

Work-Family Conflicts: Relationship between Work-Life Conflict and Employee Retention – A Comparative Study of Public and Private Sector Employees

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ABSTRACT

Work-family conflict is an inter role conflict that arises due to conflicting roles required by organization and from one's family. This issue is of great importance as far as employee's performance and ultimately organizational performance is concerned. Sometimes severe contradictory roles resulted in turnover of most precious asset of the organization that is human resource. In this paper, relationship between work family conflict (WFC), family work conflict (FWC) and turnover intentions of employees in three public and three private sector organizations from services sector of Pakistan is investigated. This study is based on primary data. SPSS is used to investigate the data with the help of descriptive and regression analysis. This study found positive but insignificant relationship between work-family conflict (WFC), family-work conflict (FWC) and turnover intention of employees. Both public and private sector employees are neutral regarding these variables.

Keywords: Work-Family Conflict (WFC), Family-Work Conflict (FWC), Turnover intention

1.0 INTRODUCTION

There is continuous change in the organizations as well as individuals' life. Meeting all these changes is difficult for both employees and organizations, so there are increasing issues for both employees and organizations as they have to reconcile these matters. These changes create work-family conflicts that have implication for both employee and organization because work family conflict spillover creates disturbance in both domains (work and family). So if family and work life of an employee is disturbed or he has conflicting roles to be performed, then ultimate performance of the employee and organization is affected. So this issue is of great importance for both employee and organization as a whole. Work-family conflict means a inter role conflict which arises due to incompatible roles in work and family domain (Carmeli, 2003). Work-family conflict has two dimensions; work-to-family conflict (WFC) represent workplace issues interfering family (taking work home) and family-to-work conflict (FWC) means home issues interrupt work (e.g. childcare issue at work). Human being is most precious asset of an organization because all other assets are dependent on human beings for their proper utilization. So nowadays organizations are focusing on capturing talented human capital and great efforts are made to retain that talented human capital. Employee turnover is a major problem for a organization because it costs a lot on employee turnover (Lucas et al., 1987; Soon et al., 2005). One major cause of employee intention to leave the organization is work family conflict. Therefore organizations are devising family-friendly policies for their employee to retain them.

Work family conflict is a common problem faced by majority of employees and results in negative outcomes such as fatigue, absenteeism at work and turnover intentions. Work family conflict arises from work and family related factors. Some of work related factors are working shifts, sudden transfer, frequent overtime, and working hour changes which increase conflict risk (Nicole, 2003). This study is designed to examine the relationship of work-family conflict (WFC), family-work conflict (FWC) as independent variable and employee retention as dependent variable among public and private sector employee of Pakistan. This comparative study is very helpful for public

and private sector organizations to determine the significance of linkage between family work conflict and employee retention.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Work-Family Conflict (WFC)

Work-family conflict means a conflict of work and family interrelated roles. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) stated that work family conflict occur when contribution in work role creates problems in contribution of family role. He said that work-family conflict could arise from tough time demands, stress originated in one role spillover to other role disturbing the quality of life, and behaviors that were appropriate in one domain but are considered as inappropriate in other domain. When demands from family and work were equally mismatched and meeting demands of one field created difficulties in meeting demands of other field, it led to work-family conflict (Bruke & Greenglass, 1987; Gary, 1991). Work-family conflict resulted in psychological disturbances in employees. Piotrkowski (1979) focused on the psychological and structural interference as working long hours at work will lose employee's energy at home. He studied that how the work family conflict and work family facilities affected the mental health of the working adults and explained what was work family fit. According to (Burke, Weir & DuWors, 1980) the wives of the senior administrators perceived that their husbands' occupational demands are affecting their home such as stress on communicating. Impact of work-family conflict was studied among working women in Taiwan and findings showed that work-family conflict was strongly linked with lower job and family satisfaction, greater stress and more severe physical ailments (Lu, 2007). Mental health can be disturbed due to minor differences in the work family understanding. Researchers found consistent positive relationship between long working hours, work load and work-family conflict (Pleck et al., 1980; Keith & Schafer, 1980).

Negative affectivity (NA) is an individual's tendency to experience high levels of subjective distress, depression, nervousness, anxiety, and feelings of anger, contempt, disgust, and fear. Stoeva et al. (2002) studied the relationship between NA and work-family conflict among 148 senior civil servants in Hong Kong. NA resulted in job and family stress. Job stress led to work-to-family conflict while family stress led to family-to-work conflict. They found that high-NA individuals experience more work-to-family conflict and more family-to-work conflict than low-NA individuals. According to a study conducted in Toronto, Canada, home to work conflict was positively associated with anxiety and depression among employed males and females, and the effects of home-to-work conflict were felt by both males and females, females tend to experience greater anxiety associated with spillover than did men-even after statistically controlling for a range of both non-work-related and work-related conditions and it also revealed that conflict and distress were strongly associated among people with independent jobs, among women with routine jobs and among men in harmful environment (Schieman et al., 2003).

National survey of post secondary faculty conducted in 1988 examined the length of workweek and analyzed its relationship to faculty dissatisfaction with work overload. The authors concluded that many professors were dissatisfied due to heavy workload and dissatisfaction increased with long working hours but long hours spent on job also increased research productivity. Faculty did work for long hour because they were expected to increase research productivity. While high level of work-family conflict resulted in low level of performance and decreased family and occupational well being (Kinnunen & Mauno, 1998). These long hours at job, results in work-family conflict. The main challenge is to set potential work standards for employees in academic sector that are well-matched with their family life. Work and family is compatible when work demands and expectations are not excessive. There are two views regarding faculty workload. According to Optimistic view, devotion to work is self-imposed because they love their work. According to the alternative view, professors feel themselves trapped into excessive institutional and professional expectations (Jacobs & Winslow, 2004). Work-family spillover means the extent to which engagement in one area (family/organizational work) affect the engagement in other area (organizational work/family). There is positive and negative work-family spillover. Various types of work-family conflict and interference are negative spillover (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Small & Riley, 1990). On the other

hand, good work-family balance and success (Milkie & Peltola, 1999; Moen & Yu, 1999) and resource enhancement were positively established (Kirchmeyer, 1992).

Parasuraman and Simmers (2001) studied that how work and family role features affected work-family conflict. He also studied indicators of psychological well being among males and females workers who are self employed or organizationally employed. In that study, employment type and gender were independent variables. They concluded that as compared to the organizational employees, self employed employees enjoy more self-sufficiency, and flexible working hours which leads to more job involvement and job satisfaction however they also experience more work-life conflict and less family satisfaction. Grzywacz et al. (2002) stated in his research on work-family spillover and daily reports of work and family stress in adult labor force that female workers reported higher level of positive spillover from work to family than did males. They test hypothesis regarding the distribution of work-family spillover by social structural context. Education was only attached with one type of work-family spillover and proved that less rather than more; education was associated with less negative spillover from work to family. In a research conducted on two hundred three teachers to see relationship of work-family culture, work-family conflict, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), Pearson correlations indicated that there was negative relation of OCB and work-family conflict while OCB was positively related with work family culture, job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Work-family culture indicated both organizational commitment and OCB, and that organizational commitment did not settle the relationship between work family culture and OCB. The findings were helpful for schools to foster a positive work-family culture (Bragger et al., 2005).

In order to reduce dissatisfaction and stress resulted from work-family conflict among employees, many factors are identified from the previous researches. According to (Mc-Croskey, 1982) work place helped employees to coordinate between work family roles by:

1. Organizational culture: by providing supportive and friendly culture to balance both work and family life of their employees (Mc-Croskey, 1982; Ontario women's directorate, 1991).
2. Supervisor support: as immediate supervisor helps employees to face low level of difficulties by giving less stress in work. Green Berger et al. (1989) demonstrated if immediate supervisor of married mothers with preschool age children are supportive and flexible he/she can provide less strain to them.
3. Family-oriented benefits: according to (Paris, 1989; Raabe & Gessner, 1988) if formal benefits are provided to employees that will help them to coordinate between work-family responsibilities to lower work-family role strain. Family-friendly policies and increased organizational support help working women to manage work family conflict and their health outcomes.

Person-environment fit revealed that good fit of individual within organizational culture resulted in less work-life conflict and more employees' satisfaction (Chatmans, 1991). Values determined the meaning that work holds for individuals, so the critical component of employee experience at work was the degree to which their work organization helped or hindered individual value attainment. Work family facilities are protective factors which eliminate the affect of work family conflict on mental health of adults and it is when work family facilities are higher than the work family conflicts (Piotrkowski, 1979). The use of family-friendly policies, number of hours worked per week, and supervisor support were predictive of work-family conflict (Frye & Breugh, 2004). Significance of work-life conflict has been proved from previous researches that work-life conflict is present in most situations than do family-work conflict and work domain is found to be major determinant of the work life conflict so employer must be aware of the practices and issues which might lead to such conflict. Warner (2005) stated the work life conflict was more significant.

2.2 Family-Work Conflict (FWC)

Family work conflict means the conflict arises when meeting of family demands by an individual creates disturbance in his/her work-life. Work-life conflict significantly depends on what are the individual's core values regarding the roles they have to perform in work and family areas. Work-family conflict is a two dimensional construct; work to family conflict arises when work interrupt family life and family to work conflict arise when family interrupt work. (Frone, 2000). Pleck (1979) found work-family interference to be related with family and

work characteristics such as time spent on child care, family, work demand flexibility, working hours and it was higher in parents. Keith and Schafer's (1980) stated that sources of work-family role strain among people with job and families were working hours per week, number of children, and their age. Employed parents faced many difficulties especially employed mothers with children having preschool age in coordinating work family needs (Friedman, 1987; Hughes & Galinsky, 1988). Employed mothers with children having preschool age were in greater work and family role strain than the males and more attention was being given to what work place can do to solve work-family problems (Greenberger et al., 1989). Voydanoff (1982) stated that the presence of children had relationship with work-family interference but not spouse employment. Netemeyer et al. (1996) found that there was correlation between number of children at home and family-work conflict. Grandey and Cropanzano (1999) also reported a positive correlation ($r=.45$) between these two variables. Meglino and Ravlin (1998) stated that individuals were dissatisfied if they were unable to perform or behave according to their values in family and work areas as compared to other individuals who were able to behave according to their values in family and work areas. Several organizations are using family-friendly policies to overcome or reduce role conflict. According to Thompson et al. (1999) work-family conflict was reduced due to availability of family-friendly policies (e.g., flexible time and job sharing) and they found that work-family conflict was associated to family benefit use ($r = -.12$) and benefit availability ($r = -.21$). Individuals who work with family-supportive employers were better in family life and had less work-family tradeoffs due to less work-family conflict (Friedman & Greenhaus, 2000). Antecedents of family-work conflict included stress factors such as low spousal support (Erdwins et al., 2001), the number of hours spent on domestic work, and parental demands (Fu & Shaffer, 2001).

If the family values and organizational values of an employee are not severely contrasting, then there is less chances of work-life conflict. Meglino and Ravlin (1998) stated that individuals were dissatisfied if they were unable to perform or behave according to their values in family and work areas as compared to other individuals who were able to behave according to their values in family and work areas. Perrewe and Hochwarter (2001) stated that contrasting values between individual and key family member or between individual and organization caused conflict between family and work demands. Work family conflict resulted in job and life dissatisfaction because such conflict hindered the achievement of essential work and family values. Prosperous career at the expense of successful life away from work was not demanded by mostly employees. Frye and Breugh (2004) conducted a research and test a model for work-family conflict and family-work conflict with independent variables (family-friendly policies, supervisor support, number of hours worked, having childcare responsibilities) and dependent variable (job and family satisfaction). They found that childcare responsibilities and supervisor's support were related to family-work conflict. Work-family conflict was found to be related to both job and family satisfaction. Childcare responsibilities interrupted working schedules hence leads to increased likelihood of work-life conflict.

2.3 Work-Family Conflict and Employee Retention

2.3.1 Employee Retention

Employee retention is one of the crucial issues the modern organizations are facing now a days i.e. skilled labor shortage, high employee turnover, and the fluctuating economic growth. Replacing a long tenured manager was quite visible; however, replacing a manager, particularly a marginally effective one, had positive effects outweighing the cost (Mitchel, 1981). Managers and researchers pay high considerations to turnover as a problem because of the high costs associated with it (Lucas et al., 1987; Soon et al., 2005). Retention is defined as "the ability to hold onto those employees you want to keep, for longer than your competitors" (Johnson, 2000). As the influences of retention can arise in more than one level, so its analysis should not be just at a single level (Klein et al., 1994; Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002; Yammarino & Dansereau, 2004).

Turnover at work place has been paid attention by many researchers (Richer et al., 2002). Kirschenbaum and Weisberg (2002) considered turnover unavoidable. Ling and Phillips (2006) considered increased working hours a cause of work stress and turnover intentions. Similarly (West, 2007) found that the lasting impact of turnover could be quite costly in a number of different ways. Morrell et al (2004) have considered turnover an important issue for organizations. Riley (2006) did not find a significant relationship between work life conflict and turnover intentions. But mostly Organizations are seeking the policies to decrease the turnover rate (Hom & Kinicki, 2001). More flexibility can address the problem of work life balance (Marks & Scholarios, 2001). Improvement of inter-role

conflict is the purpose of flexible work schedules and such flexible schedules also striking to employees especially to those who have challenging demands (Rau & Hyland, 2002).

Hammer et al. (2003) conducted a survey in which withdrawal behaviors were studied due to work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict. This study proved a significant individual level and crossover effects for both types of conflicts and withdrawal behaviors. Results of this study can be used to provide assistance in examining the crossover effects of work-family conflict as a stressor in dual earner couples. This study showed that removing work family conflict experienced by dual earner couple was found to be one possible way to reduce employee departure. the above literature showed that work-family conflict leads to turnover of employees, in order to retain talented workforce, work-family conflict should be reduced.

H: 1 Work and Family Conflict has a significant relation with Employee Retention

2.3.2 Employee Retention and Work-Family Conflict

Researchers have tested the impact of work and family benefits which comprise of flexible schedules, childcare assistance, parental leave, childcare information and parental leave on organization commitment and have shown that there is greater organizational commitment if employees have an easy access to work life policies (Grover & Crooker, 1995). Many of Previous studies showed that today employee's seek a job with value and importance for work-life benefits (McCrory, 1999). Cappelli (2000) has indicated that several factors were considered important and have a direct affect for the well- functioning of employee's retention. They were career opportunities, work environment and work-life balance (Shoaib et al., 2009). A lot of studies have reported the effect of non-work factors such as job stress and exhaustion on workers makes him to shift from the organization and such roles that create job stress, work-family clashes and lead the employee to leave the organization. The personal attributes of the employee, the level of support employees receives at job, the industry norms and the management of these components in the workplace will through its impact on work-family conflicts that can effect job contentment and organizational commitment and ultimately lead to employee turnover (Rowley & Purcell, 2001; Mulvaney et al., 2006; Namasivayam & Zhao, 2007). So work-life balance is necessary to retain employees.

H: 2 Work interprets the family predicts Employee Retention

2.4 Employee Retention and Family- Work Conflict

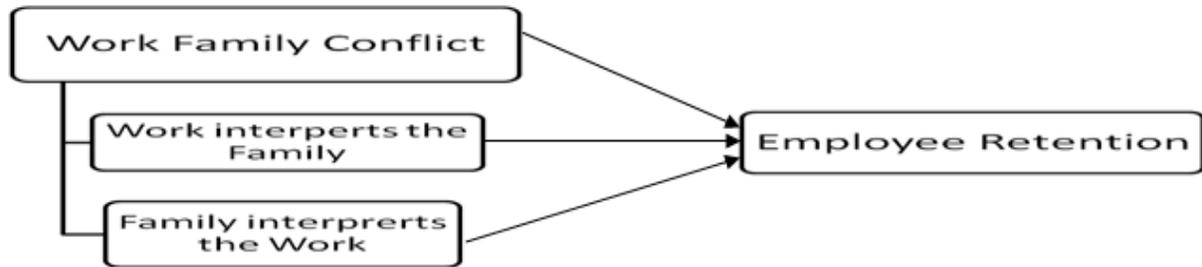
Most effective organizational responses to work family conflict and to turnover are those that combine work family policies with other human resources practices including work redesign and commitment enhancing incentives (Abeysekera, 2007). Organizational benefits and policies must help employees to balance their work and lives (Thompson et al., 2003), e.g. flexible work schedules, dependent care supports. Now companies are becoming more conscious about work and family life balance and are launching more friendly work life policies (Yasbek, 2004) and that work-life balance policies helped in reducing the job stress. While (Hudson, 2005) considered it the antecedent of organizational commitment. An employer should implement such changes in his organization which fulfill the basic policies & requirements of his employees' so that turnover intentions ratio can be decreased easily. Work-Life harmony is a critical business strategy to *reduce employee turnover*, and to improve overall firm performance (Soon et al., 2005). The more the physical/psychological symptoms, and turnover intention, the greater the work-family imbalance reported among participants (Ling & Phillips, 2006).

H: 3 Family interprets the Work predicts Employee Retention

2.5 Hypothesis

- H1: Work and Family Conflict predicts the Employee Retention.
- H2: Work interpreting the Family predicts the Employee Retention.
- H3: Family interpreting the Work predicts the Employee Retention.

2.6 Theoretical Framework



3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this paper, relationship between work-family conflict (WFC), family-work conflict (FWC) and turnover intentions of employees in three public and three private services sector organizations of Pakistan is investigated.

3.1 Population

Population used for the study was all public and private services sector organizations of Punjab region of Pakistan.

3.2 Sampling technique and sample

Multistage sampling was used to select three public and three private organizations from services sector of Pakistan. Firstly, Services sector was selected in Punjab region of Pakistan, then among public and private organizations of services sectors, three public and three private sector organizations were selected by using simple random sampling. Finally among all employees of those organizations, 200 respondents were selected by using simple random sampling technique.

3.3 Instrument used and instrument development

This study was based on primary data¹. Personally administered questionnaire was used as data collection tool. Questionnaire was consisted of 3 major parts containing 14 items. First six questions were used to measure variable “work-family conflict”, next four questions were used to measure variable “family work conflict” and last four questions were used to measure variable “employee retention”. 5 point likert scale was used to rate the responses ranging from (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree). Cronbach’s alpha was 0.66. Data for questions regarding gender, age, marital status and organization name was also recorded.

3.4 Data collection and response rate

¹ References used for our questionnaire are R.E Kopelman, J.H Greenhaus, and T.F Connolly, "A model of work and family inter-role conflict: a construct validation study, OB and Human performances"

200 questionnaires were randomly distributed among employees of these organizations, responses from 150 questionnaires were received hence the response rate was 75%.

3.5 Data analysis tool

SPSS is used to investigate the data with the help of descriptive and regression analysis.

4.0 ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Demographical Statistics

Table 4.1 & Table 4.2 (See Appendix I)

Demographical analysis of our sample is shown in the table 4.1. 30% married males and 2.7% unmarried males were belonged to public sector organizations; while 28% married males and 1.3% unmarried males were belonged to the private sector organizations. 12% married females and 6% unmarried females were belong to the public sector organization; while 14.7% married females and 5.3% unmarried females were belong to the private sector organizations. Table 4.2 contains findings of respondents' age. 33.3% of the respondents were belong to the age group 20-25 years, 30% of the respondents were belonged to group 26-30 years, 14% were belonged to group 31-35 years, 5.3% were belonged to group 36-40 years, 8% were belonged to group 41-45 years, 9.3% were belonged to group 46 years or above.

4.2 Correlation Statistics

Table 4.3 (See Appendix I)

Correlation between which are reported in table 4.3, considering dependent variable (employee retention) and independent variables (work family conflict and family work conflict) is $R=0.45$ while regression coefficient $R^2=0.02$ which means that only 2% of variation in dependent variable (employee retention) is due to independent variables (family work conflict and work family conflict). Remaining 98% variation in dependent variable is due to other factors which are held constant.

4.3 Descriptive Statistics

Table 4.4 (See Appendix I)

Among the sample of 150 public and private sector employees, there was almost neutral response regarding variables work family conflict (3.0400), family work conflict (3.0583) and intention of employee retention (3.2767) because we measured these variables on five likert scale and 3 was for neutral response.

Table 4.5 (See Appendix I)

Group statistics for both public and private sector employees were neutral regarding three variables; WFC, FWC and employee retention. We find insignificant relationship between dependent and independent variable because in ANOVA table significance value is 0.864.

DISCOSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study shows that there a weak relationship between work-family conflict, family-work conflict and employee retention among public and private sector employees of Pakistan. There might be some other factors which have more significant relationship with WFC and FWC (e.g. job satisfaction, organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior) and those factors are held constant in this research. The results revealed that people are not ready to leave their existing jobs even if there is work-family conflict is there. Our findings are contradictory of the previous studies (Noor & Maad, 2008) which stated that there is a positive relationship between work family conflict and turnover intention.

FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

Factors which are held constant in this study and are unexplored are the areas of future research. Our study was conducted at relatively small scale as our sample size is 150 respondents from 3 public and 3 private organizations, future research can be done with increased sample size in different other sectors of Pakistan to enhance and enrich the understanding of the relationship of work-family conflict and turnover intention among Pakistani employees.

Acknowledgements:

The authors acknowledge the support and obliging comments of Mr. Muhammad Farhan Akhtar, and Mr. Khizer Ali, and the anonymous reviewers of this journal.

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Appendix I

Table 4.1

	organization					
	public sector		private sector		Total	
	Count	Table N %	Count	Table N %	Count	Table N %
gender of respondent male marital status married	45	30.0%	42	28.0%	87	58.0%
unmarried	4	2.7%	2	1.3%	6	4.0%
female marital status married	18	12.0%	22	14.7%	40	26.7%
unmarried	9	6.0%	8	5.3%	17	11.3%
Total marital status married	63	42.0%	64	42.7%	127	84.7%
unmarried	13	8.7%	10	6.7%	23	15.3%

Table 4.2

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 20-25	50	33.3	33.3	33.3
26-30	45	30.0	30.0	63.3
31-35	21	14.0	14.0	77.3
36-40	8	5.3	5.3	82.7
41-45	12	8.0	8.0	90.7
46-above	14	9.3	9.3	100.0
Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.3

Correlation R		Regression coefficient	
0.45		0.02	
Model	Standardized coefficients		
	Beta	significance	
WFC	.016	.881	
FWC	-.052	.615	

Table 4.4: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
work_family_conflict	150	1.00	4.50	3.0400	.76038
family_work_conflict	150	1.50	4.75	3.0583	.70795
employee_retention	150	1.25	4.50	3.2767	.56324
Valid N (listwise)	150				

Table 4.5: Group Statistics

organization	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
work_family_conflict public sector	76	2.9912	.72923	.08365
private sector	74	3.0901	.79294	.09218
family_work_conflict public sector	76	2.9605	.64943	.07449
private sector	74	3.1588	.75464	.08772
employee_retention public sector	76	3.3914	.58357	.06694
private sector	74	3.1588	.51944	.06038