Work-Family Conflict, Family-Work Conflict as Predictors of Work-Life Balance among Women Employees Working in IT Industries

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DOI: 10.26573/2016.10.2.3
Volume 10, *Number* 2
May 2016, *pp.* 101-111

The purpose of the study is to explore the impact of the work-family conflict and family-work conflict on the work-life balance of women employees working in Information technology industries located in Bengaluru Regression analysis was used to test the proposed hypothesis. The research finding says that the work-family conflict is having a significant impact on work-life balance and it is impacting the work-life balance of the women employees working in IT industries in a negative manner whereas the family-work conflict is not having any significant impact on work-life balance.

Keywords*:* Work-life conflict, Family-work conflict, Work-life balance

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction to Work-life Balance

Work-life balance gained importance in the recent past, especially in the developing countries. Work-life balance affects both, male and female. In case of females married women are the most affected by the issue of work-life balance since they have to play multiple roles and it becomes difficult for them to strike a perfect balance between work and family. The expression of work-life balance was first used in the middle of 1970s to describe the balance between an individual's work and personal life. Working women in the early 1970's, raised the issue of work-life balance in the UK. In the early 1990's work-life balance was considered one of the main human resource management issues (Bird, 2006).Thus, the concept of work-life balance has become a key issue for social and economic policy makers, employers and social researchers. The concept of work-life balance emerged due to the high performance culture of the organization which demands more from its employees.

1.2 Work-Life Balance and Women Employees Working in IT Sector

Women IT professionals are challenged by the demands of work as well as their families. The winds of change have touched them in their career roles, but they remain untouched in their domestic roles. Working women have to perform the juggling act which includes multiple responsibilities at work, heavy meeting schedules, business trips and managing the daily routine responsibilities of life and home. Women in IT industries are torn between these seemingly irreconcilable commitments to work and family. Research studies in the past in the area of work-

life balance focused on the aspects like role stress, burnout, role conflicts, job satisfaction, etc. Examination of published works revealed that even though several studies were conducted mainly in developed countries and a few developing countries about the work-life balance issues faced by women-(Wendy C. Marcinkus, 2006; Susan Michie,2006; Jake Messersmith, 2007) in USA,(Khairunneezam Mohd Noor, 2011) in Malaysia, (Susanna Lo,2003) in Hong Kong, (Noreen Heraty, 2008) in Ireland, (Liz Doherty,2004 & Gail Kinman, 2007;) in UK, to name a few such studies. The above mentioned studies talk about the work-life balance issues in general and few studies talk about the work-life balance issues faced by traditional women. The studies pertaining to this topic done in India are limited in number-(Mohsin Aziz, 2004), (Sunetra Bhattacharya, 2007), (Divya D, 2010), Ujvala Rajadhyaksha, 2004), (Varatharaj, 2012), (Sakthivel Rani, 2011), (Rincy V. Mathew & N. Panchanatham, 2011), (Reimara Valk & Vasanthi Srinviasan, 2011) to name a few. Williams & Alliger, 1994) found that work interfered with family more than family interfered with work in a study of 41 full time working parents (13 men and 28 women). In a study of Taiwanese managers, (Hsieh, et al.,2005) it was found that very few Taiwanese managers had difficulty balancing work and personal lives and work interfered with personal life more frequently than personal life did with the work. The HOST model of work-life balance proposed by Subhash Sharma (2006) suggests that in order to achieve a work-life balance there should be a harmony between transactional, transformational and transcendental modes which are nothing but the manifestation of home, office, society and temple. Even the few published studies done in India deal with few aspects like stress, burnout, role overload, time management, etc. and its impact on work life balance, hence there is a need to understand and analyze antecedent factors that aid the work life balance as well as those which hinder the work-life balance. There is also a requirement to find out the relationship of these antecedent factors and its consequences on aspects like turnover, job satisfaction and life satisfaction.

As the work-life balance of women working in IT industries depends on various factors, this study tries to capture the aspect of work life balance by analyzing the impact of constructs work-family conflict and family-work conflict on the work-life balance of women employees working in IT industries.

1.3 Concept of Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance doesn't mean equal balance. It varies over a period of time. The right balance for you today will probably be different for you tomorrow. Work-life balance is a satisfaction and good functioning at home and work with a minimum role conflict (Clark, 2000). The most widely accepted definition of work-life balance is the lack of conflict between the work and family roles (Frone, 2003).However the absence of conflict alone will not capture the positive aspects that contribute to the work-family balance. (Clark, 2001) gave a comprehensive definition of work-life balance which uses psychological constructs containing several dimensions of work-life balance. Clark proposed five dimensions of work-life balance: work satisfaction, family satisfaction, work functioning, family functioning and role conflict. To summarize, it is clearly evident that the various perspectives regarding the work-life balance in the literature, although differ from each other; they depict a common definition of work-life balance that is nothing but a successful management and juggling of multiple roles.

1.4 Concept of Work-Family Conflict

Work family conflict has been described by (Kahn et al., 1964) as a form of inter-role conflict in which demands of the work role conflict with the demands from the family role. Work-family conflict, occurs when "the participation in a work activity interferes with participation in a competing family activity" (Frone et al., 1997).

1.5 Concept of Family-Work Conflict

Family-work conflict occurs when family and work responsibilities are mutually incompatible (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Limited definitions of family-work conflict are found in the work and family literature, as a large number of studies have focused exclusively on work-to-family effects (Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux, & Brinley, 2005).

2. Research Methodology

2.1 Bengaluru and IT Industries

Women in India have played a significant role in all walks of life. The contribution of the women to the economic growth of the nation can be ascertained by the number of women joining the workforce, especially in the Information technology sector. Women of modern India have opportunities and qualifications to be highly successful in the professional world. Today's women are willing to put extra hours in order to excel in their careers. At the same time, many feel that they are not devoting adequate time and energy to their families. Today's career oriented women face the challenge of juggling act that includes multiple responsibilities at work and managing the daily routine responsibilities of life and home. The study focused on the Information technology companies in and around Bangalore, which has emerged as the hub of offshore software development centers were both subsidiaries of MNCs and large campuses of Indian companies thrive. Bengaluru's IT industry is divided into two main cluster Electronics city and Whitefield. The exact number of employees working in IT sector in Bengaluru has not been known since the Industry has comprised employees from informal sector and contract worker. A focus group study was conducted, which consisted of twenty women employees working in IT sector to deliberate on the aspects of work-life balance and the various work related factors affecting it. The present study includes both exploratory phase and a descriptive phase. In the exploratory phase a thorough examination of the related literature was done. These studies cover a range of topics such as work-life conflict, work-life balance, and its association with facilitating factors and theoretical frameworks pertaining to work-life balance. The present study portrays the various characteristics of women employees working in IT industries at Bangalore and tries to assess the work-life conflict, family-work conflict and its relationship with demographic and perceptual factors of women working in IT industries. The study is confined to the IT companies located in and around the city of Bangalore, Karnataka. Accordingly universe of this research consists of all women employees working in IT industries located at Bangalore Electronic city, with employee strength of 1000 and above of which 20per cent are women.

2.2 Sampling Procedure

Sampling procedure used for the study was multistage sampling. Initially the geographical location of Bangalore (Electronics City) was selected, followed by

selecting the sample IT companies based on their workforce. IT companies with employee strength of 1000 and above was shortlisted based on the data provided by NASSCOM, Bangalore, out of which companies having more than 20 % of women in their workforce were only considered. The HR Departments of the respective companies were contacted and the respondents were randomly selected based on the list provided by them by using a simple random sampling technique (Lottery method). The name of the companies has not been revealed as per the request of the companies. Only those respondents who have already served for more than 2 years in the organization were included in the study.

2.3 Sample Size

The guidelines (Allreck & Settle, 2004) which states that for a survey research if the population is 10,000 or more usually a sample size of between 200 to 1000 respondents are considered adequate by most experienced researchers to give reasonable results along with the sample size selected in similar studies were used as a basis for sample size selection. A total of 500 questionnaires were distributed and out of which only 353 responses were received, yielding a response rate of 70% which is better than the rate of similar studies. On further examination 45 responses were found to be incomplete. So for all practical purposes the sample size used for analysis is 308.

The sample size was determined based on aspects such as

- The budgetary constraints,
- The time limitation,
- sample size taken in similar studies,
- The adequacy for statistical tests and adequacy of numbers obtained from all sub-samples in the population under consideration.

The survey instrument/questionnaire was designed and developed after an extensive literature review, close consultation with experts in the area of work–life balance area (both practitioners and researchers) and inputs from two focus group discussions

2.4 Measures

Multiple item scale was adapted from previous research for the study. Table I and Table II set out the scales and items used in the study and the Cronbach alpha coefficients for each.

Table 1 *Multi Item Scale for Measuring Work-Life Balance*

Work-Life Balance items (Dex &Bond, 2005)	**Cronbach Alpha**
Because the job demands it, I usually work long hours	**0.912**
There isn't much time to socialize/relax with my partner/see family in the week	
I have to take work home most evenings	
I often work late or at weekends to deal with paperwork without interruptions	
Relaxing and forgetting about work issues is hard to do	
I worry about the effect of work stress on my health	
My relationship with my partner is suffering because of the pressure or long hours of my work	
My family are missing out on my input, either because I don't see enough of them/am too tired	
Finding time for hobbies, leisure activities, or to maintain friendships and extended family relationships is difficult	

Table 2 *Multi Item Scale for Measuring Work-Family, Family-Work Conflict*

Work-Family Conflict (Netemeyer., et al., 1996)	**Cronbach Alpha**
The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life.	**0.913**
Because of my job, I can't involve myself as much as I would like in maintain close relations with my family or spouse/partner.	
Things I want to do at home do not get done because of the demands my job puts on me.	
I often have to miss important family activities because of my job.	
There is a conflict between my job and the commitments and responsibilities I have to my family or spouse/partner.	
Family-Work Conflict (Netemeyer., et al., 1996)	**Cronbach Alpha**
The demands of my family or spouse/partner interfere with work-related activities.	**0.919**
I sometimes have to miss work so that family responsibilities are met.	
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.	
There is a conflict between my job and the commitments and responsibilities I have to my family or spouse/partner.	

Table 1 and Table 2 show the Cronbach alpha values ranges from 0.912 to 0.919, which falls in the acceptable range.

2.5 Hypothesis

Hypothesis H1 proposed that the 'WLB of women working in IT industries is associated with their perception of work -family conflict experienced by them'.
The corresponding null hypothesis **H1o** states that **'**WLB of women working in IT industries is not associated with their perception of work-family conflict experienced by them'

Hypothesis H2 proposed that **'**the WLB of women working in IT industries is associated with their perception of family-work conflict experienced by them.

'The corresponding null hypothesis **H2o** states that **'**WLB of women working in IT industries is not associated with their perception of family-work conflict experienced by them'

2.5.1 Factor Analysis of Multi Item Scale to Measure Work-Family Conflict and Family-Work Conflict

In order to assess the validity of the constructs, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy (MSA) was first computed to determine the suitability of using factor analysis. The MSA was found to be 0.920 which is greater than 0.5, so the factor analysis is appropriate in this case. Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant at 2436.899 at degrees of freedom df of 45, and hence the data can be subjected to factor analysis.

Table 3 *Factor Analysis of Multi Item Scale to Measure Work-Family Conflict and Family-Work Conflict*

Variables	Factor 1	Factor 2
WFC1	.257	**.760**
WFC2	.349	**.840**
WFC3	.317	**.839**
WFC4	.262	**.763**
WFC5	.394	**.805**
FWC1	**.788**	.374
FWC2	**.786**	.288
FWC3	**.832**	.244
FWC4	**.833**	.312
FWC5	**.803**	.387
Initial Eigen values	6.330	1.197
per cent of Variance	63.301	11.972
Cumulative per cent	63.301	75.274
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged in 3 iterations		

Principal component analysis using varimax rotation was performed and all the three factors have been considered, since all the factors have eigenvalues greater than 1.0. .The total variance explained by these three factors was 75.274 per cent (Refer Table 3).

Table 4 *Reliability of Work-life Balance, Work-Family and Family-Work Conflict Scales*

Dimensions	No. of Items	Cronbach Alpha
Work-Life Balance	Nine Items	0.912
Work-Family Conflict	Five Items	0.913
Family-Work Conflict	Five Items	0.919

The multi-item scales have been subjected to reliability and validity tests by the researcher. Cronbach alpha, which is a measure of reliability based on internal consistency of the constructs used have been calculated for all the multi-item variables as recommended by (Hair et al., 1998). Only those items having a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.7 or more have been used for measurement in this study.

Content validity has been ensured by adopting the measures of the constructs from prior studies based on well accepted theoretical background and the consultation with experts during the pre-testing stage. The cogency of the constructs were established through factorial validity test involving factor analysis.

A multiple regression analysis was done to test the proposed hypothesis with Family to work conflict, Work-family conflict as independent variables, and work-life balance as a dependent variable. The results of the analysis are shown in table.4

Table 5 *Results of the Multiple Regression Analysis with Work-Life Balance (WLB) as Dependent Variable' FWC, WFC as Independent Variable*

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	Unstandardised Coefficient		Standardised Coefficient	t	Sig
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
WORK-LIFE BALANCE	(Constant)	4.834	.134		36.097	.000
	FWC	-.049	.057	-.054	-.862	.390
	WFC	-.500	.057	-.553	-8.752	.000

General

F	**82.294**
R	.592
R^2	.350
	P value < 0.05

The result from the regression analysis shows that the null hypothesis **H1o** is rejected as the significance level or the p-value of the t-test from the regression output is less than 0.05. Thus the hypothesis **H1** is supported, which means the construct work-family conflict is having a significant impact on work-life balance and it is impacting the work-life balance of the women employees working in IT industries in a negative manner.

The t-test from the regression output shows that the null hypothesis **H2o** is not accepted as the significance or the p-value of the t-test is more than 0.05. Thus the hypothesis **H2** is not supported, which means the construct family-work conflict is not having any significant impact on work-life balance.

An examination of the t-tests for significance of independent variable shows that the *Work-Family Conflict* (WFC) with a beta value of -0.553 is significant at 95 per cent confidence level since the significance value is less than 0.05. The effect of this variable is negative on work-life balance. A negative association indicates that as the level of work-family conflict increases the outcome i.e. work-life balance decreases. This may be due to the factor that in IT industries, workplace factors like work-overload, lack of job autonomy, supervisory and colleagues support contributes to work-family conflict, which is the main source of stress among the women working in IT companies. The supervisor has to pay more attention to the above mentioned factors as they are the main contributors for the work family conflict. Findings from various research studies suggest that work-family conflict is more prevalent than family-work conflict. The managers should be in a position to differentiate between FWC and WFC since each of these conflicts needs unique intervention. (Gutek et al., 1991) in his study found that people perceived less family interference with work than work interference with family. The independent variable *Family-Work Conflict*

(FWC) with a beta value of -.054 is seen not to have any significant effect on work-life balance.

3. Findings and Implications

The main aim of the study was to identify the relationship between the bidirectional conflicts and its impact on the work-life balance of women working in information technology industries. From the study it was observed that the work interfered with family more than family interfered with work which has been supported by various studies conducted in this area earlier. There can be many knock on effects for organizations in many areas as a result of employees experiencing work-family conflict. Work-family conflict has been found to be associated with decreased employee job satisfaction increased staff turnover and absenteeism, lower performance and increased job stress levels and intention to leave the organization. According to a major Canadian study conducted by Lowe (2005), 1 in 4 employees experience high levels of conflict between work and family, based on work-to-family interference and caregiver strain.

As more and more women are joining the IT workforce, they have to confront problems like long working hours, lack of job security, lack of supervision, co-workers, and social support, work demands or overload, work-role conflict, work-role ambiguity, job dissatisfaction. All these factors and extensive use of communication technology have contributed to the high level of work-family conflict among the women workforce.

The findings clearly indicated that work-life balance issues were of major concern to the women employees working in IT industries. Furthermore, it was found that high job involvement, job demands, lack of career opportunities were some of the sources of dissatisfaction which led to high levels of work-family conflict which in turn has contributed to work-life imbalance among women working in IT industries.

The IT companies have to address the issue of work-family in a more holistic manner, examining both the immediate and long-term consequences for employees as well as the organization else women employees who are currently working with the organization might transmit a negative image of the company to their acquaintances and to potential applicants, hence the organizations must become fully aware of the issues of work-life balance of women employees and act upon it.

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