



Impact of Work and Family Role Demands on Work Life Conflict amongst Working Woman

KEYWORDS

Work Life Conflict, Working Woman, Work-Life Balance

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: With marvelous increase in the work force vis-à-vis the entry of a woman in various professions in the past two decades, many concerns have come into light owing to her twofold job i.e. work & home. As she has raised the ladder of the professional world, the issue of creating balance between these roles has become an important concern as well. There could be numerous factors which can lead to the disturbance of this balance & hence the present study tries to focus on such responsible causes.

Findings: Findings imply that:

- Conflict can be divided in to two forms, work – family conflict and family – work conflict i.e. work as well as family; can interfere into each other's domain.*
- Working hours and high job demands influences work-family conflict.*

Age of children and role overload affects family-work conflict.

Value: The results of this paper lend support to the theory that with the rise of women in the workforce worldwide, the inter role conflict has also risen. Although there could be several reasons responsible for the incompatibility of these two roles but this study supports (with the help of literature review) four independent variables, namely working hours, high job demands, age of children and role overload.

Introduction

Over the past few years with the fundamentally changing business environment, Human Resources have become an important entity. Corporate are now more concerned with the well being of their employees, as positive & productive attitude proves to be the win-win situation for both the parties. The idea, 'satisfied employees are more efficient' has encouraged the management to provide a better environment embedded with employee friendly policies. From job satisfaction to stress management, providing an atmosphere which is least affected by conflicts of work and their personal life, has become the one among the top priorities in the organizations today. Out of the present HR challenges, the issue of work life balance is demanding more concern which has made the work life issues an essential one in the HR field.

Lawler (2005) posited that society has entered a new era in the association between organizations and their employees. People have become the key source for a company's competitive advantage. Organizational success and continued existence of corporate depends on how human resources are being treated. Employees too expect a sense of stability & constancy from the organizations. They have certain expectations when they join an organization, but owing to non-fulfillment of such needs, their level of job satisfaction falls down resulting in the turnover of the company (Conlon 2003, McDonald & Hite 2005 & Woods 1993).

Increase in dual-earner couples, 24x7 work culture, and dependent responsibilities are few reasons which add up to the depth of the present issue. From four walls of a home to the corporate world, woman has created a niche for herself. Many women, today handling the position of a director successfully, (Lang, I., 2008). The number of Fortune 500 companies with 25% or more women on their boards is growing as well [24]. According to catalyst data, in 2001, 30 companies met this standard and the number increased to 68 in 2007 [19].

Khokhar (2013) opined that with globalization, educated

women is getting opportunities to excel in her professional career as the openings are now more as compared to earlier stereotyped male dominated professions. Though they are not the majority, Indian women professionals are also on the rise and are paving the way for future generations. Hence with increase in the entry of women in different professions, she has achieved new heights. But like the two sided coin, this success has also brought an amount of incompatibility between the two roles (professional & personal) which is tend to increase with extra obsession of any one particular role. Hence the present study tries to find out the factors responsible which could be the cause of such irreconcilability & proposes the following objectives.

Objectives

- To explore the concept of work - life conflict.
- To observe the impact of family & work role demands on work-family conflict of working woman.

Conceptual Framework

Work-life conflict is defined as a form of 'inter-role conflict in which work and family demands are mutually incompatible so that meeting demands in one domain makes it difficult to meet demands in the other' (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Greenhaus & Beutell 1985). Gradually this irreconcilability affects the synergy of productivity of an individual because of this multi-directional relationship, where work & family both can enter & affect each other's outcome Frone (2000). Edwards and Rothbard, (2000), divided Work-life conflict into two main mechanisms: the practical aspect & the perceptual aspect. The practical one is associated with scheduling & managing time, i.e. an individual cannot be present at two places at one time as involvement in one area restrains performing in the other. Whereas the perceptual aspect leads to emotions such as stress, depression, anxiety or overburdened by the demands and pressure of numerous tasks.

As the labor force participation of women has increased over the years, especially in services, so has the social scientists' and policy makers' interest with the relation between Qual-

ity of Work Life (QWL) and gender issues. Flavy & Tapan in 2010 defined QWL inclusive of job, physical work environment, peer group, administrative system of the company and of course the balance between the life & job.

Family Work Conflict

This type of role conflict occurs when family demands and responsibilities make it more difficult to fulfill work-role responsibilities (e.g. responsibility of a dependent child, conflict with spouse or at home, lack of support from family affects giving one's complete concentration at work). It is a multi-dimensional construct & Edward and Rothbard (2000) have termed it as 'burdens' in the caregiver's day-to-day life. The study of Greenhaus & Anakwe (2000) of 3500 employees further strengthens this point.

- Women having children less than 3 years experience considerably more family to work conflict than men.
- Men and women experience same level of family to work conflict when there is not a very young child living at home.
- Gender differences appear in families where there are ample parental demands.
- Women reported missing notably more days of work than men to care for a sick child and when the usual child care was unavailable.
- Women tend to take comprehensively more time off than men for a child if both are working.

Nonetheless some studies claim that there subsist no difference in the extent to which men and women report family – to – work conflict though, analyzing more deeply surely suggests that women's career opportunities are more likely to be held back than men's (Greenhaus, J.H. & Anakwe, 2000) if they do not get due cooperation from their family members. Hence the following proposal can be proposed.

Proposition 1: Age of children and family – work conflict of working woman are negatively correlated.

Priorities of life changes with time, likewise the parameters of balance differ from a single to a married woman; from a young professional who has just entered into the field to a person nearing retirement (Gordon, M., 2006) as demands & responsibilities changes with time & circumstances. Level of stress due to multiple roles and caregiver responsibility has been reported more by women as compared to men (Bond & Galinsky, 1997). Moreover, other studies show that women also face lack of spousal support for their careers than their male counterparts (Duxbury and Higgins, 2001). Above this is the issue of glass ceiling & talent leakage which prove to be a hurdle for women to reach at the zenith of their professional career. Hence the second proposal is as follows:

Proposition 2: Role overload and Family – work conflict of working woman are positively correlated.

Work – Family Conflict

When the assigned tasks and activities are incompatible with time & energy available, it results in inadequacy & level of comfort. When demands and responsibilities from work make it harder to accomplish family-role responsibilities e.g. extra paid working hours on weekends prevents one from spending time with family members or child's school activities, excessive work demands prevents enjoying family life, work stress affects the involvement in the family affairs results in increase of conflict with the family. A survey report stated that 21000 Victorians were suffering from depression because of high job demands making it a challenge to create a balance between the two zones when the tasks are not clear (Friedman, S.D., & Greenhaus, J.H., 2000). This tendency prevailed more in working women as 1 in every 5 suffered from depression (LaMontagne, T., 2003).

Apart from the pressure of role-overload, pressure from en-

vironment also, plays a vital role on how individuals allocate their times. Greenhaus & Powell, on the bases of their laboratory experiment of MBA students, stated that 72% individuals chose work assignment out of the given two choices (family function & office meeting) when the pressure from the work was more. On the contrary under no pressure more individuals preferred to attend the family function. This highlights the importance & need of family closeness (Greenhaus & Powell, G. 2006). Hence the following hypothesis can be proposed based on the above literature.

Proposition 3: High job demands and work – life conflict of working woman are positively correlated.

Work and family affects the lives of both men & women. Duxbury and Higgins in 2001 posited that it has become vital to learn to deal with the limits between work and family to handle the demands of modern living. Workplace could become a major source of stress & ill health. Moreover this argument proves stronger for the younger generation as it is expected from them to work for long hours & be available for 24x7 hours. In fact the change can be seen in the elderly people as well. They too work more & hard to meet with the needs of the changing life style (Duxbury & Higgins 2001). This creates a time crunch.

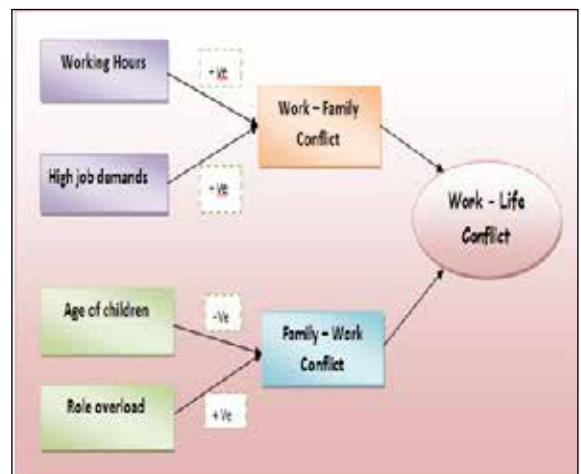
Picture is different on the reality grounds as the corporate policies and their implementation differs while the company travels from 3 tier cities to 2 tier cities. But one thing is certain that because of this incompatibility employees experience more job as well as family stress leading to extensive work family conflict and family to work conflict respectively (Steven L, G.; 2006). Hence putting forth the following proposition.

Proposition 4: Working hours and work-family conflict of working woman are positively correlated.

Impact

Figure 1:

Based on the above literature & prepositions following theoretical model is being proposed which has been proved above with the help of literature review.



Hence it can be stated that work life conflict can be divided into two forms namely family- work & work – family conflict. That is family & work can equally interfere into each other's domain. Realization has dawned that to expense recruitment & training is costlier than providing work-family programs. Paul Osterman in 1995 asserted that Work – family programs work in two ways. To employees, it helps in making the working conditions smooth; to employer it proves fruitful in three ways: in decreasing the absenteeism rates, encourages staffing & augment the maintenance of employees, and accelerate the satisfaction level of employees towards the employer

(Paul Osterman, 1995). Steven L. Grover and Karen J, 2006 have put forth that there is an evident positive relationship between employees' perspective & work- life benefits.

Preposition – 5: On the groundwork of above discussion, it can be stated that work & family can equally interfere into each other's domain & hence work life conflict can be divided into two zones namely work-family & family-work conflict.

Implication

24x7 has become the work culture today. Employees have to spend an ample amount of time & life at work. As employees are the key sources, it is required to find out the best ways through which the working places can endorse a good, healthy, & productive environment to their employees. Future studies should find the compatibility of work life policies with diverse needs of employees.

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