WHAT HAPPENED TO EMPLOYEES DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC? THE EFFECT OF WORK-FAMILY INTERFACE ON WORKPLACE WELL-BEING

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ABSTRACT

When the COVID-19 pandemic occurred, many things changed from people's daily lives. One of the things that has changed is employees who are forced to work from home or work from home (WFH). The implementation of WFH by many companies makes employees have to adapt to the challenges brought about by these changes. This study aims to understand the effect of the work-family interface (WFI) on workplace well-being (WWB). The participants in this study were 129 employees of company X who were located in Indonesia and implemented WFH during the COVID-19 pandemic. The measurement tool used is from Kinnunen et al. (2006) which consists of 4 dimensions, namely work-family conflict (WFC), family-work conflict (FWC), work-family enrichment (WFE), and family-work enrichment (FWE). The WWB measurement tool used is from Hyett and Parker (2014) which consists of 4 dimensions, namely work satisfaction, organization respect, employer care, and intrusion of work. The results of this study show that WFI has proven to influence WWB. This means that positive dimensions (enrichment) such as WFE and FWE can increase participant WWB (R^2: WFE→ WWB= .383, FWE→ WWB= .152). Conversely, negative dimensions (conflict) such as work-family conflict (WFC) and family-work conflict (FWC) can reduce participants' WWB levels (R^2: WFC→ WWB= .196, FWC→ WWB= .126). Therefore, it is important for employees to maintain WWB by increasing enrichment and reducing conflict.

Keywords: Work-family interface, covid-19 pandemic, well-being, workplace

1. PREFACE

WHO has declared COVID-19 as a pandemic on March 11 2020, which is not only a health crisis but also a crisis that will affect all sectors (Ducharme, 2020). United Nations (2020) states that studying the impact of COVID-19 on society, the economy and vulnerable groups is an important and fundamental step. An example of the economic impacts of COVID-19 pandemic felt by society includes increase in layoffs (kompas.com, 2020; Tiratmojo, 2021) and implementation of a work from home (WFH) arrangement (Kramer & Kramer, 2020; lokadata.id, 2020).

WFH was implemented to employees from various sectors and industries as an effort to manage risks and limitations faced during the COVID-19 pandemic. Massive WFH implementation has its own effects for emplotees, including declining physical and mental health (Xiao et al., 2021), increase in working hours (CNN Indonesia, 2020; Crosbie & Moore, 2004), poor well-being (Crawford et al., 2011; Bakker & Wingerden, 2020), and risk of work-family conflict (Vaziri et al., 2020).

Recent research shows that the COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on managing time for work and family or the work-family interface. This study states that a few weeks after the sudden change in work style from working in an office to teleworking or WFH, there has been a change in the work-family interface (WFI) for many employees. This increases the risk of conflict between work and family. Individuals who experience negative changes in the work-family

interface were reported to have a decrease in job satisfaction and increase in turnover intention (Vaziri et al., 2020).

The work-family interface (WFI) is a combination or interaction of and individual's experiences within family and work. WFI consists of four dimensions, namely work-family conflict, family-work conflict, work-family enrichment, and family-work enrichment (Grzywacz & Marks, 2000). Setyawan and Lestari (2020) reported more than 50% of employees were aware that collaborating during WFH was challenging because it was difficult to separate work life and life at home. The findings above prompted the authors to conduct research and find out more about work-family interface for employees who work from home.

Studies has also shown that employees who work from home or remotely have lower level of well-being. Employees also reported that they work longer hour during work from home than when they work in the office (Crawford et al., 2011; Crosbie & Moore ,2004). On top of the challenge of working from home, Bakker and Wingerden (2020) shows that COVID-19 rumination is negatively correlated with well-being. In the context of employees, the subjective evaluation of their ability to develop and function optimally in their work is called *workplace well-being* (WWB).

Chen et al. (2020) shows that employees who experienced *work family conflict* (WFC) – one of the dimensions of WFI – has a lower level of workplace well-being. This is because WFC drains the resources of an individual thus affecting their attitude towards work, such as workplace well-being. This means employees who work from home during COVID-19 pandemic is bound to face challenges in maintaining their well-being. This study hopes to take a look at the WFI state of employees who worked during the pandemic on a WFH basis and analyze their effect to the workplace well-being of those employees.

In the book "cross-cultural family research & practice" Holmes et al. (2020) stated that work-family interface (WFI) is a broad concept regarding various ways the work and family life intersects. Experts has noted that someone's work and family role can interact with one another. This interaction works both ways, its impact can come from work to family or family to work. The process in which it interacts can be both positive and negative. This means the interaction between work and family role is able to either hinder or facilitates each other. This relationship of work and family life is also explained in Frone (2003) which mentioned that work-family relationship works in bidirectional way and can have positive and negative impacts.

This concept is in line with Grzywacz and Marks (2000) which says that WFI has 4 independent dimensions. In their study, they found that WFI has 4 dimensions which is: (a) negative spillover from work to family; (b) negative spillover from family to work; (c) positive spillover from work to family; and (d) positive spillover from family to work. Frone (2003) simplify the name of these dimensions to (a) work-family conflict (WFC); (b) family-work conflict (FWC); (c) work-family enrichment (WFE); and (d) family-work enrichment (FWE) which is the term used in this study.

Work-family conflict is when an individual's role in their work hinders their role in the family. When the conflict works in a different direction or an individual's role in their family hinders their work, it is what we call family-work conflict. Oppositely when the interaction between roles is positive, we call it enrichment. When an individual's role in their work facilitates or eases their role in the family, it is called work-family enrichment. While family-work enrichment

is when an individual's role within their family facilitates their role at work (Frone, 2003; Kinnunen et al., 2006).

The effort to study and define WWB has been widespread, but the study has been somewhat disjointed, looking at the subject from various perspective. This results in different definition of well-being in general (Danna & Griffin, 1999). This means, even though well-being has been studied for decades, the definition of well-being is still unclear and too generalized (Dodge, et al., 2012). In this study we look at workplace well-being, defined as the condition in which an individual has the ability or potential to function optimally according to their value in the workplace (Bennet et al., 2017).

Based on Danna and Griffin (1999), Parker and Hyett (2014) proposes 4 dimensions for workplace well-being, which is: (a) work satisfaction; (b) organizational respect for the employee; (c) employer care; and (d) intrusion of work into private life. Work satisfaction as the first dimension of WWB is the subjective judgement of how satisfied they are with their work to fulfill their development. Second dimension of WWB is organizational respect for the employee. Organizational respect is an individual's judgement on how the senior personals in the organization are trustworthy, ethical, values and treat their employees well. WWB's third dimension is employer care. Employer care refers to one's judgement of their boss. This dimension measures whether an individual perceives that their boss is caring, willing to lend an ear, and treat them as what they expected. Last dimension of WWB is intrusion of work into private life. This is how stressed an employee is in their work, inability to rest after work, and how that affects their *self-esteem* (Parker & Hyett, 2011).

2. RESEARCH METHOD

Participants in this study involves employees of Company X with minimum tenure of 1 year. The minimum tenure limitation was applied to ensure all participants have been working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic. Non-probability technique, which is convenience sampling was used to gather research participants, this includes 129 eligible participants. These employees have stayed in the company for more than 1 year, so they have the experience of working pre-pandemic. Finally, 129 participants who were eligible for this study consisted of 80 males and 49 females, aged 21 – 45 years old. Most of the participants (48%) were 26 – 30 years old and the second largest age group (22.5%) were 31 – 35 years old. It's also recorded that 51.1% participants were single, 47.3% were married, and 1.6% were divorced.

This research measures work-family interface using work-family interface scale developed by Kinnunen et al. (2006). This instrument has been modified to fit conditions during COVID-19 pandemic. One example of modified items is "You come home cheerfully after a successful day at work, positively affecting the atmosphere at home." modified to "You spend time at home cheerfully after a successful day at work, positively affecting the atmosphere at home". The instrument consists of 14 items and used the scale of 1-5.

Workplace well-being is measured using workplace well-being questionnaire which is developed by Hyett and Parker (2014). The adjustment for COVID-19 pandemic situation is also made to this instrument. The change is made on item 26 from "Do you feel that you can separate yourself easily from your work when you leave for the day" to "Do you feel that you can separate yourself easily from your work in the end of the day". This instrument has a total of 31 items and the scale ranges from 1 to 5.

Based on Cronbach's alpha which is used for the reliability test, all four of the work-family interface's dimensions are tested reliable, with the details as follow:

Table 1
Work-family interface reliability test

	Work-family conflict	Family-work conflict	Work-family enrichment	Family-work enrichment
Positive Items	4	4	3	3
Negative Items	0	0	0	0
Cronbach's Alpha	.868	.808	.703	.638

Reliability test is also conducted on workplace well-being questionnaire and the Chronbach's alpha results are as follows:

Table 2
Workplace well-being reliability test

	Work satisfaction	Organizational respect	Employer care	Intrusion of work
Positive Items	9	9	6	6
Negative Items	0	0	0	1
Cronbach's Alpha	.883	.915	.938	.787

3.   RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study conducted shows that in general employees of company X feel more enriched than conflicted. This is proved by the two enrichment dimensions scoring higher than the two conflict dimensions. Out of all four dimensions participants scored the highest in the family-work enrichment dimension with a mean score of 3.61. This means that in this study participants felt that their role in the family facilitates their role at work more than anything else. While the lowest score is found in family-work conflict dimension. Which means that in comparison with the other dimension, participants doesn't feel like their role in the family hinders their role at work. This result is shown in table 2.

Table 3
Work-family interface description

	Mean	Min	Max	SD
Work-Family Conflict	2.54	1.00	5.00	.864
Family-Work Conflict	2.31	1.00	4.25	.796
Work-Family Enrichment	3.46	1.00	5.00	.664
Family-Work Enrichment	3.61	1.67	5.00	.689

The same descriptive analysis is also conducted to get an understanding of partcipants' WWB state. Based on that result (Table 4), it can be seen that participants generally have high level of well-being.

Table 4
Workplace well-being description

	Mean	Min	Max	SD
Work Satisfaction	3.74	2.00	5.00	.588
Organizational Respect	3.67	1.78	5.00	.619
Employer Care	3.72	1.50	5.00	.783
Intrusion of work	2.88	1.29	4.43	.663

The overall WWB mean score is 3.57 (hypothetical mean is 3). When broken down to each dimension, work satisfaction has the highest mean score followed by employer care and then organizational respect. In accordance to that intrusion of work as the negative dimension of WWB – slightly below the hypothetical mean score of 3 – is the lowest compared to the other WWB dimensions. This result suggests that participants does feel some intrusion of work into their private life, but still generally feels satisfied by their work, respected by the organization and cared by their employer.

Next, regression analysis is conducted to measure the affect of all four of WFI's dimensions to WWB. Based on this results (Table 5) it can be seen that WFC, FWC, WFE, and FWE all have significant effect on WWB.

Table 5
Effects of work-family interface dimensions on workplace well-being

Variable	t	Sig.	R^2
WFC → WWB	-5.56	.000	.196
WFE → WWB	8.87	.000	.383
FWC → WWB	-4.28	.000	.126
FWE→ WWB	4.76	.000	.152

This means that participants who experience negative spill-over be it WFC or FWC will have lower level of WWB. On the other hand, when participants experience positive spill-over – both WFE and FWE – they will have higher level of WWB. The result of this analysis also shows that the experience of WFE has the highest effect on WWB. This suggests that compared to the other WFI dimensions, making sure employee feels like their role at work helps with their role in the family might be the best way to improve WWB.

A further regression analysis where the conflict dimension (WFC & FWC) and the enrichment dimension (WFE & FWE) of WFI are clustered together is also conducted. The purpose of this analysis is to see whether WFI dimensions will produce different effects to WWB when combined compared to when these dimensions are tested separately. The result of this analysis shows that the same negative effect for conflict dimension and positive effect for enrichment dimension on WWB is produced. Overall, the enrichment dimension also still produce a bigger effect on WWB than the conflict dimension of WFI.

Table 6
Effects of conflict & enrichment dimensions on workplace well-being

Variable	t	Sig.	R^2
Conflict (WFC + FWC) → WWB	-5.65	.000	.201
Enrichment (WFE + FWE) → WWB	7.50	.000	.307

4.   CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, this study showed that participants from company X who are forced to work from home (WFH) during the COVID-19 pandemic are able to feel more enriched than conflicted with their work-family interface. The conflict and enrichment that these participants experience also contributes to their overall workplace well-being. That means, participants who feels like their role in the family is facilitated by their role at work (or vice versa) have higher level of workplace well-being. On the contrary, when participants experience conflict in between their role at work and in the family, it will lead to lower level or workplace well-being. Based on the study, work-family enrichment produced the biggest impact on workplace well-being compared to the other work-family interface dimensions.

Of course, there are limitations to this study. First and foremost is that the population of participants could have been more diverse, including those from different industries and age groups. In this study company X is a technology company which consisted of young workforce (48% was in the range of 26-30 years old). Second, this research was conducted on the first half of 2021, which means that it has been at least 12 months into the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia and also 12 months into the work from home initiatives were implemented in company X. This study might have produced a different result if it's conducted earlier in the COVID-19 pandemic. This is because participants have gone through 12 months to adjust to the new work setting.

The suggestion for future studies, is to expand this research to a wider demography including employees of other industries, with wider range of age groups or even nationalities. This study can also be used as a basis to elaborate on other related variables like job-demand, job resource, other type of well-being, work engagement, etc. This might be useful to get more wholistic picture on either work-family interface or workplace well-being. A further study on this topic can also be done to explore the possibility of moderating variables. This will help to understand the effect and relationship of how the work-family interface impacts workplace well-being.

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