



# Work-Family Balance Contribution To Children's Education (A Descriptive Study On Women's Dual Roles)

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**Abstract** *The lack of work family balance among women due to their dual roles leads to having very limited to interact and do activities with their husbands and children. The family conflicts that are prone to occur are the lack of attention to the children and being fully entrusted their education to schools. Therefore, emotional support is one of the important factors to achieve a balance of women's dual roles both in paying attention to their children's education and to their work matters. This phenomenon is the background of the problem in this research. A descriptive qualitative method is used to answer the research question related to the contribution of work-family balance to children's education. Data were collected by observation, documentation, and interview methods for working women and analyzed by the Miles Huberman model, and its validity was tested using a source triangulation technique which then became a conclusion. The results of the study indicate that the work family balance contributions of women's dual roles to children's education are 1) Maintaining discipline and being on time in completing work, 2) Making time for video calls with the children in between work, and 3) Having a joint commitment at the beginning of marriage about sharing tasks and roles in the family. Work-family balance is needed to carry out women's dual roles, especially in paying attention to the development and education of the children at their early age and in maintaining their working quality*

**Keywords:** *work Family Balance, Children's Education, Women's Dual Role*

## Introduction

Improvement in education and opportunities in professional world encourages women to participate more actively in the development of economy both in governmental and private sectors (Setyowati, 2003). Unfortunately, the opportunity to work forces married women to play a dual role which requires them to be responsible both at home as a caretaker and at work as a career woman. The word career derives from Dutch word 'carriere' which means development and advancement in work. In the official dictionary of Indonesian language, career is defined as the development and advancement both in personal and professional works which are paid financially (Sofian, 2014). A career woman is someone who works on one or several jobs based on her expertise to achieve personal and professional goals.

Balancing professional, family, and social roles has become a challenge for modern society especially for women participating as workforce. The failure to balance the roles can lead to vicious cycle of psychological stress that will worsen gradually (Bagley 2016). Dual roles and the effort to balance the roles challenge the traditional position of men and women at work and at home as now women are seen as playing important parts for the prosperity of the family and even the society.

Nowadays, the tendency of both husband and wife working to meet the daily needs has become more common (Lusila 2022).

The division of roles of husband and wife in a household needs to be clear when both partners are working. The role of father traditionally has become to fulfill the basic physical and psychological needs such as food, shelter, and clothes. The role of father to actively nurture children seems to be secondary in a family. On the other hand, the role of mothers tends to be more in educating children. She is considered to be the source of affection, caretaker, listener, manager, and the educator of emotional aspects of children. Although the role of father is also essential in the child rearing, mothers are more demanded to educate and nurture children rather than fathers whose role are seen more as breadwinner. This view is problematic as the rearing of both mother and father needs to balance as children need various experiences from both parents (Rahardjo 2019). Parents need to spend time with their children to strengthen the bond that can improve children's psychological well-being. The development and growth of children will also be more optimum if both parents are involved in the child-rearing.

The involvement of mother and father in child-rearing is evaluated quantitatively, from the amount of time, and qualitatively, from the types of activities. However, mothers with dual roles require extra supports from the extended family such as grandparents or even outsiders such as babysitters and daycares. Mothers who admit their children to daycares tend to have less quality time to spend with their children even after working hours finished.

Some literature suggests that parents do not spend time with their children due to several reasons: self-actualization, overworking, and professional development. These parents do not see that their relations with their children affect the development and growth and that children should be their top priority (Lusila 2022). Some research reported that parents' involvement in children's growth and development affect the self-esteem and independence crucially required in later school life. Parents, especially mothers, who work dual roles need to apply strategies that can balance their professional life and child-rearing.

Nevertheless, work-family balance for women with children is hard to achieve as the roles usually conflict. Some research found that conflicts are more experienced by women with dual roles than men. After works, for instance, women are still expected to do household chores and caretaking of their children, while men might be tolerated when not doing the household tasks when returning home (A.P Hastuti 2018).

The reports indicate that the career women are more bound to fail in achieving work-family balance. This research aims to investigate the form of work-family balance of career women considered successful in educating and rearing their children. The research is expected to give some leads for career women to achieve work-family balance.

## Methods

This research is a qualitative method employing phenomenology approach. Creswell defines phenomenology as research portraying the life of individuals considered as a phenomenon. In this study, 10 career women, aged 25-35 years old, working as civil servants, and having children aged 2-8 years old, are considered phenomenal as they are viewed as successful in achieving work-life balance.

The data collection process includes two techniques: observations and interviews. The researchers conduct several steps to ensure the reliability of the data: (1) rechecking the verbal transcript to minimize transcription errors, (2) standardizing the coding process by reviewing the definitions and interview notes, and (3) cross-checking the validity of the entire data collected.

## Result and Analysis

The findings indicate that career women having children aged 2-8 years old have to divide their time and roles between working and family. They have to plan a strategy to minimize conflicts that can occur due to the dual roles by taking into account the most important aspects in both working and child-rearing. The mothers in this research achieve work-family balance firstly by identifying the division of time, physical and psychological efforts, and satisfaction. They attempted to ensure that the division for work and family is as proportional as possible. Such a balance proportion is described as work-family balance.

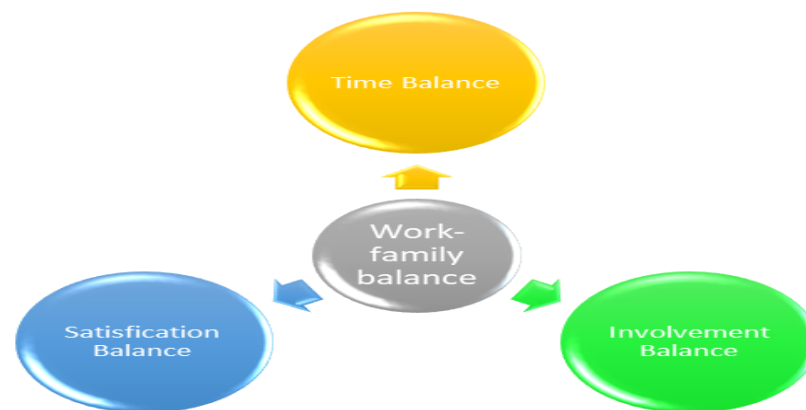


Figure 1. Three forms of *Work-Family Balance*

The subjects of the research view work-family balance as a condition where their roles in the work and family are balanced, indicated by the strong connections with the family and achievement of personal satisfaction that do not create conflicts among individuals related. More specifically, to achieve work-family balance, several components need to be fulfilled: (1) time balance, proportional time for finishing works and caring about the family, (2) involvement balance, opportunity to be involved psychologically and to commit the time for family related affairs, and (3) satisfaction balance, the emphasis on individual satisfaction level for the jobs conducted for work and family. Each work and family components intertwine and may lead to positive or negative balance depending on the proportion of time, involvement, and satisfaction interacting.

The interview suggests that the participants determine strict schedule for working and family. They usually work from 7 AM to 4 PM then, to ensure time balance, they finish their work within the working hours; thus, the remaining time on a day can be allocated for having quality time with the family. They ensure that the time spent with their family, especially children, are meaningful and memorable. The time allocated for the family might not be quantitatively more than for working, but in terms of quality, they can build psychological connections among family members.

## Dual Roles of Career Women

Dual roles started when the participants decide to work for various reasons. They may decide to work to earn extra cash for family livelihood and for not relying too much on the family financially. Primarily, married women decide to work for self-actualization, which is encouraged by high

self-esteem on their skills and support from the environment. In other words, working makes women feel more meaningful personally, financially, and academically as they earn independence, pride, and money from their jobs. Despite getting some psycho-social benefits from the jobs, career women also experience some backlash such as more demands and conflicts due to the dual roles they play.

Grzywacz and Carlson (2007) in Cyntiarani (2021) explain that work-family balance consists of two dimensions: work family conflict and work family enrichment. Work family conflict usually occurs when jobs are not in line with the life of the family and vice versa, while work family enrichment refers to how far individuals are involved in a domain affecting the other domain positively (J.H, Greenhaus, Collins 2003). Work-family balance can be achieved when work family enrichment level is higher than work family conflict as it makes work and family intersected positively; thus, the quality of jobs and caretaking of the family can run hand in hand.

Career woman do not only require equal rights but also self-actualization that does not hinder their roles for the family and themselves. The roles of women generally are categorized into traditional, women as wives, mothers, and household managers, and transitional, women as workforces, society members, and contributors of development. In their transitional roles, women are actively involved in economic activities (earnings) by selling their skills and expertise to the professional world (Akbar, 2017).

Nevertheless, playing dual roles as worker and household is a challenging task. Married career women tend to have bigger responsibility than those who do not. On one hand, they are responsible for nurturing their children, on the other hand, they are required to perform well in their work. A work-family balance is an essential thing for a woman because the balance between roles at home and at work can ensure the fulfillment of needs of the family and also the society. The achievement of work-family balance by women can lead to better generation as the children and society are well taken care.

### **The influence of work-family balance of career women on children's upbringing**

The balance of married women with children can be encouraged by good time management, external supports, access to works, and communication strategy. The social supports for women to achieve work-family balance at home and office are crucial as the lack of supports from family members and employers usually lead to conflicts. Once the supports are given and the balance is reached, the quality of work of the women will be positive and the retainment in company will also improve. The tendency is due to the high influence of household conditions that might be brought to the works. When women can satisfy both their roles at home and office, their performance in playing the roles will also be optimum.

One of the strategies to ensure the attainment of balance is by asking external supports to take care of the children at home. Women can ask their family members or trusted neighbors to care about their children while they are working at the office. In addition, the admission to early educational institutions such as day care and play group for children under four years old can also help ensuring good rearing as the institutions can give learning and playing opportunities for the children. Children who are admitted to day care can be stimulated to grow and develop as they can socialize and play with their peers while being supervised by the caretaker. When the role of caretaker can be delegated to trusted caretakers, women can focus on working and take care of their children after work; thus, their dual roles are played properly.

Child rearing for career women, similar with for others, is not only about fulfilling the physical needs of children such as food, clothes, and shelters, but also about fulfilling their developmental needs. Children aged 2-8 years need parental attention to grow and develop properly.

The education of children in the growth and development is crucial; thus, they need to be supported by quality human resources. When the human resources are not sufficient, the education for the children will not be optimum as well. Career women who do not have the entire time to take care of their children should also ensure that the children get the best education. To do such responsibility, there are three dimensions that need to be considered by the women as follows.

1. **Discipline and punctuality to finish tasks**

Being disciplined means following and obeying rules required to do the responsibilities. Punctuality in finishing jobs for career women are crucial because of the precious time that the women own are very limited. The extra times career women spend on their jobs means the decrease for the family time. Therefore, career women are demanded to be more on time and punctual in doing their tasks.

2. **Connecting to the children during a break from work**

Career women need to optimize every second that they have. They are encouraged to monitor the development and growth of their children despite being far away from them during a work. Imbalance in work-family balance usually indicated by the regret of not accompanying or watching children's development due to the abundance of work the women need to do. Many mothers reported that they miss seeing the milestones of their children. Fortunately, the development of technology can connect work and home more closely by enabling mothers to connect with their family at home or the caretakers at daycare easily.

By having a video call with their family at home or with the caretakers, at the very least, mothers are allowed to ask the conditions and show their care to the children despite the distance. Such a small and simple thing can demonstrate the care of mothers to their children and build the children's understanding on the mothers' situations. Mothers can also still listen to their children's stories and show certain extent of cares. Although the time might be limited, this activity is meaningful as quality of the time is more important than the quantity of the time. Mothers to some extent can still meet the psychological and connection needs of the children by having a video call during a break.

3. **Discussing the role division in family before having children**

Marriage commitment is an essential agreement between spouses. Islam views this commitment as having the same level with the commitment of Allah with the Prophets. Therefore, husband and wife need to follow the commitment.

Role division in a family, discussed early in the marriage, can be a foundation that direct the family, minimize unfairness, and increase respects and empathy between husband and wife. The participants explain that building commitment with their husband can work effectively when affection, respects, honesty, thoughtfulness, and understanding between family members are present. They also add that the maturity and husband and wife are also an important factor that ensure the running of the commitment.

Task division needs to be flexible as the exchange of roles and delegation of tasks both professionally and domestically can be very dynamic. Here, discussion and communication are very essential as both husband-and-wife work to ensure that the family live prosperously. Actions that are

based on the agreement indicate that the family members are respectful and mature in playing their roles, showing that the marriage is harmonious.

Social involvement from extended family members from both sides may also support the growth and development of children; thus, minimizing work family conflict encouraged by the working mothers. Some problems, such as different child-rearing style and different points of view, may occur, but such issues can be addressed when communication and involvement from the mothers are optimal. Such opportunities to be involved more in the child-rearing can be acquired by women when the working environment permit and understand the need of their female employees.

This research suggests that participants in this research experience low work family conflict as the work family enrichment level high. The participants attain work family life balance because they are disciplined and punctual to finish their jobs, get opportunities to be more involved in the child-rearing, and are satisfied with their contribution in work and at home. The attainment of work family life balance helps the participants to also attain self-actualization and provide proper care for their children.

### Conclusion

This research suggests that women having dual roles can attain work-family balance by balancing time, involvement, and satisfaction both in public and domestic spheres. Practically, the giving of care for the children can be conducted by finishing the tasks on time, making time to connect with the children when having a break, and applying the commitment for roles division made before having children. When family work-family balance is achieved and dual roles are played well, women can contribute actively and effectively to the development and growth of their family and society. Family and society also play an important role in supporting the attainment of family work-family balance among women as family and society members can give emotional and practical supports that ease the process of work and child-rearing.

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