

Factors influencing Work Life Conflict among working women in Chennai, India



Management

KEYWORDS : Work life conflict, working women, work life balance, India.

Dr. K.R.Sowmya

Associate Professor, Department of Management studies, Rajalakshmi engineering college, Chennai – 602105.

ABSTRACT

Work life conflict means the imbalance between work and family. The researcher has made an attempt to study about the work life conflict faced by the working women in the most predominant city named Chennai in India. The present economic scenario has created the demand for women also to work definitely. The housewives are almost diminishing these days as per the situational. They become victims to the pressure of working and as an outcome they are forced to sacrifice the rewards that they receive at home because of the rewards that they get from the work. The researcher has targeted any women with minimal educational background fit enough to answer a questionnaire to even the CEOs of certain important companies for this particular study. Exploratory factor analysis was exploited to identify the factors influencing work life conflict faced by women working in any organization. The study has identified three factors causing workplace conflict.

I. Introduction

Work and life balance of working women is not an easy possibility irrespective of countries. Work-family conflict is a form of work-life conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respects according to Edwards and Rothbard (2000); and Greenhaus and Beutell (1985). It is necessary for two people to work in present days to face the economic conditions. Thereby the women also are forced to take up a job irrespective of its nature, pay, shifts, working hours etc. In this process an imbalance occurs between balancing such characteristics of job taken and leads to lot of compromises in the family life. When such imbalance occurs it becomes a conflicting situation leading to a tight spot in choice of priorities ultimately leading to stress and unhappiness of the affected individual.

Increased work load, work related pressure in life, life related pressure in work are some causes of stress occurring in form of work life conflict.

II. Review of Literature

Several studies have been done on work life balance and work life conflict across sectors and countries. This study has been attempted by the researcher based on one major study from Malaysia that tested several variables that were analysed using bivariate and multivariate analysis. The researcher has made an attempt to study work life conflict in the Indian context based on the Malaysian study. However study by Irwan et al(2011) has done a detailed study with respect to the demographic variables and work life conflict. Unlike that this study will concentrate upon the factors influencing the work life conflict faced by working women alone in Indian Context.

Irwan Nadzif Mahpul & Nor Azaian Abdullah(2011) have done a detailed study among working mothers in Malaysia. The objective of this study was to examine the relationship between perceived work-family conflict and socio-demographic and family characteristics of the mothers. Data were obtained from 801 currently working mothers (with at least having one child) who were between 15 and 49 years old in Peninsular Malaysia interviewed in the Fourth Malaysian Population and Family Survey (MPFS-4), 2004. The result of this study showed that ethnicity, age and employment are the main factors contributing to the prevalence of work-family conflict. However, no significant relationship was noticed between the prevalence of conflict and the studied family characteristics, namely, number of children, childcare arrangement and presence of children aged 7 to 24 years.

III. Methodology

The data was collected through primary and secondary sources for the present study using a structured questionnaire. Non – probability convenience sampling method was used to choose the respondents from Chennai for the study. A sixteen item scale using five point likert scales was exploited for the study to study

the work life conflict faced by working women employees. The developed scale was tested for its validity and found the Cronbach alpha value as 0.895.

IV. Analysis and Discussion

Explorative factor analysis was exploited on the 16 item scale to reduce the number of statements and also to measure the validity of the scale and the statements. Principle component analysis and varimax method is used for extraction of factors and rotation respectively. In order to find out the sample adequacy for conducting factor analysis KMO Barlett's test was suitable. The value 0.808 indicates that 81 percent of the total variables are caused by the underlying factor. Finally the set of statements were categorized into three factors as follows based on the factor loadings and named according to the type of the statements as time, strain and behavior.

Factor 1: Time

The first factor influencing work life conflict was identified as time. It was tested by 6 statements and its values are as follows. "devotion to work keeps me away from home – 0.705", "I am missing my family activities too much due to work pressure-0.685", "my work keeps me away from family -0.713", "time spent with my family interferes with work – 0.515", "I am missing my work activities as I am involved with my family – 0.687", "My family time disturbs my work – 0.700". The statements discussed above represented by its respective factor loadings reveals the work conflict faced by women in terms of time imbalance between work and life. Factor loading for work life conflict based on time varies from 0.713 to 0.515.

Factor 2 :Strain

The next sets of statements were grouped into five and were named a factor called strain based on the nature of the statements. The statements tested were "I am often stressed from family responsibilities so I cannot concentrate on my work-0.804", "Due to stress at home I am preoccupied with family matters at work -0.885", "Tension and anxiety from my family life often weakens my ability to do my job -0.665", "I am often so emotionally drained due to work that it prevents me from contributing to my family -0.550", "Due to pressure at work, at home I am too stressed to do the things I enjoy – 0.504". The second factor contains five statements with respective factor loadings from 0.504 to 0.885. Each statement contributed to the main aspect called strain.

Factor 3 - Behavior

The last remaining set of 5 statements "The behaviors that work for me at home do not seem to be effective at work -0.707", "The problem solving behavior that works for me at home does not seem to be as useful at work-0.814", "Behaviors that are effective and necessary for me at home would be counterproductive at work-0.554", "The behaviors that work for me effective at work do not help me to be a better parent and spouse-0.720", "The problem solving behavior I use in my job is not effective

in resolving problems at home-0.503". These statements represented the behavioural factor influencing the work life conflict of working women in Chennai.

V.Conclusion

The above study has therefore found three factors influencing work life conflict based on the nature of the statements. The working women of present days are able to withstand pressure to a great extent. But still they are at the compulsion to compromise their happiness to a great extent in their personal living. Most of the women feel going early to office in the morning, leaving their children in the day care centers, cooking for self and family members, preparing children to school, taking care of sudden medical problems, face problems such as these. These problems have been accepted as part and parcel of the daily living of working women. Our Indian culture does not provide definite holidays on Saturdays unlike US,UK etc. The working time followed by our Indian companies also are not accurate as followed by Foreign countries, neither do we have work from home options in our country. Although globalization and liberalization has brought in several differences in our life style, and culture still we lack the real peace in terms of balanc-

ing between work and life. People of Chennai women or men unlike people of Bangalore and Hyderabad do less socializing like going to weekend parties, Pubs etc.

MNCs have come into most of the sectors these days in our country but not in our practices of living. We still are deprived of such broad mindedness in balancing our work and life. Assertiveness in expressing whatever we feel, Possessiveness and selfishness in terms of family peace only will definitely lead to never-ending happiness of the working professionals. Moreover, our Indian culture still is under confusion about the equality of men and women in all aspects. However, it may be relaxed in terms of the working time of the Indian companies keeping in mind that the woman makes the family a peaceful place to live for all including man.

Work and life is a very simple, and a sensible concept which lies in the hand of human beings itself. The employer should have enough empathy to keep its employees happy in order to have smiling and happy women around and thereby a happy family environment for all.

REFERENCE

Edwards & Rothbard, (2000): Mechanisms Linking Work and Family: Clarifying the Relationship Between Work and Family Constructs. *Academy of Management Review*, 25(1): 178-199. | Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985. Sources of Conflict between Work and Family Roles. *Academy of Management Review* 10: 76-88.