

CONSEQUENCES OF WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT: A REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL AND THEORETICAL LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

The paper is an attempt to review the existing work in the field of Work-Family Conflict (WFC) with the aim of identifying the possible outcome variables as brought forth by researchers globally. Work-family conflict has been a topic of interest for researchers globally as it involves two very important domains in the life of an individual- the work domain and the family domain. When WFC affects work domain, it manifests itself in the form of job-dissatisfaction, turnover intention, burnout, absenteeism and lack of organisational commitment. In the personal domain, WFC influences family satisfaction as well as overall life satisfaction of an individual. The aim of the study is to understand the extent to which these outcome variables have been studied, so as to determine the direction for possible future research in this area.

Index Words: Work-family conflict, job satisfaction, family satisfaction, life satisfaction

1. INTRODUCTION

Work- family conflict has been at the centre of attention of researchers globally. Many studies have been conducted to examine the relationship of work-family conflict with other variables such as job satisfaction, life satisfaction, stress, strain, burnout, turnover intention, marital discord, to name a few. In fact, a number of meta-analysis have also been conducted in this area (Allen et al, 2000; Ford et al, 2007; Kossek and Ozeki, 1998). The challenge before organisations to attract, motivate and retain a talented, flexible and adaptive workforce is further compounded due to the existence of work and family related conflict. The scenario is no different in India. The number of dual-earning couples is on the rise, with child-care no longer the exclusive responsibility of women. Also, the number of $s\frac{\Delta y}{\Delta x}$ ingle parents is increasing and finding external child-care support

may neither be easy nor economic. On the work front too, there are changes in the demographic constitution of the workforce. Following global trends, working part-time is catching up in India as well. The increasing incidences of work-family conflict related symptoms such as stress, strain, alienation, increased employee turnover and absenteeism have triggered the need for further research in this area, specifically a convergence of the various streams of thoughts around the causes and the consequences of Work-Family Conflict is called for. An attempt is also made to identify the various work and non-work consequences of work-family conflict. The authors first systematically reviewed the extant literature on consequences of work-family conflict and then categorized the existing understanding in the domain into typologies of antecedents and consequences of work-family conflict, leading to the development of a conceptual model. This model can then be tested in the Indian scenario as culturally India is significantly different from European and American economies, where a majority of research in this area has taken place.

The research papers were accessed through search engines like Proquest, JStore and Libgen, in addition to Google and Google Scholar, by using key words like work-family-conflict, job satisfaction and life satisfaction, Research papers dealing specifically with the issue of work-family conflict and its relationship with the above-mentioned other variables, were selected. Seminal papers were only considered and not dissertation work by other researchers. Another important source of information was the WFRN (work Family Research Network), which is a network of researchers exploring work and family related issues. The WFRN proved a useful source of recent research being conducted in the area of work and family issues.

2. WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT

Work-family conflict is defined as a form of inter-role conflict in which pressures from the work and family domains are incompatible in some respect- that is, participation in work (family) is made more difficult by participation in family (work) role (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985). This definition by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) is based on the Role Theory (Kahn et al, 1964). Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) have further categorised Work-Family conflict as time-based, strain based and behaviour-based. Time-based conflict is where an individual is unable to devote adequate time to a particular role due to pressures of other roles. Strain-based conflict arises due to role overload, where demands from each role are multiple and satisfying the demands of each role causes strain- mental and physical. Several times the different roles that an individual performs require different behaviours on his/her part. Such behaviours may be mutually incompatible which leads to behaviour-based conflict.

The various roles that an individual has to play and the importance of a particular role identity in the life of that individual, collectively determines the work-family conflict experienced by the individual. Certain roles may be more salient in the life of an individual and when other roles jeopardize the performance of this more salient role, it leads to a situation of conflict and stress in the life of the individual as per the Role Identity Salience Theory (Stryker 1992). According to Carlson and Kacmar (2000), Grandey et al (2005) and Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), the extent to which work is considered satisfactory or unsatisfactory may depend on the degree to which

work is seen as a threat to other relevant or salient roles for that person. When the salient roles that define our identity, are threatened, we assess the source of threat negatively.

Another important theory explaining why work-family conflict may arise and how it can be source of stress and strain is the Conservation of Resource (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989). COR theory proposes that inter-role conflict leads to stress because resources are lost in the process of juggling both work and family roles. With the limited time and resources (in the form of energy, knowledge) an individual tries to maximise the resources available to him/her. Here, an important role is played by “personal characteristics” like self-esteem, self-efficacy, positive affect and internal locus of control, in being able to manage the stress arising from the performance of various roles

How much does work-family conflict affect other spheres of an individual's life? Spill-over model (Staines, 1980), suggests that satisfaction in one domain of an individual's life extends to other areas. This can be from job to life satisfaction or life to job satisfaction. A positive relationship between the two is implied in this model. A positive spill-over leads to work-family enhancement and negative spill-over leads to work-family conflict (Grzywacz and Marks 2000). The two aspects of positive and negative spill-over may co-exist to some degree. For example, a job requiring long hours at work may carry-over into home life (negative spill-over), but at the same time may provide positive spill-over in the form of financial security and growth that enhance the family (Grzywacz and Marks 2000).

The Compensatory model (Staines, 1980), is in direct contrast to the Spill-over model and contends a negative relationship between job and life satisfaction. Employees experiencing dissatisfaction at work are likely to compensate for the same by engaging in satisfying non-work activities. The compensation may take place in two forms. An individual may decrease involvement in the domain that is not satisfying and increase participation in the domain that is satisfying (Champoux, 1978; Lambert, 1990). This form of compensation may be viewed as re-allocation of time, importance or attention to the more satisfying domain. Alternatively, the person may pursue rewards in one domain as a way to respond to dis-satisfaction in another domain (Zedeck, 1992).

The Segmentation model establishes no link between job and life satisfaction (Burke, 1986). That is, employees are able to keep their work and non-work life separate. This would be represented by a zero correlation between the two. Judge and Watanabe (1993), employed both cross-sectional and longitudinal approaches and concluded that the relationship between life and job satisfaction is positive and significant.

These theories and models help in explaining how work-family conflict may occur. However, the consequences of work-family conflict are far reaching. They may not just impact an employee's attitude and behaviour at workplace, but may also influence his non-work life. The consequences may spill-over to members of the family, colleagues at workplace and may consequently impact

the individual's overall happiness with life. The next section looks into the various consequences of WFC.

3. CONSEQUENCES OF WFC

Inter-role conflict involving work and family roles impacts both the work and family lives of an individual. Therefore, the outcome variables have been classified as (i) work/job satisfaction and (ii) family and life satisfaction. The reason behind choosing “satisfaction” as the main outcome variable at both work and personal front is that all other consequences observed- like turnover intention, absenteeism, burnout (at workplace) and stress, marital discord, alienation (at family level) are primarily a result of a dis-satisfactory work or family atmosphere.

It has been maintained by the researchers that the most severe consequences are felt in the work-domain and these consequences manifest in the form of Job Satisfaction (Perrewe et al, 1999), Organisational Commitment (Aryee et al, 2005), Intention to quit (Shaffer et al, 2001), Burnout (Peeters et al, 2005), Absenteeism (Kirmeyer and Cohen, 1999), Work-related strain (Netemeyer et al, 2004) and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (Netemeyer et al, 2005). Family-related outcomes like Marital Satisfaction (Voydanoff, 2005b), Family Satisfaction (Cardenas et al, 2004) and Family-related Strain (Swanson and Power, 1999) have been observed. Domain unspecific outcomes can be in the form of Life Satisfaction (Greenhaus et al, 2003), Psychological strain (Kelloway et al, 1999), Somatic Complaints (Peeters et al, 2004), Depression (Vinokur et al, 1999) and Substance abuse (Grzywacz and Bass, 2003) (Meta-analysis of Work-Family Conflict by Amstad et al, 2011). Majority of the work done in the field of work-family conflict is in studying its impact on job satisfaction and life satisfaction. The following sections attempt to converge the different studies of work-family conflict in relation to job satisfaction and family and life satisfaction respectively.

3.1 WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT AND JOB SATISFACTION

Job satisfaction is defined as the extent to which the expectations that an individual holds for a job match what one actually receives from the job (Locke, 1969). Job satisfaction can be characterised as an attitude concerning the extent to which people like or dislike their jobs (Spector, 1997). Although majority of studies have found that as work-family conflict increases, job satisfaction decreases, the results across individual studies have been inconsistent (Bruck et al, 2002). A review of the work-family conflict-job satisfaction literature (Allen, 2000; Kossek and Ozeki, 1998), suggests that these differences could be due to way in which these two constructs have been measured. In fact, researchers have examined the impact of work interface with family and family interface with work on job satisfaction separately, as also taking work-family conflict as a single composite measure. In the meta-analysis by Allen et al (2000), the reported correlations from individual studies ranged from -0.14 to -0.47.

As far as relating job satisfaction to the two directions of work-family conflict- that is, work-to-family and family-to-work conflict, is concerned, researchers have differed in their findings. In their longitudinal research, Grandey et al (2005), reported that some researchers have found work-to-family conflict as a strong predictor of job attitudes and family-to-work conflict as a minor predictor (Adams et al, 1996; Borovsky, 1999; Parasuraman et al, 1992). On the other hand, some researchers have concluded the opposite- that is, family-to-work conflict has been found to be strong factor influencing job-related outcomes (Frone et al, 1992a; Frone et al, 1997; Thompson and Blau, 1993). There are others who have concluded that none of the two directions of work-family conflict directly influences job satisfaction (Carlson and Kacmar, 2000; O'Driscoll et al, 1992).

Thomas and Ganster (1995) in their research on health care workers, found work-family conflict was negatively related to job satisfaction and positively related to depression and health complaints. Higgins et al (1992) found that work interfering with family related to lower quality of family life. Wiley (1987) found family interfering with work negatively related to job satisfaction, organisational commitment and life satisfaction in a sample of employed graduates. Gender differences are also observed in the manner work-family conflict impact certain work-related outcomes, like job satisfaction (Grandey et al, 2005). In a longitudinal study conducted by Grandey et al, (2005) to determine the relation between the two directions of work-family conflict on job satisfaction, gender differences were observed. The sample comprised of dual-career couples. It was reported that when a husband perceives that his spouse is violating the gender prescribed role (family), it contributed to family conflicts and resentment, which then leads to wife's attributing blame to the job. Wives were just as likely to recognise that the husband's work drains time and energy for family, but this recognition does not result in the husband disliking his job. Burke (1988), found higher levels of work interfering with family was related to psychological burnout and alienation in a sample of police officers. Bacharach et al, (1991) found high work-life conflict was significantly related to burnout and consequently low job satisfaction for nurses and engineers. Frone et al, (1992) concluded that higher levels of family interfering with work related to incidence of clinical depression and distress on the job for large no. of working adults. Frone et al, (1997) and Parasuraman (1996) in their research found that number of hours worked was significantly linked to work-life conflict.

3.2 WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT AND FAMILY AND LIFE SATISFACTION

Life satisfaction refers to a judgemental process, in which individuals assess the quality of their lives on the basis of their own unique set of criteria (Shin and Johnson, 1978). Life satisfaction has also been found to be related to work-family conflict (Greenhaus et al, 2003). A meta-analysis was conducted to determine the impact of work-to-family and family-to-work conflict on life satisfaction and the results showed a consistent negative relation between the two variables (Kossek and Ozeki, 1998). Although research has established a negative relation between both directions of work-family conflict with work satisfaction, family satisfaction and life satisfaction, the strength of the relationship differs widely (Kossek and Ozeki, 1998). The reason for this, as

reported by Allen et al, (2000), could be due to various moderating and mediating variables that may not have been included in the study.

When we look at life as a whole and quality of life of an individual, then the additive model of quality of life (Andrews and Withey, 1976; Rice et al, 1992), says that overall quality of life is a function of satisfaction experienced by the individual in each specific and separate domain of his/her life. This means that it is satisfaction in domain-specific areas like work, family etc. that should add-up or determine life satisfaction. In 1984, Cooke and Rousseau conducted a study on 200 Michigan elementary and secondary school teachers, where they hypothesised that work overload and inter-role conflict are positively related to job and life dis-satisfactions and physical strain symptoms (that is the impact was both psychological and physical). The researchers did not find any significant positive correlation between inter-role conflict and life dis-satisfaction. Staines (1986) conducted a research and concluded that those husbands who had working wives reported lower job and life satisfaction than those who had housewives. A possible cause could be that non-work lives of men becomes more burdensome when the spouse is also gainfully employed and this interferes with their work-role responsibilities.

Many other studies that have been conducted where WFC conceptualised as work-to-family conflict has been examined in its impact on life satisfaction (Bedeian et al, 1988; Kopelman et al, 1983). Bedeian (1988), conducted a study on accountants (423 male & 335 female) to determine the relationship between WFC and life satisfaction and found a correlation of $r=-0.46$ (male accountants) and $r=-0.42$ (female accountants). Wiley (1987) conducted empirical studies to assess the impact of various work/non-work role conflict and included both directions of work conflict in her study. The outcomes of this inter-role conflict were predicted as job satisfaction, life satisfaction, job involvement and organisational commitment. Significant correlations were observed between work-to-family conflict and life satisfaction ($r=-0.26$) and between family-to-work conflict and life satisfaction ($r=-0.22$). Netemeyer et al, (1996), also found inverse relationships between work-to-family conflict/ family-to-work conflict and life satisfaction across the three samples studied by the researcher. Similarly, in a study of 163 full-time workers enrolled in evening or weekend classes, Adams et al, (1996), reported a negative correlation between work interface with family and life satisfaction and family interface with work and life satisfaction.

Greenhaus et al, (2003), conducted a research on work-life balance and quality of life and reported that quality of life was the highest for those who were more involved with family than work. Work-life balance is highest for those who are more involved with family and least for those who are most involved with work. Judge et al, (1994) proposed that work-to-family conflict will have a direct impact on life satisfaction but family-to-work conflict will not. Family-to-work conflict is hypothesised to impact work first and any influence of it on life satisfaction would only be through job satisfaction. The results did establish a negative relation between work-to-family conflict and life satisfaction, but no significant relationship was observed between family-to-work conflict and job satisfaction.

At an individual level, other than impacting the overall life satisfaction of an individual, WFC also has a negative impact on the family satisfaction of the individual. It can be the cause of lack of time and attention that an individual is able to give to his/her family responsibilities. The problem compounds with the presence of small children and dependent adults and is more for those couples where both partners are engaged in high pressure jobs. It may lead to marital discord or alienation from family activities. This was found in studies by: Kopelman et al, (1983) in a sample of 181 married and employed men and also in a sample of 91 under-graduate and graduate students who were married and employed full-time; Aryee et al, (1999), in a sample of 243 dual-earner couples (& parents) in China; Beutell and Wittig-Berman (1999), in a sample of 177 married, employed, MBA and public administration students.

The two directions of work-family conflict (work-to-family and family-to-work conflict) and the three forms of work-family conflict (time-based, involvement-based and strain-based), have been found to impact life satisfaction differently. In some studies mentioned above, only a particular direction of work-family conflict is found to influence life satisfaction and in certain cases only a particular form of the conflict (whether involvement-based or time-based). The job profile of the sample does have an impact on the ability of that sample to manage balance in discharge of various responsibilities effectively. Results are also likely to vary from one culture to another. Aryee (1992) and Grzywacz et al, (2007), have emphasised that a generalisation of what policies have been adopted in the western culture and how employees feel in the western world, cannot be made for other cultures, especially the Asian culture (Namayandeh et al, 2010). Most research till date has been in context of the European, American and Australian cultures. Researchers have identified that the relationships between WFC, job satisfaction and turnover intentions are stronger among workers employed with anglo- countries (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, UK and US) than for workers employed within Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe (Spector et al, 2007). This is due to the fact that western culture is more individualistic whereas Asian culture is a collectivist and conformist culture (Powell et al, 2009).

This leads us to the question that will the results, obtained from a research in another culture/economy, hold good in the Indian culture as well. What can be the culture-specific influences that may have an impact on WFC-Life satisfaction relationship, in India? Also, taken as a whole, composite concept, does WFC have a direct impact on life satisfaction or is the impact indirect, that is, it affects life satisfaction by first impacting job and family satisfactions.

The purpose of the review was to explore the possible consequences of WFC variable and as can be seen from the studies done in this area, WFC is a significant variable which can have far-reaching impact on both the personal and work life of an individual. By impacting the job and overall life satisfaction of an individual, work-family conflict may lead to counter-productive work behaviour, in the form of anger or resentment towards one's organisation or supervisors (Bruk-Lee and Spector, 2006). It may also lead to symptoms of stress, strain and alienation on a personal front. The consequences of this inter-role conflict are many and severe by nature. So, it becomes important to look into the causes that might lead to it and how to develop policies at organisational level to effectively deal with the same.

4. CONCLUSION

The job market across the world has witnessed significant changes in the last few decades. An increasing number of women are joining the workforce. Earlier men were considered to be the bread-earners and predominantly women took care of household chores. With a change in work and family roles both men and women are performing multiple roles, leading to inter-role conflict being experienced by an increasing number of employees. Hochschild (1997) has described this phenomenon as “time-bind”. The time-bind reflects a complex phenomenon reflected in the simultaneous time and energy demands of workplace and family life, both considered to be greedy institutions (Hochschild, 1997). The notion of perceived time-bind between work and family/personal life stems from changing nature of work and families, like- longer hours of work, proliferation of non-standard work schedules, flexible and part-time work schedules, participation of women in labour force and increasing number of non-traditional families (Tausig and Fenwick, 2001).

Different researchers across the globe have tried to explore the construct of WFC to determine how much it can impact the various aspects of an individual's life. Initial studies were primarily targeted towards the work-related consequences of WFC. Studies on stress, job dis-satisfaction, turnover intentions, led researchers to believe that there could be an under-lying common cause to these and this further led to giving a proper definition and meaning to the concept of WFC. Later on, it was observed by researchers that work-related consequences were not the only outcome of WFC and it impacted family and personal life equally. Also, the focus shifted from just considering work as the root cause of all problems to realising that family obligations and responsibilities can also be as much a cause of WFC. More recent work on WFC has focussed on the factors and situations which cause a role-conflict to occur. Examining the causes of WFC can only help in developing action-plans to deal with the problem. The specific situations and factors that can cause or aggravate WFC can be found in both work as well as family domains.

Organisations are realising the serious consequences that WFC can have on their employees and can pose a serious threat to the organisation's endeavour to attract and retain best quality employees. Family-friendly policies are being developed by many organisations. What still needs to be seen is the effectiveness with which these are implemented and whether or not these policies yield desired results. Research in the field of WFC lacks longitudinal studies, which explore the benefit and consequences of implementing a specific family-friendly program. The focus of the studies can also shift towards assessing the role of teams and groups in impacting WFC, more and more organisations are now moving towards team-based performance. Team dynamics should be focus of newer studies in the area of WFC as few studies done in this area have brought forth an important fact- those who do not face WFC may react negatively towards those who desire family-friendly policies as well as towards the organisation in general.

Although WFC caught the attention of researchers a few decades back, it is still a highly researched area. The reason for this can be that people engaged in various types of jobs may experience different degrees of WFC. While some jobs can be highly demanding in terms of time and

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attention, others may not be. It may be easier to implement work-life balance programs for employees in a specific sector or performing a specific type of job. Similarly, how employees react to the triggers of work demands and family demands may be different from one culture to another. This makes WFC a very job specific and culture specific issue. Results obtained from one study cannot be generalised to all professions and across all cultures. The relationship between variables can produce varying results depending upon the nature of job and the specific cultural setting in which the research is undertaken. Cross-cultural research can bring out the ways in which relationship between WFC and other related variables can undergo changes. These cultural nuances cannot be ignored in any research on WFC. Society continues to evolve and change so each new generation of workforce has its own unique challenges. Family set ups have undergone changes and so have the expectations of individuals from their jobs. The external environment-economic stability of the country, availability of jobs etc. also influences the expectations of the employees. Organisations need to undertake an analysis of the work-family conflict experienced by their employees, find the unique problems faced by them, do a cost-benefit analysis of various family-friendly policies, test the impact of these on employee productivity and ensure an effective implementation of the same.

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