluate the division of family responsibilities and time management plan, and make adjustments according to family changes and needs. This helps to ensure the continued effectiveness of the solution.

Seek support and advice: If problems arise, family members can seek external support, such as family therapy, counselors or support groups, to solve conflicts and challenges.

## 5. Conclusion

To sum up, the conflict between work and family roles in dual-career families is a complex and multidimensional problem, which is influenced by many factors such as social expectations, gender role concepts, division of labor within the family, career development challenges and external support. Resolving these conflicts requires comprehensive social policies, culture and efforts within the family to achieve

a more balanced and harmonious work and family life. The research in this field is still developing, in order to better understand and deal with this problem in dual-income families.

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