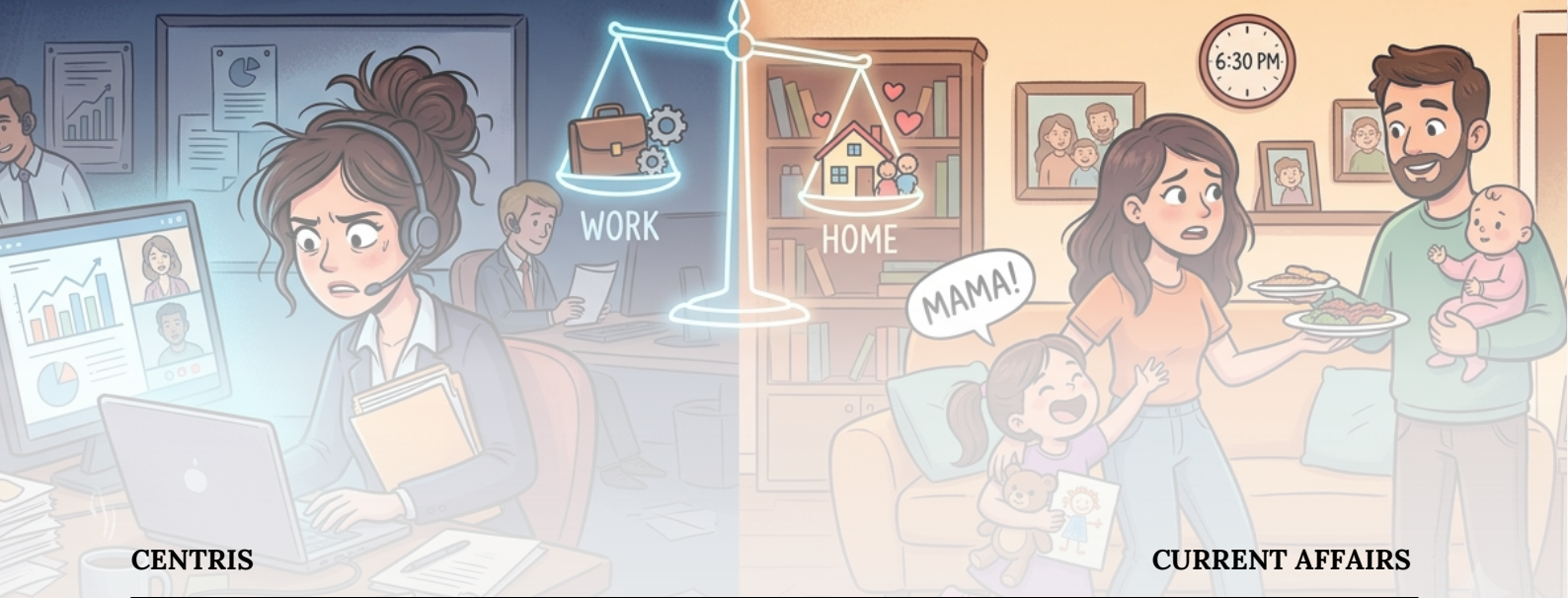




CONFLICT BETWEEN CAREER AND FAMILY PRIORITIES

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INTRODUCTION

Balancing career and family is an important aspect of family life because it helps create a harmonious environment and prevents conflicts and arguments. However, in modern life today, many couples focus more on their careers than on their families in order to achieve financial stability and attain greater success in their careers. This also happens because of heavy workloads that force people to use time outside of working hours to complete tasks, causing them to spend less time with their families. Conflict begins to arise when one partner prioritizes work too much, causing the other partner to feel that family responsibilities are being neglected. Most couples who prioritize their careers over their families often have less time together and struggle to communicate effectively, which can lead to many misunderstandings and arguments. From an Islamic perspective, the family is an *amanah* (trust and responsibility) that must be protected with love and care in order to create a harmonious family and a peaceful society. Therefore, conflicts between career and family priorities should be handled through effective time management and good communication so that families can live in peace and harmony.

BALANCING CAREER AND FAMILY PRIORITIES THROUGH ISLAMIC GUIDANCE

In Islam, we are reminded not to be excessive in any matter, as it emphasizes balance in life. We must be moderate in every affair we undertake and not go beyond limits. There is a concept known as *al-tawāzun* in Islam, which means balance and equilibrium. This concept is also often referred to as moderation (*al-wasatiyyah*), which means balancing between two situations as the best approach[i]. In the Quran, Surah al-Baqarah verse 143 states, **“And thus we have made you a middle nation....”** The word *wasata* here means middle, balanced, and best. Everything that is balanced is considered better because it helps people avoid being extreme or careless in certain matters. Islam does not encourage Muslims to focus too much on worldly matters until they neglect the hereafter. At the same time, Islam does not teach people to focus only on the hereafter until worldly responsibilities are neglected. Therefore, we should be balanced in everything we do in order to achieve a better life and gain blessings from Allah SWT.

Besides that, good time management is one of the ways to balance career and family responsibilities. In Islam, proper time management is encouraged so that people do not waste time on unbeneficial matters until they neglect their responsibilities. Every Muslim should manage their time wisely so that all responsibilities can be fulfilled properly without neglecting other important aspects of life. This is in line with the words of Allah SWT in the Quran, **Surah al-‘Asr verses 1-2: “By time, indeed mankind is in loss.”** These verses show that time is very valuable in human life, and those who fail to manage it properly will face loss.

Conflict between career and family can be avoided with good time management, as it allows for a balance between work, worship, and family. This can create a harmonious family as its members can spend time together and communicate well while also fulfilling their given responsibilities.

Responsibilities and rights are obligations that must be fulfilled, especially for married couples. Family is an *amanah* and a responsibility that must be taken care of properly, so it should be prioritized over career because it is a requirement in Islam. However, prioritizing family does not mean that a person should neglect their work, but both career and family should be balanced wisely. This is in line with the hadith of Prophet Muhammad SAW: **“Your Lord has a right over you, your body has a right over you, and your family has a right over you. So, give each their rights.”** This hadith shows that Islam teaches Muslims to be fair and balanced by fulfilling responsibilities towards family, themselves, work, and their relationship with Allah SWT.

Prophet Muhammad SAW should be taken as the best example in this matter. Even though he was busy with *da’wah* and leadership responsibilities, he still spent time with his family and helped his wives with household chores. Family relationships become closer and more harmonious when each person fulfils their responsibilities and respects the rights of others. This can create a peaceful and harmonious family while preventing conflicts and arguments.

CHALLENGES IN MANAGING CAREER AND FAMILY PRIORITIES

For many people, balancing a career and family life is one of the greatest difficulties in life today. In days gone by, work and home were distinct spheres of activity. As the demands of businesses increase, unpredictability becomes more embedded in our working hours, and the pressure grows to always have a job to go to, these two sides of life become merged, creating "work-family conflict." This is where the demands of the workplace begin to affect your ability to fulfil your role at home, or vice versa. Some examples of real-world problems arising from this family or work conflict in our society are:

1 Always Connected and No Boundaries

Increased remote working and smartphone usage have made it more difficult to establish a distinction between your office and your home. Technology has also created an expectation that employees at most companies will respond to emails and texts even when they have finished work for the day. Because of this constant connectivity, work can easily infringe upon a person's family time. For example, a parent sitting at home during dinner may feel mentally bombarded by work-related emails and phone notifications. Ultimately, while technology allows people to work whenever they would like, it also creates an expectation among employees that their workday has no end.

2 High Stress and the Impact on Kids

Having to juggle two very large responsibilities is a huge drain on one's mental health. Working parents who tend to have conflicting responsibilities between their jobs and their families will experience more stress, anxiety, and burnout compared to those parents with fewer conflicting responsibilities. Unfortunately, the stress experienced by the parent does not just remain with them, as it spills over to the rest of the family. Parents who are emotionally worn out tend not to parent their children effectively, thus causing issues (both behavioural and emotional) for their young children.



3 Inequality for Women and Workplace Problems

While society has improved over time, there continues to be an unequal distribution of household duties between men and women, with women performing most of the labour required for housework, preparing meals, and caring for children or elderly individuals in their homes. Trying to balance these burdensome traditional responsibilities while also having a demanding modern-day career creates physical and emotional fatigue.

This same issue, when found in the workplace, creates negative impacts on both businesses and employees who are experiencing a higher level of family-related stress. When an employee is impacted by family stress, their productivity decreases substantially, they become much less innovative, and they are significantly more likely to resign from their positions.

Overall, the clash between career and family is no longer just an individual-based concern, but a major social problem that damages mental health, child development, and productivity in workplaces. In this way, companies and society must work together to provide flexible working hours and offer good support to help employees balance both of their roles. Without this, the well-being of modern families and the strength of the economy will continue to suffer.

ISLAMIC SOLUTIONS FOR BALANCING CAREER AND FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

1 Strengthening Spiritual Values

Strengthening spiritual values is an important solution to conflicts between career and family priorities, as it helps individuals achieve emotional well-being and maintain family harmony. Career pressure, financial responsibilities, and demanding lifestyles may lead to stress and weaken family relationships if not managed properly. Islam provides a strong spiritual foundation, such as prayer, *dhikr*, patience, and *tawakkal*, which help individuals attain inner peace and cope with daily challenges.

By integrating spiritual values into daily family life, family members can develop stronger emotional resilience and healthier relationships. Islam teaches that success should not be measured solely through material achievement but also through family harmony, emotional peace, and obedience to Allah. This spiritual approach supports the *Maqasid Shariah* objectives of *hifz al-din* (protection of religion). Therefore, balancing spiritual obligations with career responsibilities can help families achieve a more harmonious and stable lifestyle.

2 Strengthening Cooperation and Shared Responsibilities within the Family

Another practical solution is strengthening cooperation and shared responsibilities between spouses in managing household and career obligations. In many cases, conflict arises when one partner carries excessive responsibilities while lacking emotional or practical support from the other family member. Islam emphasizes the importance of mutual consultation (*shura*), justice, and cooperation in family life.

Flexibility and fair division of tasks between spouses contribute significantly to a harmonious household and stable emotions. Husbands and wives should communicate openly regarding financial responsibilities, childcare, and work commitments in order to avoid misunderstandings and emotional stress.

This cooperative approach helps create a supportive family environment where both career development and family welfare can be maintained at the same time. From the perspective of *Maqasid al-Shariah*, this solution protects *hifz al-nafs* (protection of emotional and mental well-being) because emotional burdens and stress can be controlled through mutual support and understanding.

3 Achieving Work-Life Balance through Moderation

Finally, a practical solution in addressing conflict between career and family priorities is maintaining a healthy work-life balance based on the Islamic principle of moderation. Islam encourages Muslims to fulfil both professional and family responsibilities fairly without neglecting either side. When career demands become excessive, they can slowly create emotional distance within the family and increase stress for everyone involved. A balance between work and family is essential in preserving emotional well-being and family harmony. Therefore, individuals should manage their time wisely by allocating time for spouses, children, and personal well-being. Flexible working arrangements and open communication between family members can also help reduce tension caused by work pressure. This solution is consistent with the *fiqh* principle “الضرر يزال” (harm must be eliminated), as Islam discourages situations that may harm family relationships and emotional stability.

CONCLUSION

The difficulty of balancing progress in one's career with obligations to family is not simply an individual's fault for not being an efficient time manager. This issue is also a systemic flaw in how today's societies are structured within the social contract. With today's "always-on" digital economy and the financial need for dual-income households in the majority of families, individuals' ability to utilize coping strategies has reached its maximum capacity. With constant workplace interference in the family ecosystem, the repercussions are not only individual stress, but they also appear collectively through parents experiencing burnout, families losing stability, and, subsequently, children suffering due to their parents' high stress levels. If organizations continue to perceive family obligations as a hindrance to productivity rather than a basic human requirement, they stand to create high turnover rates among employees, along with an increased level of societal fatigue. To resolve the issue holistically, the family unit must continue to grow spiritually to help provide emotional resilience while also promoting cooperation and a fair distribution of responsibilities in all aspects of household duties. In addition to this, organizations and individuals alike need to adopt the principle of moderation to ensure that job responsibilities do not sacrifice the harmony of their domestic environment.

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Conflict Between Career and Family Priorities

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QUR'ANIC VERSE AND HADITH

QUR'ANIC VERSE

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا
"And thus We have made you a middle nation..." (2:143)

• The concept of al-tawazzun in Islam means balance and moderation (al-wasatiyyah).

HADITH :

"you owe a duty to your family; so you should give to every one his due." (Sahih al-Bukhari)



SOLUTION : MAQASID SHARIAH IN CHILD DISCIPLINE



MAQASID SHARIAH: HIFZ AL-NAFS

Strengthening Spiritual Values

- Prayer, dhikr, patience & tawakkal
- Emotional peace and resilience
- Halal sustenance strengthens family harmony



MAQASID SHARIAH: HIFZ AL-DIN

Strengthening Cooperation and Shared Responsibilities

- Mutual consultation (shura)
- Fair division of household responsibilities
- Open communication between spouses



FIQH PRINCIPLE: AL-DARAR YUZAL

Achieving Work-Life Balance through Moderation

- Balance between career and family responsibilities
- Wise time management
- Reduce emotional stress and tension

CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES



Always Connected & No Boundaries

Technology and remote work make it hard to separate work and family time, causing work to interrupt personal and family

High Stress Affecting Families

Work-family conflict increases stress and burnout, which can negatively affect parents' mental health and children's emotional development.



Gender Inequality in Responsibilities

Women often carry more household and childcare duties while working, leading to physical and emotional exhaustion and reduced productivity

CONCLUSION

Career family conflict is not just an individual issue but a systemic problem shaped by modern work culture. The "always-on" economy and dual-income demands increase stress, leading to burnout, weaker family stability, and negative effects on children. Without support from workplaces and balanced family responsibilities, both productivity and well-being will continue to decline.