

RC 19 Conference Social Policies:

(I.S.A.)

Local Experiments ,Travelling Ideas

To be held in Montreal

20-22 August 2009

**The main causes of housekeeping role conflict and
Women's employment**

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Abstract

Objectives: *This is certainly a role conflict between women's employment as a human resource, and their housekeeping tasks. The latter has been women's traditional role for centuries in Iran. Investigation into the nature of this conflict is a matter of important discussion. Through the revolution and the reforms, the rights of women have been reiterated by the media as well by the women's associations. This paper attempts at showing how far women have succeeded in satisfactory reconciliation of the conflict between their job and their home requirements.*

Method: *The research orientation is based on a survey with choosing a sample size of 193 cases through a systematic sampling method. It consists of two groups of women in term of white collar and blue collar ones.*

Theory: *The theoretical framework is the role conflicts and role distribution which the gender and relative deprivation theories have been combined. These theories explain the effects of women's job, education, family income, time work, women's status in family power structure, number of children.*

Findings: *The finding through a statistical analysis reveals a relationship between white collar and blue collar women and their gender role differentiation. Our data analysis indicates that a majority of 60% of women who work outside the family think that there exists a contradiction between working and housekeeping, and that they prefer to maintain their traditional role, the housekeeping. This finding among other, is a factor to be considered as an obstacle to the extension of women's work in Iran. A regression analysis also suggests the effects of education, husband income, husband participation in housekeeping tasks, time work on role conflict (dependent variable)*

Keywords: *Women's employment, Housekeeping tasks, Role conflicts, Family distribution, Education, Income*

Introduction

With emerging industrial revolution and increasing demand for human labor force in industrial units and factories, admission of women to work spaces changed the traditional forms of family and at the same time developed a transformation in women's attitudes. First, in industrial countries and after a short time in other societies, women made requests to work as employees and many world organizations and institutions recognized and supported their rights to work.

This trend in industrial societies beside other factors resulted in increasing damages and collapsing of foundation of family relationships. In developing countries – in which the old traditions are still firm – women have tried to maintain their main and natural roles – that is nurturing children and supporting foundations of family – beside working outside the house. But in spite of their efforts to gain relative success, there are still many contradictions and disagreements between doing their jobs and working as a housewife.

In this article we try to study and evaluate the contradictions between women's occupational and their domestic roles, based on a field study. The questionnaire includes items related to personal and family characteristics and different factors to evaluate the type and extent of difference between women's occupational and domestic roles.

The findings of this research show women's roles and places in family pyramid, their abilities to handle household duties, their success to draw their husbands' and children's attention to help them in house works, etc. and also by the use of statistical and regression analyses try to show the small amount of conflicts in two sample groups in a same way.

Modern Approaches toward Women's Occupational Roles

The matter of women's employment has been studied through different economical and social ground so far, and western sociology has expressed different opinions in favor of or against it. In the framework of "role differentiation theory" of men and women, "Parsons" blames women employment with regard to the fact that their employment out of their houses will endanger the family system and foundation in which man is the bread winner and woman is the homemaker(Michel, 1975/1354:17).

On the other hand, in subjects related to "multiple roles" in medical sociology ground, women's employment as a new role - that is working against payment and salary in comparison to their traditional role in their families as a mother and wife – is discussed and attributes different positive and negative contradictory consequences to it(Annandale and Hunt,2000:27).

Some of western sociologists emphasize on important conflicts and contradictions between women's traditional roles (being a mother and wife) and occupational role and the harmful outcomes of accumulation of these two roles. They believe that accumulation of women's traditional and modern roles might result in "role conflict" or "role overload" and will imperil women's health(Hibbard and Pope,1991). From this point of view, women think they are not able enough to undertake their traditional responsibilities and as a result a feeling of anxiety and contempt is developed inside them which are the main source of mental disorders(Arber,1991:48).

The sociologists also emphasize on women's incurring because of their multiple roles and commitments. In condition of "multiple roles", a person always tries to balance and adjust between her "necessities" and "expectations" and under pressure of her different commitments she will lose her good health(Bartly et al,1992:65).

Even in industrial countries like traditional societies, women in spite of their employments out of their houses are still responsible for child caring and homemaking. According to "multiple roles theory", this condition will pave the way for appearing of "role conflict" and "role overload" and finally result in mental and physical disorders(Martikainen,1995:114).

According to these theories, this condition creates exhaustion, fatigue and illness in women and increases the women's death in comparison to men.

Some experts attribute the existence of higher rate of physical diseases among women to a higher rate of pressure arising from women's different roles in modern western societies(.

Similar argument is also introduced in "convergence hypothesis" which says so long as women increasingly step into manly world, that is their involvement in economical and social activities in contrast to house works and child caring, and by selecting a kind of male life style (such as smoking, drinking, etc) they expose themselves to job stresses and gradually put themselves into losing their good health(Martikainen,1995:101).

The "scarcity hypothesis" by Barnett(1993) accepts that multiple roles create more pressure and stress in women and it assumes that fulfillment of several main roles simultaneously causes a woman to lose her energy and as a result she will be unable to response and fulfill the expectations and necessities of her roles (as a mother, wife and at the same time as an employee) and she will lose her energy and face physical and mental problems.

"Waldron" and his colleagues referring to "role strain hypothesis" discuss the evil consequences of multiple roles for women's health and declare that multiple responsibilities

and its contradictory effects contribute to increase of stress and exhaust women's energies, times and mental capacities and jeopardize their health.

But there are also some experts who offer theories in favor of "multiple roles" and "role accumulation" hypotheses in contrast with negative rules and hypotheses about them, according to "role enhancement hypothesis" for both men and women, participation of a person in valuable social activities will enhance his/her health condition. As marriage (being a spouse), being parents and working as a bread winner (fatherhood role) are located in high rank according to social and cultural standards, then the more a person undertakes these roles, the more s/he takes advantages of health(Bartly et al,1992:72).

There is also emphasizes on advantages of multiple roles. They maintain some privileges for it, including: benefit, security, and dignity or rank arising from any roles in general, provide people with opportunities to improve their social positions, enrich their personalities and inner satisfaction, such theory is founded on "role accumulation hypothesis" based on which, employment provides people with new social dependencies out of their family and marriage domain which have a supportive influence on them. So employment brings women on self esteem and can prevent them to do just boring house works and feel unworthy(Bartly et al,1992:74).

"Waldron" and his colleagues believe in "two role accumulation theories" and claim that any roles encompasses different levels of positive or negative effects for a person involved in. They believe that among women's three main roles (as a wife, mother and employee) being a wife might give them more privileges than the other two roles which don't have the same degree of benefits necessarily.

Although through marriage a woman might face family problems and quarrels, she extends her social support and gains more monetary interests on the other hand. Working as

an employee embraces many positive outcomes for women including: more income, wider social protections and emotional rewards. However, we can consider other negative consequences about it like anxieties arising from job problems or occupational accidents and threats. Finally, we can mention positive and negative effects of being a mother for a woman. Being a mother and having children could increase emotional load and motherhood problems which result in more social tensions in women.

Referring to emotional aspects, being a mother might produce more stresses in one hand and bring spiritual reward on the other hand. Moreover, it might reduce harmful habits like smoking(Waldron et al,1998,22).

"Nathanson" also mentions the positive effects of women's employment such as improvement of their health, enhancement of their self esteem, making progression and being successful in their jobs and also having favorite social relationship and inner satisfaction. Earning money, acquisition of an identity based on her job and organizing her life are some advantages of being an employee for a woman which "Hibbard" and "Pope" also accept them.

In their opinions, in fact, taking care of children or nurturing roles for women like being a wife, mother and nurse have to be considered as the most stressful roles and in most cases it seems that women's occupational roles can adjust unfavorable consequences of these stressful roles. "Dennerstein" offers "role expansion hypothesis" through which he emphasizes the benefits of "multiple roles" by terms such as: improvement of self esteem, obtaining position, dignity, reward and income due to women's employment. Some authors account functions of the procedure as the following:

Employment can improve women's social relations. Female employees could be supported by their coworkers and managers and thus they can get rid of boredom and relative lower social rank of being a homemaker. Moreover, employment brings women out

satisfaction and happiness by social and monetary security. "Arber" believes that women employments have to be considered both as an "other role" and also as a "structural variable". Employment of women as an extra role could bring them more commitments and obligations. On the other hand, women receive reward by their positions in job markets and it provides them with more control on monetary sources and gives them opportunities to improve their own lives and families.

"Arber" believes that in analyzing the results of women's multiple roles, it is necessary to consider both women's roles and the monetary situation which enable them to work(Arber,1990:58).

But he refers to the differences which draws from multiple roles and might be affected by variable of social class of a person. Iranian culture underlines women's traditional roles that are being a good wife, mother and woman(Safiri,1998/1377:11).

Most of Iranian women appreciate their motherhood roles as the most important role and as "Motie" has also mentioned, such a belief will be intensified by women who are the bread winner of their families, especially in tough economical situations. Some of the Iranian female writers believe that although modern women try to realize their ideals and real capacities by doing social activities, it must not result in being indifference toward their main roles that are being a wife and mother(Karbasy,1998/1377:18).

In their opinions a working mother, in fact, is a housewife whose most important role is being a mother and a wife. Then in any essential situation (in cases that her job does not bring disorder to her main roles) she has to be ready to leave her job in favor of her other roles(Karbasy,1998/1377:19).

In Iran similarly, employment of women is under question (Safiri, 1998/1377). On the other hand, women continue to work as employees because society needs their works in jobs which are feminine. (Such as teaching, nursing, etc).

Gender Theories

The main point in "gender Theories" is that women's passive position in job markets and family and house are related to each other and they are all parts of a total social system in which women are obedient in contrast to men roles. These theories have considerable terms which talking about their differences is not possible in this article.

A key matter in gender theories is that homemaking especially taking care of children is a woman duty. Both in industrial societies which depend on markets and other nonindustrial countries which do not depend on markets, employee women are still responsible for homemaking and nurturing children. Women In extended families help each other in their main roles, but with transformation of families in to nuclear families especially in urban areas, women have to do their main roles individually and without any help. Moreover hiring a babysitter or leaving children to day care is expensive and their services are not accessible enough for every one. Because of these duties, inability of women in job markets won't become smaller but it will become greater particularly in developing countries.

"Gender theories" try to show that woman's position in labor market is a part of a total social system in which women are inferior and submissive.

With another point of view, gender theories try to show that women face much discrimination in labor market such as:

- First, they are paid less than men in similar positions, at first both men and women are paid the same but gradually men are paid more than women because of many economical and social justifications.
- Second, women are presented by low payment, simple and nontechnical jobs. Their poor presence in skillful and high rank jobs now days are the effect of their efforts to put such discriminations off.
- Third, in economic crisis women dismiss from their jobs more than men.
- Fourth, men and women are not equal in acquisition new methods and receiving instructions.

Findings of the research

The sample includes two groups of workers and employees. The first group consists of 30 workers from Nowzohoor factory and 66 workers from Payam factory, the total number of subjects is 96 workers. The second group, employees, consists of those 15 and 17 teachers from different municipality zones who took part in information technology and communication program held in Honar Javan institute. They are totally 97 employees. As there were few workers available, all the members of population were selected as sample. However, the employees were randomly selected.

In this research, after testing research hypothesis, we use multivariate regression analysis separately for both groups to determine which independent variable among other variables have an effect more than the others on role conflict and extrapolate more about dependant variable.

It is necessary to say that at first we used step by step method and then concurrent method to do multivariate regression analysis.

The findings of regression analysis for both workers and employees women are as follows:

1: findings of regression analysis about the effective factors on role conflict among female workers:

Regression analysis of effective factors on role conflict among female workers shows those variables like education, husband's income, participation rate of husband and children in housekeeping and working time have respectively the highest effect on extrapolation of changes on dependent variable of role conflict.

While the observed multiple correlation coefficient (R) which is equal to 0.73 signifies the existence of a high and strong correlation among independent and dependent variables of role conflict. The determination coefficient (r) is equal to 0.53 and implies that the four independent variables which have a meaningful statistical and regression effect on dependant variable of role conflict, could determine 0.53 percent of changes of role conflict dependant variable, but other changes are affected by some parameters which are out of linear regression equation. The value of F test (28.12) also shows the efficiency of the model among changes of dependant variables of role conflict and denotes that independent variables involved in this research are able to determine the changes of role conflict dependant variable and there is a correlation between variables.

The following are the descriptions and coefficients of independent variables which are the most effective factors in standardized regression coefficient of role conflict dependant variable:

- 1- The variable of educational stand with a standardized regression coefficient equal to 0.42 has the most effect on changes of role conflict dependant variable. According to

its value we can claim that addition of one standard deviation of education independent variable causes to increase value of standard deviation of role conflict dependant variable among female workers up to 0.43.

- 2- The second variable is husband's income with a standardized regression coefficient equal to -0.40. Thus according to its value, addition of one standard deviation of husband's income independent variable causes to reduction value of standard deviation of role conflict dependant variable to 0.40.
- 3- The third variable is husbands' and children's participation in house works with a standardized regression coefficient equal to -0.25. The value shows that husbands' and children's participation in house works has a diminishing effect on role conflict of female workers and denotes any increase or decrease of one standard deviation of this variable accompanies by increase or decrease of standard deviation of role conflict to 0.25.
- 4- And finally the fourth variable is work time with a standardized regression coefficient equal to 0.22. The observed coefficient denotes a 0.22 increase of standard deviation of dependant variable role conflict against increase of one standard deviation of work time independent variable.

In general, independent variables of educational stand (with a coefficient of 0.42), husband's income (with a coefficient of -0.40), husbands' and children's participation in house works (with a coefficient of -0.25), and work time (with a coefficient of 0.22), in sequence could predict changes of role conflict dependent variable.

Thus, regression equation of affective factors on role conflict among female workers is as follows: **$Y \text{ (role conflict)} = 0.42 \text{ (education stand)} + (-0.40) \text{ (husband's income)} + (-0.25) \text{ (husbands' and children's participation in doing house works)} + 0.22 \text{ (work time)}$**

2: findings of regression analysis about the effective factors on role conflict among female employees:

The result of regression analysis of effective factors on role conflict among female employees is exactly similar to those of female workers group. The affective factors in role conflict are exactly the same in both groups; the only important difference is the order of variables. The order of variables in female employees group in sequence is as follows: husbands' and children's participation in house works, education stand, husband's income and work time. Computed multiple correlation coefficient (0.78) also denotes there is a high and strong correlation among independent and dependent variables of role conflict.

According to determination coefficient (0.60) we can say that four independent variables were able to determine 0.60 percent of changes and regression of dependent variable of role conflict among female employees but other changes are affected by external factor out of sample group and they were not displayed in linear regression equation.

The value of F test (45.11) also displays the merit of sample population and it shows the ability of independent and dependent variables to determine and affect the changes and variance of role conflict variable among female employee group.

The following is the descriptions and values of coefficient of independent variables and their effects on dependent variable:

- 1- Husband's and children's participation in house works with a standardized regression coefficient equal to -0.47 is the first variable which predicts the most changes of role conflict dependent variable among female employees group. According to the value of coefficient, we can declare that addition of one standard deviation to independent

variable of husbands' and children's participation in house works causes to reduction of standard deviation of role conflict dependent variable amount to 0.47.

- 2- Education stand with a standardized regression coefficient equal to -0.47 is the second variable; the value of coefficient denotes 0.44 increase of standard deviation in role conflict dependent variable causes an addition of one standard deviation in education stand independent variable.
- 3- Husband's income with a standardized regression coefficient equal to -0.32 is the third variable. The value has a diminishing effect and at the same time denotes that addition of one standard deviation in husband's income independent variable accompanies by a reduction of standard deviation in role conflict dependent variable to 0.32.
- 4- And finally work time variable with a standardized regression coefficient equal to 0.27 is the fourth variable which had a meaningful correlation with role conflict dependent variable. The value shows an addition of 0.27 to standard deviation of role conflict dependent variable causes an addition of one standard regression of work time independent variable.

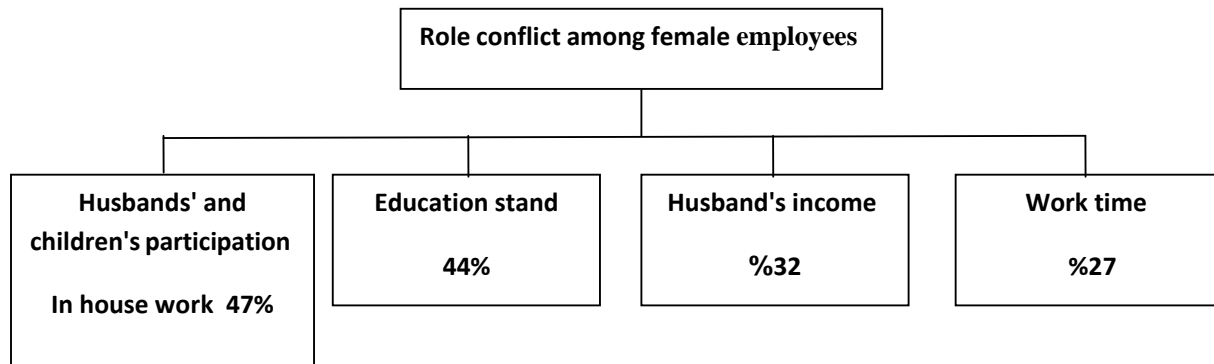
Finally, following variables in sequence could determine and predict the changes of role conflict dependent variable:

Husband's and children's participation in house works (with standardized regression coefficient of -0.47), education stand (with standardized regression coefficient of 0.44), husband's income (with standardized regression coefficient of -0.32) and work time (with standardized regression coefficient of 0.27)

Thus, regression equation of affective factors on role conflict among female employees is as follows:

$$Y \text{ (role conflict)} = 0.44 \text{ (education stand)} + (-0.32) \text{ (husband's income)} + (-0.47) \text{ (husbands' and children's participation in doing house works)} + 0.27 \text{ (work time)}$$

Regression chart of affective factors on role conflict among female employees



Outcome of regression analysis of affective factors on role conflict among female employees

[illegible]

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