

Validity Evidence of the Work-Family Conflict Scale for Public Security Professionals*

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ABSTRACT – The aim of this article is to present evidence of validity for the ‘work-family conflict scale’ with a sample of 10,383 professionals working in Brazilian public security. Cross-validation procedures were applied through the definition of two subsamples, exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were performed. All ethical procedures were followed. The results found in both the exploratory factor analysis (‘Work Interference with Family’ Factor, with factor loadings between .91 and .81 and alpha of .93, and ‘Family Interference with Work’ Factor, with factor loadings between .96 and .71 and alpha of .90) and the confirmatory analysis ($\chi^2/df < 5$; CFI $> .98$; TLI $> .98$; RMSEA $< .10$) demonstrate robust evidence of validity, indicating the use of the scale in other organizational contexts.

KEYWORDS: Work-Family Conflict, Family-Work Conflict, Public security

Evidências de Validade da Escala Conflito Trabalho-Família para Profissionais da Segurança Pública*

RESUMO – O artigo tem como objetivo geral apresentar evidências de validade da escala ‘conflito trabalho-família’ junto a uma amostra de 10.383 profissionais que atuam na segurança pública brasileira. Optou-se pela condução dos procedimentos de validação cruzada, por meio da definição de duas subamostras, foram realizadas análises fatoriais exploratórias e confirmatórias. Todos os procedimentos éticos foram adotados. Os resultados encontrados tanto na análise fatorial exploratória (Fator ‘Interferência do Trabalho na Família’, com cargas fatoriais entre 0,91 e 0,81 e alpha de 0,93 e Fator ‘Interferência da Família no Trabalho, com cargas entre 0,96 a 0,71 e alpha de 0,90) quanto confirmatória ($\chi^2/gl < 5$; CFI $> 0,98$; TLI $> 0,98$; RMSEA $< 0,1$) demonstram robustas evidências de validade, indicando o uso da escala em outros contextos organizacionais.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Conflito Trabalho-Família, Conflito Família-Trabalho, Segurança Pública

Work and family play a central role in people’s daily lives and histories, and for a long time these two domains were considered independent, without overlapping each other in the lives of individuals (Aguiar & Bastos 2013; Andrade & Barbosa, 2015). Over time, this attitude of separating these two contexts and treating them as independent from each other changed after the development of studies which

showed that these two areas of life establish very close and dynamic relationships. Considering this interdependence, the challenge is to find a balance between the two spheres (Chambel & Veríssimo, 2009; Chambel et al., 2022; Gomez et al., 2021).

In general, there are two main theoretical perspectives that dominate the research on work-family interfaces. One

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is a recent perspective that came from Positive Psychology, in the 2000s, indicating constructs related to the positive side of this interface, such as work-family enrichment, suggesting that involvement in one domain may be able to positively influence performance in the other domain and vice versa (Barnett & Hyde, 2001; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). The other is the traditional position of research that has as its main focus the negative effects arising from the accumulation of family and occupational roles (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

The concept of work-family conflict established by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), widely accepted in the literature, establishes the construct as an conflict of functions between the work and family dimensions, which are reciprocally irreconcilable, to some extent (Aguiar & Bastos, 2013; Min et al., 2021). In addition to this capacity for mutual harm – that is, work can harm the family and vice versa – three types of friction contribute to the experience of work-family conflict: linked to time, pressures, and behavioral aspects. Still, all reproduce the understanding that more time spent, more significant pressure experienced, or behavioral aspects of the family's role, for example, negatively impact work, and the reciprocal is also true (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

The more contemporary view aims to identify the influence of other work factors, of a multilevel nature, such as leadership styles and work design, for example, from a more dynamic and adaptive perspective (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). This more recent perspective adopts the logic of work-family enrichment under the logic of its antecedents and predictors rather than adopting a more static view of the occurrence of this phenomenon.

The present study investigated the conflicting perspective of the work-family interface in the context of Public Security. The perspective of conflict considers the existence of a disharmonious influence between these domains, which can originate both within the world of work and within the family. It is based on the premise that professional responsibilities may interfere with the fulfillment of family obligations (work-family conflict), influencing the private life domain, while obligations related to family may impair the work performance. This conflict can make individuals perceive that investing in a certain context or role depletes resources, such as time, energy and attention to the other sphere of life, and the non-fulfillment of obligations or the non-fulfillment of needs in one of the areas will lead to direct consequences in the other area. As a result, this dynamic between roles is considered to be interdependent and mutually reciprocal (Barros, 2021; Bandeira, et al., 2021; Oliveira, et al., 2013).

Depending on the professional context, there are many implications for this disparity – as is the case with Public Security. Public security is the way in which the State seeks to guarantee society the right to security (Brasil, 1988), forming an integrated and optimized system, involving instruments of coercion, justice, defense of rights, health

and social welfare. The public security process begins with prevention and ends with repairing the damage, dealing with the causes and reinserting the offender into society, seeking to preserve public order and the safety of people and property (Costa, 2010).

This is an important sector of society, responsible for maintaining law and order, and serves as a kind of guardian for society. However, maintaining law and order requires a constant commitment to active surveillance from these workers, and this hectic routine makes this a very demanding and stressful profession, of which the public is not fully aware (Islam, et al., 2020).

Like all individuals who are divided between professional and family life, public security workers are also subject to dealing with incompatibilities between performing their function and having a family. That is because it is essential to point out that these professionals are immersed in a work context with significant tensions as its characteristics – which even require an inherent risk to their lives and those of their professional colleagues – long shifts of service, among other characteristics. These circumstances can lead to job dissatisfaction, burnout, and other adverse effects (Islam et al., 2020; Freitas et al., 2018).

The conflict between private and professional life has been highlighted, especially in the international literature (Gomez, et al., 2021; Oliveira, et al. 2013), however, there is a need for a national study to investigate the work-family conflict in public security professionals in the Brazilian scenario.

Different instruments have been developed with the aim of evaluating the work-family conflict and, among the measures presented by Aguiar and Bastos (2013), the one proposed by Netemeyer et al. (1996) has received considerable recognition and been widely used in recent studies. These authors translated and adapted this original scale for the Brazilian scenario and performed the measurement of the work-family conflict, composed of two dimensions: 'Work interference with family' and 'Family interference with work', both containing five items each.

The conceptual approach to the instrument's dimensions is based on the premise that work-family conflict (WFC) and family-work conflict (FWC) are distinct but related forms of role conflict (Aguiar & Bastos, 2013; Netemeyer et al., 1996). Furthermore, the literature has highlighted three main theoretical dimensions related to this construct, namely: service time, tension in the work-family interface, and associated behaviors (Chambel et al., 2022). The literature suggests that work-family conflict exists when: (a) the time devoted to the requirements of one role makes it difficult to fulfill the requirements of the other; (b) the strain of participating in one role makes it difficult to fulfill the requirements of the other; and (c) specific behaviors required by one role make it difficult to fulfill the requirements of the other role (Frone et al., 1992; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Gomez et al., 2021).

Regarding the validity evidence of the original scale construction study, the results showed significant correlations between typical work and non-work variables, and the work-family conflict and family-work conflict scales. There were also adequate levels of internal consistency, dimensionality and discriminant validity in the three samples used in the study, namely: sample 1, consisting of 182 teachers and coordinators; sample 2, consisting of 162 micro-entrepreneurs; and sample 3, consisting of 186 sales people (Netemeyer et al., 1996). From the results obtained by the authors, using confirmatory factor analysis, by modeling structural equations, the two-dimensional nature of the measure was also confirmed. This model obtained satisfactory fit indicators: $\chi^2=76.24$; 85.47; 70.03; GFI=.92; .90; .93; AGFI=.87; .84; .88; and CFI=.96; .93; .97 for the three samples, respectively.

The WFC and FWC scales were used in studies that sought to understand the conflicts between work activities and families, among different populations, such as in contexts of university professors (Bianchim et al., 2020), public transport drivers (Silva & Silva, 2015) and physicians (Tameirão & Nunes, 2017). Andrade et al. (2020) carried out a study using the scales with 470 workers from a private hospital in the southeastern region of Brazil. The findings indicated that work-related variables present a greater prediction of work-family conflict than variables related to family issues, despite both being interconnected.

In a study conducted by Techio et al. (2020), at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, using the

mentioned scales, with 149 people who performed work activities, were married, and had at least one child, it was found that there was greater interference of work demands in the family than the reverse. The authors presumed that this was due to the fact that it is possible to have greater control over family relationships, therefore they end up enduring the more serious conflicts.

Focusing on public security, specifically police and firefighters, Cerqueira et al. (2017) showed that the very nature of the occupation of police officers and firefighters favors that the demands of the work environment intersect with the demands of the family, since, for example, these professional categories can receive calls in relation to diverse emergency situations. These calls can generate concern in family members, who need to go through, in general, a period of adaptation to these unforeseen events.

Accordingly, the present research aims to obtaining evidence of validity of a work-family conflict instrument, already validated for Brazil, in the specific context of national public security. It is extremely important to understand how these conflicts occur, so that strategies can be developed to manage them, since these are occupations in which the practices are permeated by risks and responsibilities, often in stressful and violent contexts. Living with these stressful events at work can interfere with the way these professionals establish their interpersonal bonds, including with family (Gomez et al., 2021).

METHOD

Participants

Study participants were 10,383 professionals working in public security. The public security agents came from different corporations, distributed among the Military Police, Civil Police, Criminal Police, Technical-Scientific Police and Military Fire Brigade, from all states of Brazil. There was also the participation of Federal institutions such as the Federal Highway Police and the National Penitentiary Department.

The sample consisted mostly of men (80.1%) with a mean age of 41.41 years ($SD=8.01$). The mean length of service was 14.54 years ($SD=8.48$). Concerning the state of residence, 25.4% of the participants reported living in Minas Gerais, 16.3% in Rio de Janeiro and the rest were distributed among the other states. Of the participants, 73.3% were married, 18.4% single and 7.9% divorced, with 27.5% not having children.

Regarding the salary, 31.1% reported that they receive 3 to 5 minimum wages, 24.2% 5 to 7 minimum wages and 20.2% 7 to 10 minimum wages. In relation to COVID-19,

40.4% had contracted COVID-19, however, only 7.9% had needed to be hospitalized, and 78.2% were vaccinated with 2 doses against the virus.

Instrument

The Work-Family Conflict Scale (*Escala Conflito Trabalho-Familia* – ECTF) was used. The scale, translated and adapted by Aguiar and Bastos (2013) from the original scale by Netemeyer et al. (1996), is composed of two theoretical dimensions: ‘Work Interference with Family’ and ‘Family Interference with Work’, with five items each. The participants answered a six-point Likert-type scale, with respondents indicating their degree of agreement with the content explained, ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree).

In the validation for Brazil, Aguiar and Bastos (2013) applied the scale to 994 workers, with most participants located in the northeast (51.2%) or southeast (47.8%) of the country and based on the results obtained through

confirmatory factor analysis using structural equation modeling. The following adjustment indices were achieved in the national sample: $\chi^2/df = 6.422$ (that of the total sample, with the subsamples index at a level < 5); CFI = 0.97; GFI = 0.959; AGFI = 0.931; RMSEA = 0.074 ($p < 0.001$).

Procedures

The instrument was e-mailed to workers in the public security area, with links provided to access the institutional pages in order to respond. It should be noted that, at the beginning of the study, a consent term was provided in order to present the research objectives and relevant ethical issues, and to enable the informed consent of the participants, who had access to the instrument only after agreeing to participate.

Data analysis

Cross-validation procedures were chosen to study the construct validity of the measure, which consisted of separating the database into two randomly selected subsamples, of 5,191 and 5,192 cases, out of a total of 10,383, with the proportions of the instrument being maintained.

Exploratory factor analyses were carried out, aiming to identifying a factorial solution converging with the theoretical proposal and to identify the psychometric properties of the measure. Oblique promax rotation, based on polychoric correlations, was used. This technique aims to simplify the comprehension of the retained factors and, in its oblique form, it presupposes the correlation between the factors (Damásio, 2012) using the weighted least squares (WLS) estimation method. The choice of the promax method is due to the fact that, although the study factors are linked, they have their particularities (Ribeiro, Porto, Puente-Palacios, & Resende, 2016). The reliability of the factors was measured using Cronbach's alpha index (α). Furthermore, all the statistical procedures recommended by Hair et al. (2009) were followed.

Statistical software R and IBM SPSS (version 23) were used for data analysis. Based on the exploratory analyses, structural equation modeling was used as a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) technique. This analysis was performed using the Weighted Least Squares Mean and Variance-adjusted (WLSMV) estimation method and the fit indices considered for the evaluation of the proposed model were: $\chi^2/\text{degrees of freedom (df)}$; Comparative Fit Index (CFI); Tucker Lewis Index (TLI); and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The validity evidence obtained suggests the instrument's accuracy and reliability. The empirical results found reinforce the original model by Netemeyer et al. (1996) and its validations, achieving adequate fit indices in both cross-validation samples ($\chi^2/df < 5$; CFI $> .98$; TLI $> .98$; RMSEA $< .10$).

Through the exploratory factor analysis, a final structure was found that also had 10 items, divided into two empirical factors: The 'Work Interference with Family' factor and the 'Family Interference with Work' factor. The factor loadings ranged from .91 to .81 for the Work Interference with Family factor ($\alpha = .93$), and .96 to .71 ($\alpha = .90$) for the Family Interference with Work factor. The commonalities were also quite high. These results are presented in Table 1.

The psychometric indicators obtained in this study are similar to those obtained by Greenhaus and Beutell (1988), Frone et al. (1992) and Aguiar and Bastos (2003). The empirical factors obtained in this article reinforce the behavior of the measure in relation to the perceptions about the work-family conflict, allowing the investigation of this topic that is so relevant to the lives of workers and their families.

It should be noted that work demands represent an important source of conflict with the family if there is no adequate planning of routines, as well as if the professional

cannot disconnect from work (Frone et al., 1992). Managerial performance and informal leadership are of paramount importance in the analysis of sources of conflict at work (Islam et al., 2020).

Comprehending the basis of work-family conflict dynamics will help to understand possible sources of dissatisfaction (Chambel & Verissimo, 2009) for the worker, as well as affective and behavioral reactions (Andrade et al., 2020) influenced by conflicting experiences. The origin of the conflict, according to Chambel et al. (2022), may be in the difficulty to interpret and differentiate personal roles (maternity or paternity, for example, requiring the dedication of more time) in relation to their integration with professional demands (double or triple work shifts, for example).

Seeking harmonious and balanced conciliation between personal and professional interests (Gomez et al., 2021) is at the heart of the experiences of conflict between these two social contexts (Bianchim et al. 2020; Cerqueira et al., 2017) that are of such relevance to people's lives (work and family). Regarding the psychometric reliability indicators obtained with the confirmatory factor analysis, Table 2 shows that they have very representative values, indicating internal consistency in the two empirical factors studied. The results are presented below.

The coefficients (alpha, omega and lambda) obtained were excellent, and are similar to the coefficients obtained in the initial validation of the measure. The psychometric behavior of the scale suggests that it can be applied to public security organizations, as it demonstrates, behaviorally, observable latent traits resulting from experiences of work-family conflict from the perspective of professionals working in public security. The type of organizational locus (public security organizations) did not influence

the behavior of the measure, demonstrating psychometric stability.

These findings are relevant insofar as they enable governmental actions aimed at public security professionals, whether considering the importance of the construct in the work and personal routine of servers, with its background and impacts or in the practice of preventive and response actions. That helps the individual constantly attempt to harmonize work difficulties and his family context.

Table 1
Psychometric indicators of the exploratory factor analysis of the Work-Family Conflict Scale

Item	F1 (Work demands)	F2 (Family demands)	Communality
Conflict 4. The pressures of my work restrict the freedom to plan my family activities.	.91		.80
Conflict 2. Due to the amount of time I spend at work, I find it difficult to fulfill my family responsibilities.	.90		.83
Conflict 5. My work duties cause me to change my plans for family activities.	.89		.74
Conflict 3. Because of the demands in my work, I can't do the things I want to do at home.	.89		.82
Conflict 1. The demands of my work interfere with my family life.	.81		.65
Conflict 8. Because of the demands of my family, I can't do the things I need to do at work.		.96	.87
Conflict 7. I need to postpone work activities because of demands that arise when I am at home.		.88	.75
Conflict 9. My home life interferes with my responsibilities at work (such as being on time, completing tasks, and working hours)		.87	.72
Conflict 10. The pressures generated by my family interfere with my performance at work.		.78	.66
Conflict 6. My family's demands interfere with my work activities.		.71	.63

Table 2
Psychometric Indicators through Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Dimensions	Definitions	Items	Reliability indices
Work – Family Interference	A form of conflict in which the demands of the work environment interfere with the performance of family activities and responsibilities;	1,2,3,4 and 5	$\alpha=.93$ $\Omega=.95$ $\lambda-6=.93$
Family – Work Interference	A form of conflict in which the demands of the family environment interfere with the performance of work activities and responsibilities	6,7,8,9 and 10	$\alpha=.90$ $\Omega=.92$ $\lambda-6=.88$

Note: α , Cronbach's alpha; ω , McDonald's omega; $\lambda-6$, Guttman's lambda 6.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The present article aimed to present evidence of validity for the Work-Family Conflict Scale (Aguiar & Bastos, 2013), applied with a sample of 10,383 public security professionals working throughout Brazil. This sample was divided into two subsamples, allowing the results obtained from the exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis procedures to be compared.

Through the application of a survey, in the Brazilian national context, with professionals who work in public security organizations, analysis techniques were applied showing that the measure used here has substantive indicators of accuracy, validity and reliability. It is believed, therefore, that the general aim of this study was fully achieved.

The psychometric indicators obtained were similar to the original and adapted versions of the measure. The scale can be used by leaders interested in the design of organizational policies or practices, oriented to the identification of conflicts between work and family, aiming to propose action plans to minimize these conflicts. Diagnoses can be made considering workers' beliefs and perceptions.

The conflict is evidenced by the perceived disharmony between the degrees of influence of one context over the other. When individuals are unable to develop adaptive or self-regulatory strategies aimed at minimizing conflict, they may be impacted by this. Impacts on their mental, physical, and emotional health, as well as their performance, may be evident. The quality of their personal and professional lives may also be affected by the conflict between work and family.

Concerning the limitations of this study, the lack of knowledge of the work and family reality of the public security professionals who participated in this research stands out. Aspects related to the day-to-day work (feeling of insecurity on the streets, for example) could have enriched, even from a qualitative point of view, the interpretations of the statistical analyses carried out. Knowledge of the work design and some of its components (such as the number of

police operations in which they participate, whether they operate in a middle or final area in the organization in which they work, aspects of the work team dynamics and other context variables) could have provided new empirical possibilities for the analysis and theoretical interpretation of the factors.

Of course, countless other variables, including individual, social and organizational aspects, may influence the generation or maintenance of conflict. Further research is recommended in order to identify, for example, the effect exerted by culturally established organizational practices that may impact the perception of conflict. To what extent, for example, can pressure to achieve goals at work cause the individual to experience situations of family conflict? What work design aspects can generate human dissatisfaction, and does this impact family dynamics? Can a more authoritarian leadership, for example, end up becoming a source of conflict and negative experiences both at work and in the family? Could the lack of support from colleagues also influence, in some way, the genesis of family conflicts?

Likewise, further studies are recommended on the role of the family acting on the generation of conflict from the perspective of the worker. To what extent can worries at home, such as a sick child or older adult, have an impact on the worker's mental life, generating experiences of conflict at work? To what extent do family dynamics (for example, number of people with monthly income, number of children or responsibility for older adults) influence the genesis of conflicts at work? What other variables (indebtedness, lack of structure at home or emotional experiences related to bipolar disorders, for example) could be a source of conflict? What is expected of the leadership's performance in this regard? This and other research questions may constitute new studies, contributing to the study of the work-family relationship and its impacts from the perspective of both work and family dynamics.

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