



## NAVIGATING DUAL RESPONSIBILITIES: WORK-LIFE CONFLICT AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING IN WOMEN

**Dr. Janak Kumari Shrivastava**

Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, T.N.B. College, Bhagalpur, T.M.B.U. Bhagalpur, Bihar PIN-812007

### ABSTRACT

The present Indian social structure reflects changes that have come up through changing frame of time. A major breakthrough at this juncture is the growing education and economic independence among women. Women's employment when viewed against Indian socio-cultural context offers a picture of a woman still holding the major responsibility of home and child care while contributing to paid work. Women today experience intense pressure to be everything to everyone all of the time. They bear the burden of responsibility associated with being wives, mother and carers of others apart from the job. The study examines if the working women were able to continue their work as well family and identifies the constraints they faced and how the family and organisational support they received in this process. The present study also focused to assess the impact of work-life balance determined by work-family conflict and family-work conflict on the well-being of working women. In this study the participants were 129 married working women of 25-55 years old with an average age of 40 years. The participants were well above average in education, minimum graduate level. Well-being is measured by level of family satisfaction, work satisfaction. Result revealed that there is a direct effect of role conflict in job satisfaction and it also affect the psychological well-being of working women.

**KEYWORDS :** Work-Life Conflict, Role-Conflict, Job Satisfaction, Psychological Well-Being, Psychological Distress; Etc.

The present Indian social structure reflects changes that have come up through changing frame of time. The increasing economic independence and educational attainment of women is a significant development at this time. The new milieu provides them a stand in terms of empowerment and socio-economic independence. Due to the impact of economic compulsion and also due to growing desire for search of personal and gender identity, the women of today have out stepped the bounds family and are taking to jobs. The change of women's ethos is clearly perceptible these days. Though the economic and professional status has contributed to their sense of security and the ability to face otherwise challenging social situations, various other factors have contributed to their sense of insecurity. The dual task of handling home and job mixed with a real or perceived threat against women may make them feel rejected, isolated and tense. Taking to new roles have brought in extra stress and strain in their aspirations and role enactment and it is generally believed that women work force, today, has frequent experiences of gloom and depression.

Women today experience intense pressure to be everything to everyone all of the time. They are particularly frustrated with the growing expectations that they should please everyone, be very homely as well profession. Women are particularly exposed to some of the factors that increase the risk of poor mental health because of the role and status that they typically have in society. However, the multiple responsibilities that they fulfil in society negatively affect their psychological wellbeing. Home and work are two different worlds for working women and are often in conflict. As most of the mother working women justify both parenting and working outside the home are physically and emotionally drained. The present study focused to assess the impact of work-life balance determined by work-family conflict and family-work conflict on the well-being of working women.

A number of studies have been conducted on the issue of role conflict and well-being in dual roll women (Amatea & Fong, 1991; Haw, 1982; Jenkins, 1997; Lennon, 1994; Lennon & Rosenfeld, 1992; Nelson & Burke, 2000; Sherr & Lawrence, 2000). A higher prevalence of major depression, simple phobias and agoraphobia in women was also reported by Russo and Green (1993). Even, the prevalence of mental distress in the Indian society has been variedly reported from 23.79 per thousand (Dube, 1970) up to 129 per thousand (Chakraborty, 1990). Barring few exceptions, the well-being of working women, with special reference to Indian community and drastic social changes, has been neglected. In the Fourth Educational Survey of NCERT, Panda (1991) did address issues like stress, mental health and adjustment. Later, Sinha (1997) found that working status of women had a significant effect on anxiety. In yet another interesting investigation Mukhopadhyay (1997) attempted to correlate working status of women and its impact on health. However, families still remaining the centripetal force in the Indian subcontinent, many equally qualified women have either opted out of their profession or have remained in their families only.

After reviewing literature, it has been observed that work-family conflict and family-work conflict play important roles in affecting work life balance and wellbeing of women employees. Hence, it is decided to use those two conflicts as the two main variables measuring work life balance, and three variables- family satisfaction, work satisfaction and psychological distress- to measure employees' wellbeing.

### The Present Study

This study focuses on assessing how these variables relate to each other in order to establish the relationship between work life balance and the wellbeing of individuals employed in the private and public sector of Kolkata metropolitan city.

This research should benefit individuals and organisations in terms of a deeper understanding of the importance of a healthy balance between work and family demands and their effects on people's wellbeing and organisation's performance.

**Objectives:** The main objective of this research was to identify the key characteristics strongly related to the individual's wellbeing in order to assess how Work Life Balance affects the wellbeing of participants.

### Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were framed for this study:

- H1: Work-family conflict will be significantly negatively associated with family satisfaction.
- H2: Work-family conflict will be significantly negatively associated with work satisfaction.
- H3: Work-family conflict will be significantly positively associated with psychological distress.
- H4: Family-work conflict will be significantly negatively associated with family satisfaction.
- H5: Family-work conflict will be significantly negatively associated with work satisfaction.
- H6: Family-work conflict will be significantly positively associated with psychological distress.

### METHOD

#### Sample & Procedure

A convenient sampling method was used for this study, which means that individuals who were easiest to include in the research were selected (Saunders et al., 2012; Fisher, 2007). In this case individuals including friends, colleagues, neighbours and other people that were known to the researcher or easy to approach were selected and invited to participate in the study. Participants who were employed full-time and part-time were selected amongst different organisations working in the private sector and public sector of Kolkata city. Participants were 129 married working women within the age range of 30-50 years with an average age of 40 years. The sample was well above average in education, minimum graduate. The majority of the participants were married (83.7%) and rest were separated, divorced or widowed

(18.3%). The entire participant had children at home. The number of children ranged from 1 to 3, with the majority of women having either having one child (38.8%) or two children (51.2%). Among total sample 72.5% participants were employed full-time and rest of 27.5% respondents were employed part-time.

In this study a survey research strategy was chosen, and quantitative research was conducted through a self-completion questionnaire which contained five separate sections. The questionnaire used for this study included an information sheet explaining the aim of this study, emphasising confidentiality and the voluntary nature of participation.

Family-work conflict and work-family conflict were assessed using two separate scales: family-work conflict scale and work-family conflict scale. These scales were developed and validated by Netemeyer et al. (1996) and measure interferences between work and family lives of individuals. Family satisfaction was assessed using a five-item life satisfaction scale developed and validated by Diener et al. (1985).

The participants level of job satisfaction was assessed using a three-item General Job Satisfaction subscale developed by Hackman and Oldham (1975) and Psychological health in this study was measured by levels of psychological distress by Goldberg (1972).

**Demographic Information**

Participants were asked questions including their gender, age, and marital status, responsibility for the care of children, a number and age of their children, number of hours per week spent in paid-employment, the sector they worked in, and their current role in the job.

**RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS**

The data were analysed using appropriate statistical method. The statistical test used to assess the problem included Mean, SD, correlation co-efficient. The objective of this study was to assess the impact of work life balance on the wellbeing of employees in the private and public sector of Kolkata city. Work-family conflict and family-work conflict were used as the two main variables measuring Work Life Balance, and three variables- family satisfaction, work satisfaction and psychological distress- to measure employee's wellbeing. Work-family conflict and family-work conflict scales measured levels of interference between work and family lives, and high scores were indicative of high levels of conflict. Family satisfaction scale and work satisfaction scale assessed participant's level of satisfaction with their family lives and their work, and high scores were indicative of high levels of satisfaction. Psychological health scale measured appearance of distress, and high scores were indicative of high levels of participant's distress, therefore low levels of psychological health.

The mean of four variables (work-family conflict, family-work conflict, family satisfaction and work satisfaction) was measured using a scale ranging from 1 (very low) to 7 (very high). Participants reported relatively high levels of work-family conflict with a mean (3.52), which indicates that respondents experienced relatively high levels of work interference with family life. Moderate levels of family-work conflict were reported, with a mean (2.62), which indicates that participants experienced moderate levels of family life interference with work. High levels of family satisfaction were reported, with a mean (4.85), and relatively high levels of work satisfaction were indicated by participants, with a mean (4.52). The psychological health scale assessed the appearance of distress, which was measured using a scale ranging from 1 (very high) to 4 (very low), whereas participants indicated moderate levels of distress, with a mean (2.01). Descriptive statistics for all five scales are presented in table-1.

**Table -1: Descriptive Statistics of All Five Scales**

Scales	Mean	Standard Deviation
Total work - family conflict	3.52	7.87
Total family-work conflict	2.62	6.17
Total work satisfaction conflict	4.85	6.01
Total family satisfaction conflict	4.52	4.86
Total psychological health	2.01	5.40

Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient (r) was used for calculations of correlations as it is designed for continuous variables (Pallant, 2013). It should be noted that correlations reach statistical significance when  $p < .05$  (Pallant, 2013), and the strength of the relationship is considered small when  $r = .10$  to  $.29$ ; medium when  $r =$

$.30$  to  $.49$ ; and large when  $r = .50$  to  $1.0$  (Cohen, 1988). These indications were followed by the researcher during interpretations of the output from correlations.

Hypothesis 1 proposed that work-family conflict will be negatively correlated with family satisfaction. The relationship between work-family conflict (measured by work-family conflict scale) and family satisfaction (measured by family satisfaction scale) was examined using Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient. There was a statistically significant medium negative correlation between the two variables,  $r = -.44$ ,  $n = 111$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , which indicates that the more work-family conflict is experienced by individuals the less satisfied they are with their family lives. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was accepted.

Hypothesis 2 posited that work-family conflict will be negatively correlated with work satisfaction. The relationship between work-family conflict (measured by work-family conflict scale) and work satisfaction (measured by work satisfaction scale) was examined using Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient. There was a statistically significant but small negative correlation between the two variables,  $r = -.28$ ,  $n = 113$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , which indicates that the more work-family conflict is experienced by individuals the less satisfied they are with their work. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was accepted.

Hypothesis 3 suggested that there will be a positive correlation between work-family conflict and psychological distress. The relationship between work-family conflict (measured by work-family conflict scale) and psychological distress (measured by psychological health scale) was examined using Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient. There was a statistically significant and medium positive correlation between the two variables,  $r = .40$ ,  $n = 113$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , which indicates that the more work-family conflict is experienced by individuals the more psychological distress will be observed. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was accepted.

Hypothesis 4 proposed that family-work conflict will be negatively correlated with family satisfaction. The relationship between family-work conflict (measured by family-work conflict scale) and family satisfaction (measured by family satisfaction scale) was examined using Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient. There was a statistically significant but small negative correlation between the two variables,  $r = -.20$ ,  $n = 112$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , which indicates that the more family-work conflict is experienced by individuals the less satisfied they are with their family lives. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 was accepted.

Hypothesis 5 posited that family-work conflict will be negatively correlated with work satisfaction. The relationship between family-work conflict (measured by family-work conflict scale) and work satisfaction (measured by work satisfaction scale) was examined using Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient. There was a small negative correlation between the two variables,  $r = -.15$ ,  $n = 113$ , which would indicate that the more family-work conflict is experienced by individuals the less satisfied they are with their work. However, this correlation was not statistically significant ( $p > 0.05$ ), therefore Hypothesis 5 was not accepted.

Hypothesis 6 suggested that family-work conflict will be positively correlated with psychological distress. The relationship between family-work conflict (measured by family-work conflict scale) and psychological distress (measured by psychological health scale) was examined using Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient. However, there was no statistically significant relationship between the family-work conflict and psychological distress,  $r = .03$ ,  $n = 113$ ,  $p > 0.05$ . Therefore, Hypothesis 6 was not supported. Results of all correlations are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Pearson's Product-moment Correlations Between All Variables**

Scale	1	2	3	4	5
1. Total work-family conflict	–				
2. Total family-work conflict	-.48**				
3. Total family satisfaction	-.44**	-.20*	–		
4. Total work satisfaction	-.28**	-.15	.50**	–	
5. Total psychological distress	.40**	.03	-.54**	-.53**	–

\*  $p < 0.05$  (2-tailed) \*\*  $p < 0.01$  (2-tailed)

**RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS**

The objective of the present study was to assess the impact of Work Life Balance on the wellbeing of mother working women in the private

and public sector of Kolkata city. This study focused on assessing how the variables like- work-family conflict, family-work conflict, work satisfaction, family satisfaction related to each other in order to establish the relationship between Work Life Balance and wellbeing of individuals.

Work-family conflict was the first variable defining individuals' Work Life Balance. Work and family literature indicates that work-family conflict occurs when work activities interfere with family activities. Netemeyer et al. (1996, p.401) described work-family conflict as "a form of inter role conflict in which the general demands of, time devoted to, and strain created by the job interfere with performing family-related responsibilities". The present study proposed that work-family conflict will be negatively related to family satisfaction and work satisfaction, and positively related to psychological distress.

The hypothesis was supported, and the correlation between the two variables in the present study was  $r = -.44$ . These results suggest that the more work-family conflict is experienced by individuals the less satisfied they are with their family lives. This happens because participation in one domain makes it more difficult to participate in a second domain (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Greenhaus & Shaw, 2003; Greenhaus, J.H., 2008).

Clark (2004) argued that work and family domains are the most important elements of everyone's life. Any competing demands of work and family life will cause conflict and negatively affect the wellbeing of workers (Frone, 2000, Frone, 2003; Clark, 2004). These findings implied that employees experiencing higher levels of work-family conflict seemed to be less satisfied with their family lives. This was supported in this study.

It was proposed in the present study that there will be negative relationship between work-family conflict and work satisfaction. This hypothesis was supported, and the correlation between the two variables was  $r = -.28$ . These findings indicate that the more work-family conflict is experienced by individuals the less satisfied they are with their work. This suggests that work-related duties, amount of time spent at work, and strain produced by work demands and pressure had negative effects on the participants.

This study proposed that work-family conflict will be positively correlated with psychological distress. This hypothesis was supported, and the correlation between the two variables was  $r = .40$ . This result indicates that the more work-family conflict is experienced by individuals the more psychological distress will be observed. These findings suggest that participants who experienced higher levels of work-family conflict caused by higher degrees of work pressure and demands, and longer time spent in employment, reported higher degrees of, concentration problems, sleeping problems, higher levels of unhappiness, strain, and lack of confidence.

Findings from the current study support previous research examining positive relationships between work-family conflict and poor psychological health. (Hill, 2005 & Frone et al., 1997)

## CONCLUSION

Findings from the present study are important to both employees and employers in terms of a deeper understanding of Work-Life Balance and its effects on people's wellbeing, which consequently affects organisations' productivity and performance. The present study found that the main causes of work-family conflict among the participants were excessive workload caused by a reduced number of staff, and long working hours necessary to complete their allocated tasks. Apart from these long working hours, as well as work schedule inflexibility increase work-family conflict. The results of this study show negative relationships between poor Work-Life-Balance and individuals' wellbeing, in particular negative impacts of work-family conflict on levels of work satisfaction, family satisfaction and psychological health. Lower levels of work satisfaction can lead to employees' higher dissatisfaction with the employer, lower commitments and productivity.

## Limitations of the Research

This study used a convenience sampling method, which is the easiest and the cheapest to conduct and can provide interesting data, but it is the least reliable. Considering the various categories of employers in the private sector chosen for this study to gather data, and the sample size, the findings from this study are relevant to the sample population,

and may not be generalise to the entire employment in private sector in Kolkata city.

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