



Role Of Work-Family Conflict And Family-Work Conflict In Life Satisfaction: A Study On Working Professionals

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Abstract

Work-family conflict is defined as the “inter-role conflict that occurs due to the general demands of, time devoted to, and strain created by the job which interfere with performing family-related responsibilities.” (Netemeyer et al., 1996). Family-work conflict is defined as a “form of inter-role conflict in which the general demands of, time devoted to, and strain created by the family which interfere with performing work-related responsibilities.” (Netemeyer et al., 1996). Life satisfaction, as defined by Shin and Johnson (1978), is a “judgmental process, in which individuals assess the quality of their lives on the basis of their own unique set of criteria.” A quantitative, correlational study was conducted to measure variables. Work-family conflict, family-work conflict scale given by Netemeyer, Boles, and McMurrian (1996) and Satisfaction with Life Scale, constructed by Pavot and Diener (2009) were used in order to collect data from 292 working individuals from various professions using Purposive sampling technique. The cross-sectional study revealed that police personnel experience more work-family conflict and low life satisfaction while advocates have low work-family conflict and high levels of life satisfaction. Studying work-family conflict helps identify stressors and contribute to developing interventions that promote work-life balance. Interventions to decrease work-family conflict will in turn increase life satisfaction.

Keywords: Work-family conflict, Family-work conflict, Life Satisfaction

Introduction

Adults' lives revolve around two crucial aspects: work and family. Expectations associated with these domains often result in conflicts between job and family responsibilities leading to negative consequences such as discontentment with one's job, burnout, psychological distress, as well as dissatisfaction with professional and marital aspects of life. These conflicts emerge because demands of roles at the work place and home are generally stressful and reciprocal in nature (work can impinge upon family life (work – family conflict) or vice versa can impact the life at work (family – work conflict)) – (Frone, 2003). Inter-role conflict refers to the incompatibility between role responsibilities in these two domains, specifically when participation in one role (work or family) interferes with the other (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

Work-family conflict is defined as “inter-role conflict that occurs due to the general demands of, time devoted to, and strain created by the job which interfere with performing family-related responsibilities”

(Netemeyer et al., 1996). Kahn et al. (1964) indicated that the problem individuals have in dealing with the pressure and stress from both the work and family domains lead to work-family conflict. Netemeyer et al. (1996) also found three dimensions of work - family conflict: time dependent conflict, strain dependent conflict, and behavior dependent conflicts.

Research shows that there are several reasons involved due to which employees experience work-family conflict. For example, work – family conflict has adversely related to job performance (Komal et al., 2013). As mentioned by Winefield et al. (2015), work–family conflict may also be an important mechanism through which job demands harm workers' physical health. According to Akkas et al. (2015), long working hours, excessive work overload, workplace discrimination, lack of supervisory support, taking care of children and dependent care, and inadequate support from wives or family were among different factors causing work-family conflict.

Family-work conflict is defined as “inter-role conflict in which the general demands of, time devoted to, and strain created by the family which interfere with performing work-related responsibilities” (Netemeyer et al., 1996). Conflict of this form may take place due to parental responsibilities and caring for elderly family members. According to Boyar et al. (2003) individuals who have high degree of family centrality may have more conflict between family and work. Moreover, there was a negative relationship between family-work conflict and life satisfaction as reported by Afzal and Farooqi (2014).

Life satisfaction is defined as a “judgmental process, in which individuals assess the quality of their lives based on their own unique set of criteria” (Shin & Johnson, 1978). It entails subjectively analyzing a multifaceted concept that surpasses momentary happiness and casts back an enduring sense of fulfilment and happiness derived from one’s life experiences. According to Lambert et al. (2021), job stress has a significant negative effect on life satisfaction. However, having family time as a leisure preference has effected life satisfaction in a positive way (Dirzyte et al., 2022). As reported by Szcześniak and Tułeczka (2020), those who perceive their family environment as supportive, communicative, and flexible report higher life satisfaction.

According to the spillover theory by Erdogan et al., (2012), circumstances at the workplace affect life satisfaction. It states that positive experiences at work result in optimistic feelings, which result in increased happiness with life. On the other hand, negative experiences at work result in psychological strain, which diminishes the quality of life. Emotions, and behaviours generated at workplace can "spill over" into another aspect of an individual's life, thereby influencing comprehensive well-being and life satisfaction.

The current study is to investigate the levels of work to family conflict, family to work conflict and life satisfaction in doctors, educators, police personnel and advocates who are married and aged between 30 to 40. Allen et al. (2000) show that 40% of parents in various professions experience work-family conflict at least once during their life. According to Huffman et al. (2013), those in middle adulthood are specifically prone to work-family conflict because people at this stage of life have competing demands from professional and personal life and also have lack of personal resources which thereby increases the conflicts.

Long and stressful working hours and heavy workload of healthcare professionals contribute to the work-family conflict in doctors. (Aksayan et al, 2001). As per the reports of Human Rights Watch (2009) police have high levels of stress as they are required to be available on-duty for 24 hours a day and seven days a week. Constables and head constables who constitute 85% of the Indian police department have extremely stressful and unhygienic working conditions (Saha et al., 2010).

According to (Indian Kanoon, n.d.), “An Advocate shall be bound to appear in Court on any day which by notice duly given or in accordance with the practice of the Court, is fixed for the hearing of a proceeding in which he is appointed by the party” (Section 7(1)). Advocates do not face deductions in salary or any other penalties for not being present in court on a particular day or by particular time thereby giving them autonomy over their schedules. Educators on the other hand benefit from shorter working hours and a fixed schedule of holidays or week-offs, allowing them to plan their days and vacations effectively much before. The schools in Telangana have seven-hour workday on regular working days (Telangana Today, 2023). Unlike police personnel or doctors, educators do not face sudden emergencies in odd timings or threats to their physical or mental health due to their line of work.

Research question

Are there any profession-wise differences in the levels of work-family conflict, family-work conflict and life satisfaction among working professionals.

Hypothesis

There will be profession wise differences in the levels of

1. Work-family conflict
2. Family-work conflict
3. Life satisfaction among working professionals

Research Design

Comparison of work family conflict, family work conflict and life satisfaction in working professionals was done using cross sectional design.

Sample

The data for working professionals from different professions such as advocates, educators, doctors, police personnel was chosen using Non-Probability Purposive sampling technique. The sample (N=292) was 49.6% (N=145) of females and 50.3% (N=147) of males.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria:

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Married individuals	Live-in couples who are together but not legally married
Individuals aged between 30-40 years	Part-time employees or individuals
Working professionals	Individuals holding two jobs

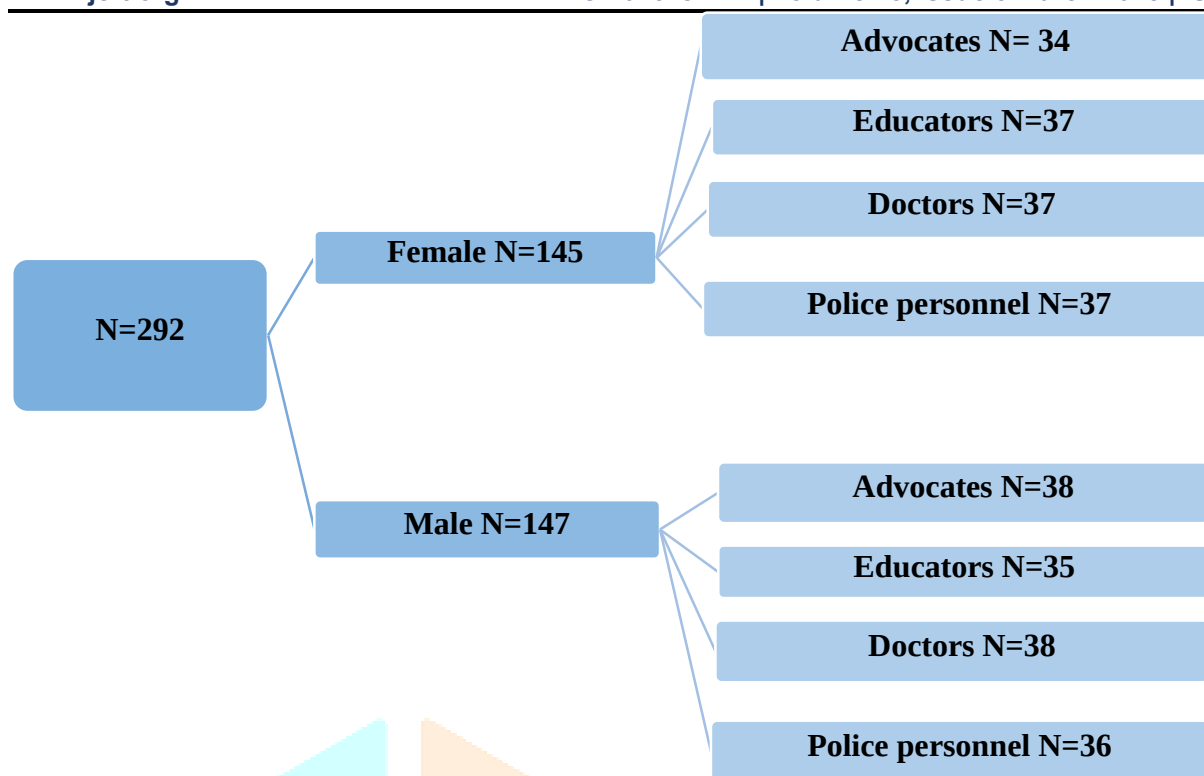


Figure 1 illustrating the division of the sample into groups based on the professions [Advocates (N=72), Educators (72), Doctors (75) and Police personnel (73)].

Instruments:

Work-Family Conflict Scale, Family-Work Conflict Scale: The developed Netemeyer, Boles, McMurrian (1996). The reliability coefficient in the Work-Family Conflict scale is $\alpha = 0.88$ and the Family-Work Conflict scale $\alpha = 0.89$. Higher scores indicated greater challenges in managing work and family responsibilities.

The scales includes five items each on a seven-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree 7, Agree 6, Slightly Agree 5, Neutral 4, Slightly Disagree 3, Disagree 2, and Strongly Disagree 1. The score range on the whole is 5 to 35.

Satisfaction with Life Scale: Pavot and Diener (2009)'s scale is reliable with coefficient of 0.87. The scale has been built on a 7- point subjective Likert scale where the items are scored on a scale from Strongly Agree (7) to Strongly Disagree (1). By this scale, the scores are grouped in the following manner:

30 – 35 Very high score- highly satisfied

25- 29 High score.

20 – 24 Average score.

15 – 19 Slightly below average in Life satisfaction.

10 – 14 Dissatisfied.

5 – 9 Extremely Dissatisfied with life.

Procedure

Data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0. One-Way ANOVA was used to determine whether there are any profession wise differences in work-family conflict, family-work conflict and life satisfaction among working professionals.

Results

Table 1

Mean, Standard deviation and f-ratio of the professions' advocates, educators, doctors and police personnel, with respect to work-family conflict, family-work conflict and life satisfaction among working professionals. (N=292).

	1		2		3		4		f	N	Post-Hoc
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD			
WFC	24.04	7.81	24.84	7.38	27.79	6.20	27.82	5.24	2.87**	0.03	4>3>2>1
FWC	20.03	6.08	17.26	6.23	21.16	6.14	20.22	6.21	2.81*	0.03	3>4>1>2
LS	21.14	7.21	21.75	6.94	19.80	7.69	15.73	7.37	5.76**	0.06	2>1>3>4

*p<0.05, **p<0.01

1: Advocates, 2: Educators, 3: Doctors, 4: Police personnel

WFC: Work-family conflict, FWC: Family-work conflict, LS: Life satisfaction.

Table 2

Post-Hoc multiple comparisons of the professionals, advocates, educators, doctors and police personnel with respect to work-family conflict, family-work conflict, and life satisfaction among working professionals. (N=292).

	Professions	Mean difference	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval (LL-UL)	
Work-family conflict	Advocates-Educators	-	0.52	-3.06	1.56
	Advocates-Doctors	-3.70*	0.002	-5.99	-1.41
	Advocates-Police personnel	-3.73*	0.002	-6.04	-1.43
	Educators- Doctors	-2.95*	0.11	-5.22	-0.68
	Educators-Police personnel	-2.98*	0.01	-5.27	-0.70
	Doctors -Police personnel	-	0.97	-2.30	2.23
Family-work conflict	Advocates-Educators	-	0.01	-0.63	4.90
	Advocates- Doctors	-	0.29	-3.25	0.99
	Advocates-Police personnel	-	0.86	-2.33	1.94
	Educators-Doctors	-3.90**	0.001	-6.00	-1.80
	Educators-Police personnel	-2.95*	0.006	-5.07	-0.85
	Doctors -Police personnel	-	0.37	-1.16	3.04

Life Satisfaction	Advocates-Educators	-	0.63	-3.10	1.88
	Advocates-Doctors	-	0.28	-1.13	3.82
	Advocates-Police personnel	3.41*	0.007	0.93	5.91
	Educators - Doctors	-	0.11	-0.49	4.40
	Educators -Police personnel	4.02*	0.001	1.56	6.49
	Doctors -Police personnel	-	0.97	-0.37	4.52

*p<0.05, **p<0.01

WFC: Work-family conflict, FWC: Family-work conflict, LS: Life satisfaction

From table 2 it is evident that significant differences were found only between few professions. Doctors and police personnel had significantly higher levels of work-family conflict than advocates. (Advocates M=24.09, Educators M=24.84, Doctors M=27.79, Police personnel M=27.82). Educators had significantly lower levels of work-family conflict when compared doctors police personnel. (educators M=24.84, doctors M=27.9, police personnel M=26.09). Educators have significantly low levels of family-work conflict when compared to advocates, doctors and police personnel (Educators M= 17.26, Advocates M= 20.03, Doctors M= 21.26, police personnel M= 20.22). Advocates and educators had high levels of satisfaction with life when compared to police personnel. (Advocates M=24.09, Educators M=21.75, Police personnel M=15.73).

Discussion

The results show that there are profession-based differences in work–family conflict, family–work conflict and life satisfaction among working professionals. Particularly, doctors and police personnel had significantly higher work-family conflict and family-work conflict as compared to educators.

Situations like irregular shifts and long working hours, sometimes even in 24×7 schedule to protect the public, are major aspects of a police officer's job. With this demanding schedule, there is not much time for personal or family obligations. Based on prior research done by Rathi and Barath (2013), the Indian police officers are reported to spend most of their time on duty thereby hindering family obligations. Police officers have a threatening effect on mental health as they are first respondents who are constantly exposed to trauma related to their job (Buchanan et al. 2001). Due to this, police officers may struggle to disconnect from their work-related stress and trauma, leading to emotional unavailability and decreased engagement with family members. The stress and anxiety associated with their work can lead to increased irritability, conflict, by which they may find it challenging to defend their work-life balance, thereby leading to conflicts between work and family responsibilities.

On the other hand, the stress of doctors is high as they need to do home visits, answer emergency calls and attend night shifts. Rao et al. (2011) highlighted that India has around 20 healthcare professionals per 10,000 people. This indicates that each doctor has to attend to a large number of patients, leading to an increased workload. Increased workload makes them work for prolonged hours (including night shifts, or working on weekends, and holidays) leading to increased burnout, fatigue and stress among doctors. As work hours increase, maintaining a balance between the responsibilities related to family and work becomes difficult, leading to conflicts.

Furthermore, Romate and Rajkumar (2022) reported that disagreements and absence of emotional support from family negatively impacts their personal well-being and their professional performance.

Educators have more predictable work hours which allows them to fulfil their family responsibilities. The consistency in the work schedules allow them to plan and balance their work and family commitments. Unlike police and doctors who involve inherent physical risks or exposure to traumatic events, teaching typically carries lower occupational hazards. This reduced risk exposure may contribute to lower levels of anxiety and stress which thereby allows them to spend leisure and fun time with family. The nature of profession of educators allows them to maintain clear-cut boundaries with both work and family life compared to police or doctors where emergencies can arise unexpectedly.

The work-family conflict results from this study show that doctors and police officers experience more of it than educators. This could be due to the flexible work schedules and fewer working days that advocates have. The High Court of Telangana functioned for 5 hours per day (Siasat, 2024). Unlike doctors and police, advocates need not work 24/7, thereby allowing them to have leisure time to spend with their families and balance their spousal, parent-care, child-care and work responsibilities.

Results also indicate that advocates and educators have significantly high levels of life satisfaction when compared to police personnel. Section 22 of the Police Act 1861 states that police personnel are always on duty. "Every police-officer shall, for all purposes in this Act contained, be considered to be always on duty, and may, at any time, be employed as a police-officer in any part of the general police-district". (Indian Government, 1861). Chaturvedi, (2024) stated that the job of police personnel requires them to keep the law and order intact; cater to emergency situations; ensure smooth movement of dignitaries or important persons (VIPs or VVIPs), investigate the crime, provide security to endangered citizens, conduct police verification, manage crowd during fairs, elections etc. The requirement to be "always on duty" leads to emotional numbing and exhaustion. It also blurs the boundaries between personal and professional life of police personnel as they are invested in their work most of the time. They neither get opportunity to spend time with themselves or with their loved ones thereby decreasing their contentment with life. Their highly demanding nature work "on-ground" forces them to leave most of their family responsibilities unfulfilled which might in-turn make them feel guilty thereby decreasing their satisfaction with life.

In general, High court of Telangana functions for approximately 200 days; for example, according to the 2023 calendar of Telangana High Court, given in its official website (Telangana State High Court, n.d.), the court had functioned for 200 with 165 days of holidays. An article in Indian Express (Indian Express, 2023), has conveyed that, High Courts have approximately 210 working days, and trial courts have 245 working days. These act as proofs that advocates have more than 100 days of holidays every year. This predictability of working days enables them to plan their personal lives more effectively, making it easier to schedule time for hobbies, and leisure activities, which increases their emotional stability thereby increasing their contentment and satisfaction with life. Advocates are not bound by any kind of mandatory daily presence in court. Their workday revolves around their cause list, if they have no cases listed for the day, they are not obliged to attend court. This gives them the autonomy to plan their days prior. They can attend just that one case and are free to continue with their personal work for rest of the day. However, this is not the same with police personnel, they are bound by heavy work load that it gets nearly impossible for them to look into their personal work while they are "on-duty". Advocates also enjoy the right to charge and demand their fee to their client for services they render. In contrast, police personnel are prohibited from accepting any additional forms of compensation. If police personnel accept anything beyond their authorized salary, they will be subjected to disciplinary actions, including suspension. This financial autonomy enjoyed by advocates enables them to fulfill their monetary and material needs thereby making them free to pursue their desires and interests without financial constraints, which thereby enhances their overall contentment with life.

According to the Telangana School Calendar (Sakshi Education, 2023), schools operated for 229 days during the 2023–2024 academic year. Similar to advocates, educators have predictable work schedules and shifts, along with the advantage of summer and winter breaks compared to police personnel. This could be a potential reason for their higher levels of life satisfaction, as these breaks provide them opportunities to spend time with themselves or their families, leading to greater overall satisfaction with life.

In summary, the results indicate that

1. Advocates have less of work–family conflict than doctors and police personnel.
2. Educators have less of work-family conflict than doctors and police personnel.
3. Educators have less of family-work conflict than doctors and police personnel.
4. Advocates and educators have significantly high levels of life satisfaction when compared to police personnel.

Implications

Conducting workshops that equip individuals with skills to better manage time and stress, which could improve life satisfaction. Conflict pertaining to work and family are highly difficult to differentiate unless an individual attempts to answer a set of standardized questions, however, once an individual is able to identify whether family is interrupting with work related roles or work is interfering with family related roles, he/she will be able to maintain a work-family balance accordingly. Policy makers can take cognizance of these findings and look into the possibility of build an improved work-life balance for doctors and police personnel.

Limitations and future recommendations

Only urban population was considered in the sample leaving no room for rural population. Further research can be done by considering both urban and rural population and a contrast study can be done by comparing the levels of variables in urban and rural setting. People falling under same rank without any rank permeability can be considered to get more accurate results. Conclusion In the professions examined in this study, work-family conflict is high for police personnel ($M=27.82$) and least for advocates (24.04). While family-work conflict is highest for doctors ($M=21.6$) and least for educators (17.26). Life satisfaction is highest for educators 21.75 and least for police personnel ($M=15.73$).

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Appendices

Informed consent form

Please read the following information and give your consent to be a part of the study.

The Researcher

My name is Srinidhi Nemmikanti and I am a student of Psychology, Dept. of Psychology St. Francis College, Hyderabad. You are requested to participate in the research study I am conducting on working individuals.

The Study

The purpose of this study is to gain insight into your likes, dislikes, attitudes, interests and how you feel about certain situations. There is no right or wrong answer because everyone has a right to their own views. All you have to do is answer what is true for you.

The Process

Your participation in the study will involve the filling of a questionnaire, which does not have a time limit. It will take approximately 15 – 20 mins for you to complete this questionnaire. The responses in the questionnaire will be used to analyze the results. Please note that findings from this study may be published and used in journals or article collections, however, that will not affect the confidentiality of the participants.

Risk

This study poses little to no risk to its participants. Confidentiality is maintained by not citing your actual name within the actual study. Your participation in the study is voluntary and you may choose to leave the study at any time. You may also request that any data collected from you not be used in the study.

Your participation will help the research since your views are important.

By signing below, you agree that you have read and understood the above information, and would be interested in participating in this study.

Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

***You are at liberty to mention your name or remain anonymous**

****Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study****

Personal Details Sheet

Please fill the appropriate answer for the following

1) Age

2) Gender

For the following questions, please choose an option that is applicable to you by tick marking (✓).

1) Monthly household income

☐ Less than ₹25,000

☐ ₹25,000 - ₹50,000

☐ ₹50,000 - ₹1,00,000

☐ ₹1,00,000 - ₹2,00,000

☐ More than ₹2,00,000

2) Highest degree or level of education you have completed

☐ Senior secondary degree

☐ Bachelor's degree

☐ Master's degree

☐ Ph.D. or higher degree

3) Parental status

☐ Parent

☐ Expecting a child

☐ Not a parent

4) Number of dependents (Including pets)

☐ None

☐ 1-4

☐ More than 4

5) Years of work experience

- ☐ Less than two years
- ☐ 2-5 years
- ☐ 5-10 years
- ☐ More than 10 years

6) Living status

- ☐ House owner
- ☐ Tenant

7) How do you like spending your time?

- ☐ Social service
- ☐ Sports
- ☐ Reading books
- ☐ Swimming
- ☐ Cooking

8) Number of work hours per day

- ☐ 7-8 hours
- ☐ 8-10 hours
- ☐ 10 hours and above

9) Family type

- ☐ Nuclear
- ☐ Joint
- ☐ Extended

10) Profession

- ☐ Advocates
- ☐ Educators
- ☐ Doctors
- ☐ Journalism

- ☐ Sales and marketing
- ☐ Police personnel
- ☐ Information technology
- ☐ Other - Specify_____

Appendix: 1- Work-Family Conflict Scale and Family-Work Conflict Scale

Please choose any one appropriate answer for the statements given below with strongly disagree, disagree, slightly disagree, neutral, slightly agree, agree and strongly agree by tick marking (✓). Please respond to all items.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life							
The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfill family responsibilities							
Things I want to do at home do not get done because of the demands my job puts on me.							
My job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfill family duties.							
Due to work-related duties, I have to make changes to my plans for family activities							
The demands of my family or spouse/partner interfere with work-related activities.							
I have to put off doing things at work because of demands on my time at home.							
Things I want to do at work don't get done because of the demands of my family or spouse/partner.							
My home life interferes with my responsibilities at work such as getting to work on time, accomplishing daily tasks, and working overtime							

Family-related strain interferes with my ability to perform job-related duties							
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Appendix: 2- Satisfaction with Life Scale

Please choose any one appropriate answer for the statements given below with strongly disagree, disagree, slightly disagree, neutral, slightly agree, agree and strongly agree by tick marking (✓). Please respond to all items.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
In most ways, my life is close to ideal.							
The conditions of my life are excellent.							
I am satisfied with my life.							
So far, I have gotten the important things I want in life.							
If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.							