

# Work family conflict and burnout: A proposal of a theoretical model based on factors and consequences

**Amina BENRAISS, (PhD, Professor)**

*Faculty of Legal, Economic and Social Sciences of Marrakech,  
Cadi Ayyad University of Marrakech, Morocco*

**Fatima Ezzahra CHOUKAIRI-DINI, (PhD, Student)**

*Faculty of Legal, Economic and Social Sciences of Marrakech,  
Cadi Ayyad University of Marrakech, Morocco*

<b>Correspondence address :</b>	Faculty of Legal, Economic and Social Sciences Daoudiate B.P. 2380, Marrakech Cadi Ayyad University Morocco, Marrakech 40000 +212 5 35 46 70 84/86
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## **Work family conflict and burnout: A proposal of a theoretical model based on factors and consequences**

### **Abstract**

This paper proposes a theoretical model of the factors and consequences of work-family conflict (in a bidirectional sense) and burnout by analyzing a set of articles from the oldest to the most recent research found in the literature. Work-family conflicts arise when demands for participation in one area of life come into tension with demands for participation in another area. Research on work-family conflict and burnout sheds light on their origins and excesses. However, few studies allow us to highlight their interactions as well as the common factors and consequences of these two phenomena.

Thus, this article synthesizes the literature review related to theoretical models, factors and consequences of the interference between work and family spheres as well as those related to burnout propose a theoretical model of factors impacting work-family conflict and burnout and their outcomes. The model is based on three types of factors: Demographic characteristics, Personal life factors, organizational and relational factors, and three levels of consequences: The intra-individual level, the inter-individual level and the micro-organizational level. Finally, the interrelationships of these factors and consequences have been established using the existing literature review.

The significance of this study is paramount as it contributes valuable insight to the existence of potential in the relationship between burnout and work-family conflict, and contributes to the enrichment of the literature on the subject by proposing an theoretical model that will be the guideline and pilot of a future empirical study.

**Keywords:** work-family conflict, burnout, factors, consequences, theoretical models.

**JEL classification:** O15

**Papyer type:** Theoretical Research

## 1. Introduction

Workers spend their energy and time in the work domain while they have less energy and time for the family domain (AlAzzam, AbuAlRub, & Nazzal (2017) ; Mache and al. (2015)). As a result, they face problems with maintaining a balance between work life and family life (Grzywacz, Frone, Brewer, & Kovner (2006), which ultimately cause a work-family conflict (WFC). Individuals have multiple roles in both work and family lives, and they can engage in these roles as proved by Rothbard (2001). Voydanoff (2005) explains that when the demand of time and energy required in these roles is too high to be able to fulfill the role adequately, work-family conflict (WFC) emerges and harms the individual and his or her participation in these roles. WFC is bi-directional : (a) work interfering with the family (WIF), and (b) family interfering with the work (FIW) (Carlson & Kacmar (2000) ; Frone, Russell, & Cooper 1992 ; Greenhaus & Beutell (1985) ; Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian (1996) ; Voydanoff (2005)).

In modern society, mental health problems among workers are widespread and affect a large proportion of the population. Many people experience daily pressures from the accumulation of demands from their roles as a parent, spouse, co-worker and worker. The conflicting demands of work and family life can lead to stress that have a direct impact on mental health. It is necessary to recognize that mental health is sometimes the result of the constraints and difficulties imposed by the reconciliation of these two spheres (Nelson & Burke, 2002).

Researchers have thus sought to understand the impact of work-family conflict on the mental health of individuals. According to the researchers, the effects of this conflict on mental health are harmful.

The job demand-resources model starts from the premise that burnout evolves by following two distinct processes : In the first process, the demands of the job abuse the employee's strengths and lead to burnout. This then leads to negative consequences for the organization such as absenteeism and therefore a decrease in performance. Job demands are the physical, social or organizational aspects that require an employee to exert physical or mental effort. When an employee faces too many professional demands, they are very likely to experience burnout, including physical exhaustion.

The second process implies a lack of professional resources. Professional resources are the physical, psychological, social or organizational aspects of a position which can produce one or more of the following consequences : reduction of professional demands, commitment and positive behavior towards the organization, including motivation. When an employee lacks professional resources, it becomes more difficult for him or her to meet professional demands and this ultimately leads to withdrawal or disengagement from work (i.e., attitudes and behaviors characterized by cynicism) (Demerouti et al. (2001).

Over the years, many researchers have focused their research on the study of the determining factors of burnout on one side and have been interested in the study of the antecedents of work-family conflict on the other side. The work that has been conducted in this sense has also highlighted a variety of consequences, thus emphasizing the multiple negative effects of these two processes. So far, the vast majority of these studies have separately examined these two concepts.

Based on these reflections, the following questions are formulated : what are the main common factors and consequences of burnout and work-family conflict ? and how do these two phenomena mutually interact ?

Our literature review focuses on the issue of the interaction between work-family conflict and burnout, their common consequences and their determining factors, which fall within a broader scope of employee well-being.

In order to understand the origin of these two phenomena, we first present the main theories explaining their development and then we attempt to group, by nature, the different factors and consequences associated with work-family conflict and burnout, based on the results of previous research, from the oldest to the most recent ones. And finally, we propose a compiled theoretical model of the factors contributing to the development of both work-family conflict and burnout, as well as the consequences arising from the interaction of these two constructs.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

The table below (Table 1) presents work-family conflict and burnout according to the different theoretical projections provided by previous studies. This presentation highlights the main dimensions retained by the different theoretical conceptions of the two constructs initially mentioned. As a result, we note that all the models used in the study of work-family conflict and burnout involve the perception of the individual, the psychological demand and the management of resources within a framework of interaction between the individual and his environment.

*Tableau 1: different theoretical projections of work-family conflict and burnout*

<b>Concept</b>	<b>Principles Theories / Models</b>	<b>Authors</b>
<b>Work-family conflict</b>	Identity theory supposes that it would be difficult to balance the work and non-work spheres when there is incompatibility between two parallel or intersecting identities.	<b>The theory of identity Dubar (2000)</b>
	This model provides the basis for the role conflict theory, which assumes that the interaction between a set of roles (role expectations, transmitted role, perceived role, and acted role) could be a source of conflict.	<b>Role theory, katz &amp; kahn (1978).</b>
	Resources are characteristics that contribute to a worker's emotional, physical and psychological well-being, while demands are detrimental in all of these areas	<b>Theory of resource scarcity, Goode (1960)</b>
<b>Work-family conflict and burnout</b>	According to the Resource Conservation Model, stress and work-family conflict arise from threats to resources, resulting in resource loss and over-investment	<b>(COR) Hobfoll (1989)</b>
	Job demands refer to physical, psychological, social or organizational aspects of work that require sustained physical and/or psychological (cognitive and emotional) effort and are therefore associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs.	<b>J-DR Model, Bakker and Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, &amp; Schaufeli, (2001)</b>
<b>Burnout</b>	Cherniss' model of burnout is a three-stage process: a stage of occupational stress, where demands exceed the subject's resources, is followed by a stage of strain, an emotional reaction to stress dominated by overwhelm, anxiety and exhaustion.	<b>Cherniss (1980) model of burnout</b>

	<p>The burn out syndrome includes three correlated but distinct dimensions : emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of self-actualization. Maslach and Jackson have constructed the Maslach Burn out Inventory, a widely validated measurement scale.</p>	<p><b>The three-dimensional model of Christina Maslach (1998)</b></p>
	<p>Burnout is "a state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion caused by a long involvement in emotionally demanding situations".</p>	<p><b>Pines and Aronson's model (1988)</b></p>

Source : Authors

## 2.1. Work family Conflict

The conception of work-family life conflict is related to the idea that individuals have a limited amount of time and energy and that each of the two spheres, private and professional, requires a part, not always delimited. The concept of work-family conflict is considered as a form of role conflict that arises when work demands and family demands are in tension (Higgins & Duxbury 1992).

According to the perspective of role theory (Greenhaus & Beutell 1985) define the concept of work-family conflict as an incompatibility of roles that an individual must assume in his life : the fulfillment of roles that enrich professional life prevents, for example, the functioning of roles relating to family life (Rhnima and al. 2014). These authors propose a “multidimensional” conceptualization by building on the classic distinction between the two directions of conflict (work interference in the family sphere versus family interference in the work sphere), while highlighting the three forms that each of these two directions can take (time, energy and behavior).

- **Time-based conflict**

Time-based conflict resides in the impossibility for the individual to have a perfect distribution of his time, because the demands of a multiplicity of roles (i.e. responsibilities towards family members versus the demands of co-workers or management) compete with each other to invest the limited amount of time available to the individual. In some, this type of conflict relates to role overload, including feeling that you have too much to do and not enough time to do it.

The other two conflicts concern professional and family demands when they interfere with each other making the exercise of responsibilities in one of the two spheres incompatible with the other.

- **Strain-based conflict**

Based on the finding of Greenhauss & Beutell (1985), the strain-based conflict implies that it is the exhausting effort made by an individual in the accomplishment of a given role (e.g. putting in more effort due to overtime) that decreases the effort required to perform other roles (eg doing homework with children after returning from work).

- **Behavior-based conflict**

Finally, behavior-based conflict occurs when a behavior specifically required for a given role in one sphere becomes incompatible with the expectations expressed in other roles in another sphere. Thus, there are situations where an individual exhibits efficient behavior towards members of his family, whose expectations are rather much more focused on compassionate behaviors and affection (Rhnima and al. 2014).

Conflicts therefore arise when requests for participation in one area of life are incompatible with requests for participation in another area. According to this multidimensional

conceptualization, the conflict between work and family can therefore be broken down into six work-family conflicts (crossing of two directions and three forms).

These conflicts can have a significant effect on both the quality of family life and the quality of life in the workplace (Beutell (2010), Netemeyer and al. (1996) ; Dumas (2008)).

### 2.1.1. Factors of work-family conflict

In some, the determining factors of work-family conflict revolve around three main axes in Bennani & Bertal (2019), namely:

*Tableau 2 ; Factors of work-family conflict (Socio-demographic factors, Personal life factors, Work-related factors)*

	<b>Factors</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Authors</b>
<b>Socio-demographic factors</b>	<b>Status of the individual : Age, gender, marital status,</b>	According to Greenhauss and Beutell, these dimensions affect the quality of the individual's functioning in fulfilling roles associated with the private and professional spheres.	Bulger and al. (2007) ; Barnett & Hyde (2001); Marshall & Tracy (2009) ; Frone and al. (1994); Matthews and al. (1996).
<b>Personal life factors</b>	<b>Social support</b>	The contribution of the spouse to family life ; Support from spouse and family members	Frone and al. (1994) ; Oishi and al. (2015) ; Voydanoff (2005), Aryee, (1992) ; Carlson & Perrewé (1999) ; Carlson & Kacmar (2000).
	<b>Family problems</b>	Stressors and family conflicts (e.g. ambiguity of family roles, personal expectations)	Frone and al. (1992) ; Chee, Conger & Elder (2009).
	<b>Parental charge or surcharge and child care</b>	Number of children; Having children at a young age.	Frone and al. (1994); Marshall & Tracy (2009) ; Voydanoff (1988)
	<b>Spouse's charge and relationship</b>	The nature of the spouse's job. Satisfaction with spouse.	Greenhaus & Beutell (1985)
	<b>Family demands and requirement</b>	Commitment and / or involvement in the family	Aryee (1992) ; Aryee, Field & Luk (1999) ; Carlson and Kacmar (2000).
<b>Work-related factors</b>	<b>Working environment</b>	Values, social culture Support in the workplace (e.g. support from supervisor or colleagues, values, cultures)	Zhang and al. (2012) ; Allen (2001) ; Carlson & Perrewé (1999). Norling & Chopik (2020).
	<b>Work overload</b>	Number of working hours Atypical working hours	Voydanoff (1988) ; Damayanti and al. (2021); Oishi and al., (2015) ; Karatepe (2013)
	<b>Job categories and sector of activity</b>	The nature of the roles	Voydanoff (1988) ; Kazmi and al. (2017)

	<b>Labor demand</b>	Demands, variety, complexity, autonomy, personal achievements.	Voydanoff (1988) ; Voydanoff (2005) ; Bakker and al. (2008)
	<b>Job attitudes</b>	Commitment or involvement in work	Day & Chamberlain (2006) ; Benligiray & Sönmez (2012)
	<b>Management practices</b>	Presence of work-family balance practices Satisfaction with work-family balance practices and their use	Allen and al. (2013) ; Christensen & Staines (1990) ; Dinger and al. (2010) ; Chang and al. (2017) ; Zahoor, Abdullah & Zakaria (2021); Stankevičiūtė & Savanevičienė (2019).

Source: Authors

These factors perpetually influence the perception that is given to the work-family connection.

### 2.1.2. Consequences of work-family conflict

According to many authors (Bedeian and al. (1988) ; Staines & Pleck (1983) ; Voydanoff & Kelly (1984)), these are the consequences that are related to the work-family relationship, namely conflict or enrichment.

Tableau 3 : Consequences of work-family conflict (Non-work life consequences, Work life consequences)

	Consequences	Description	Authors
<b>Non-work life consequences</b>	<b>The quality of non-work life</b>	Individual's non-work-related well-being, the extent to which his or her roles as a parent and a spouse or other roles in non-work activities are rewarding, fulfilling and devoid of stress.	Zandian, Sharghi & Moghadam (2020) ; Jackson & Fransman (2018) ; Zaman & Ansari (2022) ; Singh and al. (2015).
	<b>Health (mental health, physical health and the perception of health)</b>	Mental health (e.g. depression, distress, anxiety, stress, burnout, alienation at work, emotional and negative states, psychosomatic and somatic problems) Physical health (e.g. blood pressure, cholesterol level)	Grzywacz & Bass (2003) ; Frone and al. (1997) ; Leineweber and al (2013) ; Madsen and al. (2005) ; Greenhaus and al. (2006).
	<b>Non-work life satisfaction</b>	Satisfaction with the couple, the family and life in general Leisure satisfaction	Bai and al. (2021) ; Karakose and al. (2021), Choki & Zhao (2021)
	<b>Family performance and family distress</b>	Personal effectiveness, Communication, Complete tasks carefully, accurately, and on time, using family hours productively.	Bedeian and al. (1988), Zahoor, Abdullah & Zakaria (2021), Odle-Dusseau and al. (2012)

<b>Work life consequences</b>	<b>Organizational attitudes</b>	Satisfaction at work, organizational commitment and work involvement	Rabenu and al. (2017); Carr and al. (2008); Odle-Dusseau and al. (2012); Zhao & Mattila (2013); Rehman & Waheed (2012).
	<b>Organizational behaviors</b>	Absenteeism, leaving work early, tardiness.	Boyar and al. (2005); Goff and al. (1990)
	<b>Productivity</b>	Perception of the employee and the supervisor.	Kossek & Ozeki (1999); Clifton & Shepard (2004)
	<b>Intention to leave</b>	Desire to stop working, desire to change employer, desire to change job.	Mansour & Tremblay (2018); Aboobaker and al. (2017); Sharifzadeh and al. (2014)

Source : Authors

## 2.2. Burnout

Freudenberger was the first to introduce the term "burnout" in 1974, he defined burnout as "failing, wearing out or being exhausted due to excessive demands for energy, strength or resources", Freudenberger (1974). Burnout is the difference between the roles people play and the roles they should fulfill.

Maslach (1986, p. 1) describes burnout as "the emotional burnout, depersonalization, and reduced sense of personal achievement that is seen in people who work in a" people-related "job, and Pines and Aronson (1981, p. 202) refer to burnout simply as "physical, emotional and mental burnout".

Burnout is a reaction developed against the chronic emotional tension that professionals deal with people. Thus, it can be seen as a kind of stress at work, however although it shares some common aspects with stress reactions, burnout is distinguished by the fact that it arises from the social interaction between the caregiver and helped him, Maslach (1982).

According to many authors, burnout is closely associated with the environment and work factors, so it is strongly recommended in this type of design to relate burnout to the work context, although it is more interesting to adopt a more general approach which takes into consideration the multiplicity of causes and their interactions.

Different theoretical currents oppose and / or complement each other to explain the differences in the perception of this psychosocial risk.

From a social perspective, we find approaches that highlight personality traits and the part of inter-individual variance in a burnout experience (Perrewé & Zellars (1999); Schaubroeck, Ganster & Kemmerer (1994)). On the other hand, some work sheds light on the factors related to the work context that adversely affect the well-being of employees when they do not have or no longer have the means to cope with the situation of imbalance. Several works fall within this perspective (Lazarus & Folkman (1984); Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter (2001)).

### 2.2.1. Factors of Burnout

The factors of burnout are varied, interdependent, and complementary. We group these main factors into two major areas as follows :



**Tableau 4 : Factors of Burnout (Factors related to the type of work, Organizational and relational factors)**

	<b>Factors</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Authors</b>
<b>Factors related to the type of work</b>	<b>Volume and job demands</b>	The accumulation of daily tasks often leads to excessive administrative work Also boredom and lack of work also cause this syndrome. The volume of work also is directly linked to the impossibility of mastering all the knowledge as well as the constant shortage of personnel.	Xian and al. (2020), Ahmad and al. (2020), Tesi (2021)
	<b>Lack of Recognition and Support at Work</b>	The changes in society are causing changes in some professions in favor of others (loss of status of doctor, teacher, notary, etc.). This results in insecurity and a lack of recognition of the work carried out, thus reducing the criteria of motivation at work.	Bugaj and al. (2020) ; Ray & Miller (1994) ; Muhammad & Hamdy (2005).
	<b>Rhythm of work</b>	The way we use time today makes us unable to think long-term.	Romeo, Fontana & Pelissier (2021) ; Yong & Yue (2007).
	<b>Psychological aspects experienced at work</b>	Lack of transferability of information between teams  Lack of information sharing with the superior Constant lack of personnel Inter-body conflicts Lack of coordination between employees / managers Poor communication with superiors Workplace conflicts	Cordes & Dougherty (1993), Maslach & Leiter (2016).
<b>Organizational and relational factors</b>	<b>Role ambiguity</b>	The unclear definition of the tasks to be carried out leads to confusion, embarrassment and tension.	Papastylianou, Kaila & Polychronopoulos (2009), Ambrose and al. (2014).
	<b>Role conflict in the distribution of responsibilities and tasks.</b>	The imprecision of organizational limits and the tasks to be fulfilled by each of the protagonists are often the origin of conflicts at work.	Schwab & Iwanicki (1982), Pratiwi and al. (2019).

	<b>The nature of relations between colleagues, between the boss and his subordinates.</b>	Overlaps between generations, roles, responsibilities, lack of clarity, isolation and lack of social support will lead to confusion in the responsibilities and limits of intervention of each.	Parrello and al. (2019); Rossiter & Sochos (2018).
	<b>The structure of the organization</b>	All the elements that contribute to the climate and the working atmosphere contribute to burnout. Managerial styles, Poor work climate, lack of participation in decision-making and communication and the rewards system...	Prada-Ospina (2019); Mugiono and al. (2020); Schulz, Greenley & Brown (1995).
	<b>Moral or professional harassment</b>	Relational techniques (refusal to say hello, contemptuous tone, criticism of work and physical appearance), persecution (control of the length of breaks and absences, telephone communications, control of conversations with colleagues, control without good reason )	Lucas and al. (2021); Ajoudani and al. (2019); Góralewska-Słońska (2019).

Source : Authors

### 2.2.2. Consequences of burnout

In the world of research, several studies have attempted to identify the consequences of burnout (Neveu (1995) ; Edey Gamassou (2006)). Some have focused on the characteristics of the individual (Chanlat 1986). Others have turned their attention to the organization in which the employee works. Less frequently, research has highlighted the role of the individual's relationship with his or her environment.

Tableau 5 : Consequences of burnout (the intra-individual level, the inter-individual level, the micro-organizational level)

	<b>Consequences</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Authors</b>
<b>At the intra-individual level</b>	<b>workers' well-being and health</b>	Psychosomatic disorders (sleep and fatigue disturbance) Psychological disorders (irritability, aggressiveness, loss of interest, drop in self-esteem)	Lizano (2015); Johnson and al. (2018).
	<b>Marital and family problems</b>	The harmful consequences of burnout often go beyond the professional sphere and spill over into private life (family difficulties, emotional breakdowns, divorces, etc.).	Kara & Uysal (2018); Rosenberg & Pace (2006); Figley (1997); Greenglass & Burke (1988).

<b>At the inter-individual level</b>	<b>The consequences of burnout for staff, clients and the large institutions in which they interact.</b>	Distancing from others with loss of empathy towards the client or colleague which manifests itself in cynicism, arrogance or aggression leading to social isolation.	Jackson & Maslach (1982); Zapf, Seifert, Schmutte, Mertini & Holz (2001).
<b>At the micro-organizational level</b>	<b>Negative attitudes and behaviors</b>	higher absenteeism rates, high risk of legal action, higher level of staff turnover, intention to change jobs, decline in productivity and performance at work, a large number of early retirement, reduced organizational involvement.	Kulkarni (2006); Maslach & Schaufeli (2018); Torlak, Kuzey and al. (2021).

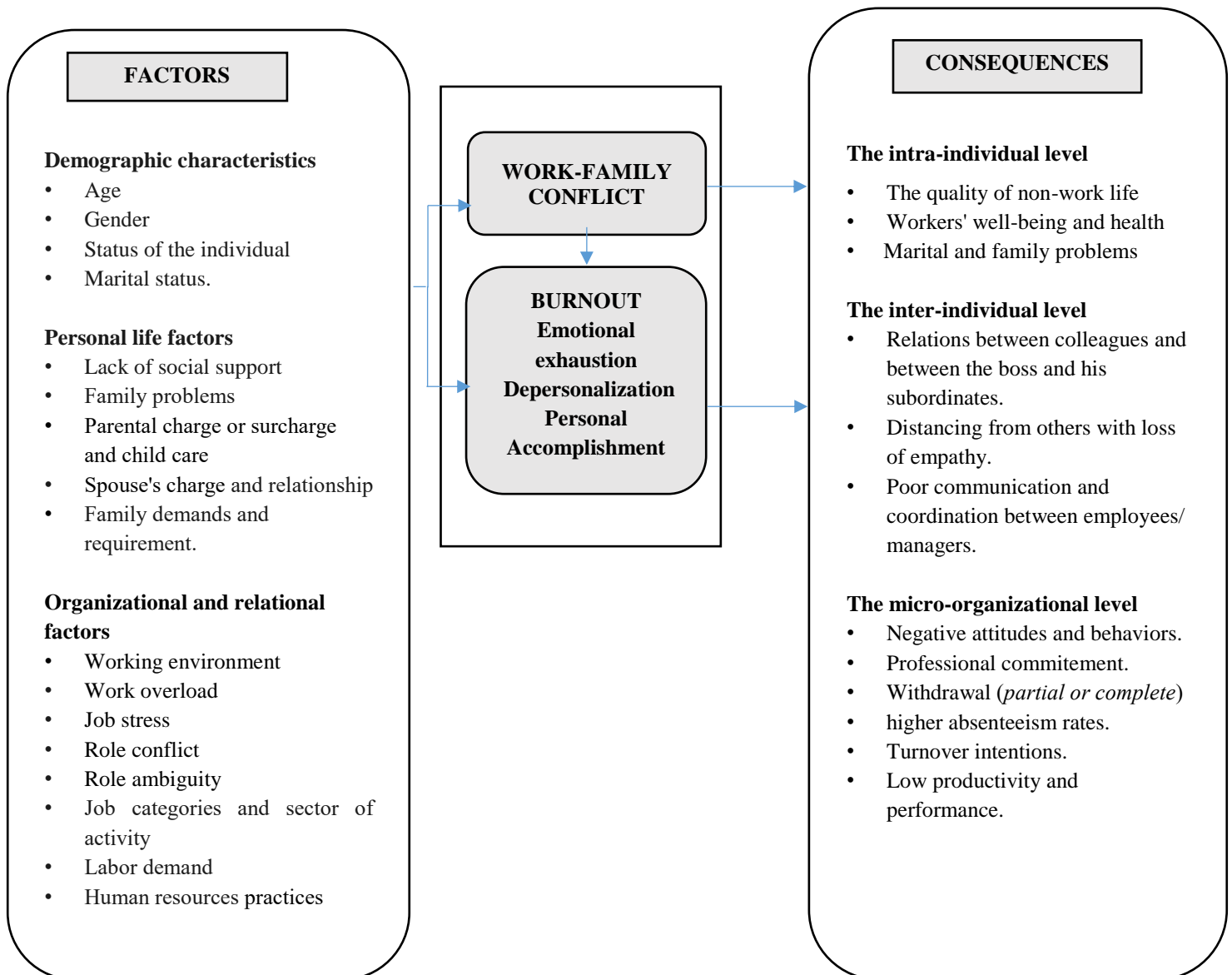
*Source : Authors*

### 3. Theoretical model of Work-family conflict and Burnout

Several factors appear to increase the susceptibility to work-life interference and generally spill over into work-family conflict that makes employees more vulnerable to stress. These same factors do not directly cause burnout but rather increase the employee's vulnerability and therefore the risk of developing burnout.

Our model also integrates the common consequences of work-family conflict and burnout, which can be summarized in three main categories affecting the personal, interpersonal and organizational dimensions.

**Figure 1 Theoretical model of Work-family conflict and burnout including key vulnerability factors (e.g., demographics, personal and organizational environment), key dimensions of burnout, and negative consequences (e.g., withdrawal, low performance and productivity...).**



Source: Authors

The literature provides evidence of the dynamic nature of burnout. Our model includes both the factors and effects of burnout as described above. Although we compiled the majority of antecedents and consequences found in the literature, it is important to note that work-family conflict as well as burnout are highly personal experiences (Schwab and al. (1986) ; Cordes & Dougherty (1993) ; Dierdorff & Ellington (2008)).

#### 4. Conclusion

The present study aimed at presenting a theoretical model that integrates the factors and consequences of work-family conflict and burnout and shows the relationship between these two constructs. The first section of our literature review provides a brief overview of the most widely adopted theories to explain work-family conflict and burnout, pointing out that both, COR theory Hobfoll (1989) and J-DR Model (Bakker and Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001) provide an explanation for these investigated phenomena by linking them to

the conception of demands and limited resources.

The second section presents the concept of work-family conflict, its definition and dimensions, and summarizes all of its determining factors under three main categories (Socio-demographic factors, Personal life factors, Work-related factors). Similarly, a second table is drawn up to expose the consequences of WFC on the private and professional spheres. Following the same approach, the third section of our review describes the concept of burnout, its origins and its development process, while grouping together its multiple factors, in particular those related to the organization and type of work. Finally, we mention the various negative effects of burnout on the individual, relational and organizational levels.

In the light of our documentary research, we have noticed that burnout and work-family conflict are generally predicted by the same determining factors and also share a certain number of negative consequences, these include intention to quit, decreased job satisfaction, decreased family-related performance, job stress, organizational commitment, etc. However, we consider that these effects vary in terms of their intensity, i.e. the impact of burnout or work-family conflict may be greater depending on the centrality of the roles, which is expressed by the resources allocated to work and family.

Therefore, we propose a theoretical model that schematically presents the relationships between our variables. This compiled model illustrates the anticipated relationships between work-family conflict and burnout. Indeed, one of the most common sources of stress is the struggle to balance the demands of one's job with the demands of one's family (Carlson, Kacmar, & Williams 2000) . We believe that working is not only about producing, but also about interacting with others. Therefore, our problematic seeks to show the existence of links between the individual's relational environment and his propensity to be exposed to burnout.

We are also convinced that the negative relationship between the private and professional spheres, just as burnout, produce harmful consequences at the individual, relational and organizational levels.

Present research appears with some limitations. Clearly, this research does not allow us to identify the nature of the influence of each extracted variable (factor or consequence) on the constructs investigated, nor does it measure its degree of influence. However, current research is pretty insightful in understanding the association between work-family conflict and burnout. Future quantitative and qualitative research needs to be conducted in different contexts to examine the nature of this relationship, much attention needs to be given to studying the relationship between each of these constructs and its determinants which are also variables that exert a positive or negative impact depending on their nature, and also to test the link with the various consequences that we have been able to extract through this research.

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