

Family Work Conflict among Married Women Employees in Ludhiana: An Empirical Study

Lalita Kumari

Sr. Research Scholar
University Business School,
Guru Nanak Dev University,
Amritsar, Punjab

Abstract

In the complex and dynamic business world with the ever increasing requirements of the work, employees are likely to develop conflict between their work and non-work activities. Family-work conflict (FWC) and work-family conflict (WFC) are more likely to exert negative influences in the family domain, resulting in lower life satisfaction and job satisfaction. Studies have identified several variables that influence the level of WFC and FWC. The aim of this study is to find out about the married women employee's perception of various factors which could lead to FWC. Quota sampling method was followed. Survey was conducted and data was analyzed on the basis of responses provided by 100 respondents. A well structured questionnaire was formulated, which was subjected to pilot testing and re-drafted. The obtained data was analyzed using descriptive, mean and S.D and inferential statistics. Carl Pearson's Correlation was used to find the relationship between the different variables. The result of study may have practical significance for human resource managers especially where married women employed at large extent to improve staff commitment and productivity together with designing their recruitment and retention policies.

Keywords: Work-life balance, Retention policies, Recruitment

Introduction

Women's roles in society have begun to change, especially with the emergence of the women's movement. Despite those changes, barriers that prevent women from working still exist. Not only do men see parenting as fundamentally female, they also see the pursuing of a career as a fundamentally male prerogative.

Social expectation affects the decisions women make about their careers. Society treats women differently. They are subjected to many different demands and are often expected to play several roles that may be conflicting. Caring for a family often means that many work-life conflicts emerge for women. These conflicts are often intensive, and women's response results often in the reduction of employment which in turn leads to a restriction in career opportunities and advancement. The extent to which a woman subordinates her career aspirations to meet her family needs or vice versa depends on such things as her value

systems and priorities, the amount of support she gets from her spouse, the age-based needs of her children, and the support she gets from the organization she works for in terms of flexibility in working hours, and assistance for child care. The work-family conflict is prevalent today mainly due to the increased participation of women in the labour market. The female labour force participation rate had increased from 39.3 percent in 1980 to 46.1 percent in 2010, largely as a result of the educational improvement, as better educated women are more likely than the lesser educated women to be in the labour force. As women continue to have a dominant presence in the workforce, the number of females facing problems in performing different roles, such as the wife, mother, homemaker and employee will inevitably increase. According to Aminah (1997), married working women in Malaysia do experience work-family conflict which was shown to lead significantly to lower job satisfaction as well as life satisfaction. Those findings are supported by other studies (Fatimah, 1985; Aminah, 1995). Makowska (1995) studied psychosocial determinants of stress and well-being among working women. The significance of the work-related stressors was evidently greater than that of the stressors associated with the family function, although the relationship between family functioning, stress and well-being was also significant. Super (1980) identified six common life roles. He indicated that the need to balance these different roles simultaneously is a reality for most individuals at various stages throughout their lives. Rather than following a transitional sequence from one role to another, women are required to perform an accumulation of disparate roles simultaneously, each one with its unique pressures. Multiple role-playing has been found to have both positive and negative effects on the mental health and well-being of professional women (Kopp and Ruzicka, 1993). At the same time, there has been a big decline in those who are in the non-formal sector such as the agricultural sector (NPFDB, 2004). As more women become involved in the formal sector, there is a tendency for them to spend less time with their family. Huang et al. (2004) found that work-family conflict is positively correlated with the number and ages of dependent children. In MPFS-4, almost 60 percent of women who had ever worked (but were not working when they were interviewed) stopped working because of childcare problems. The main reason was they could not afford to pay for childcare services provided in their community. In certain instances, women with multiple roles reported better physical and psychological health than women with less role involvement. In other words, they cherished motivational stimulation, self-esteem, a sense of control, physical stamina, and bursts of energy (Doress, 1994). However, multiple roles have also been found to cause a variety of adverse effects on women's mental and physical health, including loss of appetite, insomnia, overindulgence, and

back pains Hughes and Glinsky (1994). The findings from Study of Childcare and Parenting Style among Working Parents conducted by NPFDB in 1999 indicated that affordability was a significant factor in the type of childcare used. While 8.9% of the families with a household income of RM4,000 and above used childcare services, only 4.9% of those with a household income of less than RM2,000 did so (NPFDB, 1999). The cost of childcare services gives the burden to the parents, especially those in the low socio-economic group. A study of role conflict among married working women in Malaysia by Fatimah (1985) suggested the need for further studies on work-family conflict. Most of the studies on work-family conflicts have been conducted in Western societies (Aminah, 1996) such as European countries, US, and Canada, but as more women in non-Western societies join the labour market, understanding the effects of work-family conflicts has become increasingly important. Recognizing the needs for further studies on work-family conflict, this paper examines the relationship between perceived work-family conflict and socio-demographic and family characteristics of mothers aged 15 to 49 years in Peninsular Malaysia. The previous studies revealed that multipurpose roles performed by the and role strain experienced because of multiple roles, i.e., role conflict and role overload.

Conceptualization of hypothesis

Chassin *et al.* (1985) found that women with pre-school children experience different types of conflicts and concluded that self-role congruence in women leads to better mental health. Studies also reported that women having younger children experience more role conflicts. In the light of available literature, the following hypotheses were developed for the current study.

Ho (1): Perception of women employees towards family work conflict is independent of children age.

Some researchers used parental overload Frone (2000) which included number of children; others used variables such as family demand Yang (2000) in predicting WFC.

Ho (2): Perception of women employees towards family work conflict is independent of no. of children.

Dual role demands and expectation from working women by husbands was significantly related to high WFC and FWC among the working women in the present study. According to Sharma (1999) the support and involvement of husband positively relates to lower levels of role conflict experienced by the married working women. Carlson *et al.* (1998) found that experience of work demands negatively influenced family responsibilities in more instances than family demands that influenced work responsibilities. Job-parent conflict was reported to be the most often experienced conflict among the women. Therefore, the following

hypothesis is proposed:

H0 (3): Perception of women employees towards family work conflict is independent of dual role.

Findings from the first Malaysian Family Life Survey (MFLS-1) and fourth Malaysian Population and Family Survey (MPFS-4) conducted by the National Population and Family Development Board (NPFDB) revealed that between 1978 to 2004, there has been a significant increase in a proportion of working women in formal sectors such as professional, technical, clerical and sales workers. At the same time, there has been a big decline in those who are in the non-formal sector such as the agricultural sector (NPFDB, 1978 and 2004). As more women become involved in the formal sector, there is a tendency for them to spend less time with their family. For example, women in professional and non-professional positions more or less have equal prevalence of work-family conflict. The difference might be just the direction of the conflict whether it is work-to-family or family-to-work conflict. A study of Malaysian females' operators, clerks, secretaries, nurses and physicians in 2005 found that physicians experienced the greatest intensity of work-to-family conflict. However, operators experienced the greatest intensity of family-to-work conflict (Aminah Ahmad, 2005). The fact is both of them having a work-family conflict and the matter is just the direction of conflict. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H0 (4): Perception of women employees towards family work conflict is independent of nature of work.

Schular (1978) found that the financial need is the chief reported reason for women taking up employment. Phillips and Imhoff (1977) argue that many women take up job on compulsion, but it is the career which is extremely gratifying. In the present study, it is noted that only a few women had taken up employment for career. Sharma (2006) reported that problems can arise if woman works for money. In that case, woman needs to be careful not to bring home her frustration and unhappiness, which can affect family relationships. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Ho (5): Perception of women employees towards family work conflict is independent of children age. reason for working.

Higgins *et al.* (1992) found that family involvement and family expectations were related to conflict in the family, but not related to WFC. High levels of family responsibility cause increased time requirements and strain on the family, thereby interfering with the employee's work roles Boise L, Neal (1996). As children and elderly family members require additional care, the obligation to meet their needs can influence family roles, which can create inter-role

conflict Khan (1964) and impact family roles, Piotrkowski(1947) producing FWC Boise(1996).

H0 (6): Perception of women employees towards family work conflict is independent of family expectations.

Research studies have found the results of experienced work-family conflict such as increased levels of stress, decreased performance at home and work, and decreased life and work satisfaction (Allen et al., 2000; Rotondo, Carlson, & Kincaid, 2003). Hill, et. al (2003) hypothesized that high commitment or high performance management practices could have a negative impact on the private lives of workers, as they elicit discretionary effort, which often takes the form of additional working hours. Work-life balance policies could be used to offset those adverse effects. White et al. (2003) found that high commitment management practices had a negative effect on employees' lives, even after controlling for the hours worked. They also found that flexibility reduced negative spill-over for women but had little effect for men. The authors concluded that it is not necessary that employees always be benefited from high commitment management practices. Lo (2003) concluded that in Hong Kong, married female professionals faced more work-life conflict due to long working hours which affected their performance at work (Lo, 2003). WLC had generally been linked with lower productivity and poorer self rated and supervisor rated performance (Dorio, Bryant, & Allen, 2008).

H0 (7): There is no association between Work family conflict and family work conflict.

Research instrument and methods

This study was restricted to Ludhiana (Malwa region, Punjab) only. The sample size was 100 women employee respondents of both formal (School, civil hospital, Industry) and non formal sector (self employed/agricultural and elementary workers). For the purpose of selection of respondents, convenient sampling technique was used. The study was conducted with pre structured questionnaire. Thirteen items were used to data collection of WLC and all statements were positive. A five-point scale with 1 being "strongly disagree" and being 5 "strongly agree" was used. The inter item consistency was .876. Thus, these results suggested that the instrument was reliable and valid for use in this study.

Distribution of respondents

A total of 100 women employees participated in the survey. Majority of the respondents were urban employees (70%). 55.2% were at the younger age group (26 to 35 years old) and most of them (28.8%) have been working from 2-5 years.

Analysis of data

In the present study, firstly, the data was coded and tabulated to find the effects of various family characteristics on the attitudes of respondents. The hypothesis formed for the purpose was tested statistically for their significance according to the ANOVA (one way). **In this study, a default $\alpha = 0.05$** was used to determine the level of significance. To understand the relationship between FWC and family characteristics among women employees Karl Pearson correlation was used, ignoring the possible effect of all other influences. The data was analyzed using SPSS version 11.5 for window through out the study.

Results and Discussion

Table I shows that a total of 100 married respondents from formal and non formal sector were participated in this survey. Majority of respondents (50.3%) were having child between age 0-5. Almost 70% of studied mothers living in the urban area. 80% of mothers were working in the formal sector, the rest were in the non formal sector. Around 27% of the respondents have only one child and the table 1 is about the same as those having two and three children. Around 70% mothers have dual responsibilities. 37% childcare done by grandparents and nearly 70% of the women were working to support their families.

Table: I Respondents profile (family characteristics)

Variables	%age	Variables	%age
Age of children(years)		Number of Children	
0-5	50.30	No child	25.20
5-10	25.70	One Child	26.60
Above 10	24.00	Two children	29.20
		Three or more children	19.00
Nature of work (formal & informal sector)		Child care	
		Respondent/Husband /Elder child	36.00
School	20.00	Grand parents	
Hospital	20.00	Maternal parents	37.20
Banking	20.00	Maids	10.90
Industry	20.00	Neighbor/friend/ childcare centre	11.00
Agriculture and elementary workers	20.00		04.90
Dual roles demands		Reasons for working	
Yes	70.20	Support family	68.80
No	05.20	Financial needs	20.20
sometimes	24.60	Career oriented	05.80
		As a hobby	05.20
Number of dependent		Stratum	
No dependent	16.80	Rural	30.20
One dependent	11.00	Urban	70.30
Two dependent	32.00		
Three or more dependent	40.20		

Table II shows the distribution of women respondents who reply that they have family work conflict by their family characteristics. The percentage of women who have FWC is higher among women in the formal sector as compared to the non formal sector. Mother's working in hospital having higher conflict as compared to other types of work. The reason behind it may be that there is less flexibility as compared to other professions.

Percentage of mothers having conflict is smaller among those having one or no child, and it increases as the number

of children reaches two or three. Mother's who take care of their young children themselves with the help from their husband and an older child show the smallest conflict. It suggests that individuals who have help with non-work responsibilities may spend less time on family duties and may have more time available for work. The percentage of mother's having conflict is higher among those having two or more dependents.

Table: II Distribution of respondents having family work conflict
by Independents Variables

Variables	%age	Variables	%age
Age of children(years)		Number of Children	
0-5	35.20	No child	22.10
5-10	27.30	One Child	24.10
Above 10	20.20	Two children	28.30
		Three or more children	20.20
Nature of work(formal &informal sector)		Child care	
		Respondent/Husband /Elder child	
School	35.20	Grand parents	23.30
Hospital	36.70	Maternal parents	33.30
Banking	33.00	Maids	29.50
Industry	26.60	Neighbor/friend/ childcare centre	36.50
Agriculture and elementary workers	12.30		40.20
Dual roles demands		Reasons for working	
Yes	75.50	Support family	48.20
No	15.50	Financial needs	23.80
sometimes	10.10	Career oriented	25.20
		As a hobby	12.70
Number of dependent		Stratum	
No dependent	12.20	Rural	40.80
One dependent	25.10	Urban	59.20
Two dependent	27.90		
Three or more dependent	34.50		

Hypothesis testing

Table III shows that H_0 (1) is rejected partially in case of children 0-5 age groups as the mean of this group is higher as compared to other age groups so it can be concluded that children age significantly positively related to FWC. This finding is consistent with the previous literature. The reason behind it may be that the children of this age group needs more care and affection of their mothers that's why working mother also take more tension and face FWC. In terms of H_0 (2) number of children the mean influence score of the mothers having three children is significantly in comparison with the other groups. The reason behind it may be as the children increases more time is required for their care which create disturbance and conflict in work life. H_0 (3) that women perception towards FWC is independent from dual

role is rejected. FWC is significantly high among the women whose husbands demanded dual roles from working women. This study is consistent with other study (Reddy et. al., 2010). H_0 (4) is rejected partially in case of nature of work as women working in hospital scored high as compared to other working. In terms of reason of working, H_0 (5) rejected as women working for fulfill their financial needs scored significantly high FWC ($F=2.31$; $P<0.05$) in comparison with the other groups. Similarly family expectations also significantly correlates with FWC, the families which expect more from working women always create difficulties for them due to which FWC come into existence, so H_0 (6)rejected. H_0 (7) that there is no association between FWC and WFC conflict is rejected as Table 4 shows there is a significant positive relation between both.

TABLE III ANOVA TEST AND INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Independent variables	Mean	Std. deviation	F	P 0.05
Age of children			4.44	
0-5	13.20	7.34		*
5-10	17.00	3.04		-
Above 10	21.23	4.24		-
Nos. of Children			4.27	
No children	23.31	0.01		-
One children	17.65	4.13		-
Two children	15.00	3.15		-
Three or more children	20.21	7.49		*
Nature of work			8.90	
School	15.00	5.99		-
Hospital	21.21	8.99		*
Banking	13.39	4.36		-
Industry	15.21	6.00		-
Agriculture and elementary workers	17.29	7.49		-
Dual roles demands			4.59	
Yes	19.02	5.59		*
No	16.68	3.31		-
sometimes	22.24	2.33		-
Reasons for working			2.31	
Support family	21.29	6.52		*
Financial needs	25.26	7.29		*
Career oriented	18.19	2.34		*
As a hobby	23.61	6.56		*

No. of dependents			4.28	
No dependent	20.01	2.31		-
One dependent	20.00	3.39		-
Two dependent	14.56	3.59		-
Three or more dependent	19.99	5.96		*

The results of Table IV revealed that all the family characteristics (independent variables) are positively related with FWC of the working women so it can be concluded that family characteristics important predictors of FWC.

Table IV Intercorrelation of FWC with family characteristics

Variables	r
Age of children	.769
No. of children	.510
Nature of work	.892
Dual responsibility	.432
Childcare	.533
No. of dependents	.491

Conclusion

Work Family conflict remains important issue that requires considerable attention from society. FWC is present today, due to increased participation of women in the labour market. Due to educational improvements, educated women are more than the lesser educated women. And as more married women participate in the labour force, they tend to experience conflict in order to occupy both family and work roles simultaneously. As per findings from the previous researchers the independent variables (age of children, number of children and dependent, nature of work, dual role and reason for working) which the researcher has used to determine the working women perception towards FWC as a whole are proven to be affects the working life of women in India. It is amazing that in India very low percentage of women working for career or as a hobby. Usually in India middle class women are working to support family. They paid milkman's bill, children's tuition and school fee; and other minor expenses of the family. As a custom working women also take dual responsibility of home i.e. childcare and dependent care (mother/father in laws and husband). As the dependents/children increases so does the FWC. Moreover the study also presents that mostly women participating in this study had one or two children showing trend in small family system. So it can be concluded that a women are the backbone of whole society, so society must not fail to respond to the needs of women when dealing with complex issues arising from personal and the work life,

especially among women further along in their lives and careers. These findings are consistent with the ones in previous researches for example Reddy et al. (2010). The work-life programs incorporated at organizations provide the flexibility and support that help individuals navigate through the increasing complexities of modern life that encompass various priorities, including dual earning families, childcare, and elder care to name a few. However, there is an apparent under-utilization of these programs (Rodbourne, 1996; Spinks, 2004). It is up to the employer and the employee to work together to facilitate the acculturation of work-life balance into the organization. FWC has negative outcomes such as absenteeism, stress and job dissatisfaction that are detrimental to both employees and the organization. So there should be supportive culture, childcare facilities, flexible working hours and paid parental leave and family support especially from spouse and other family members plays an important role in reducing family work conflict.

Limitations and scope for further research

The present study suffered from some limitations like small sample size and limited area of investigation which might not be true representative of the whole population of the working women. So, before generalization, there is a need to conduct an in-depth study covering larger sample size and broader areas of investigation. Further research should be conducted in order to identify other factors that could contribute to FWC. Yet in spite of the plethora of research on

the subject, the efforts on the part of researchers to identify the factors of FWC in the Indian context have not been encouraging. In summary, the limitations of dual role had been pointed out in the literature for assessing the FWC and there had been a little attempt in the past to measure FWC in terms of dual role in Ludhiana (a more engaged city of India). So this study is an attempt to further develop theoretical underpinnings to the available literature on FWC.

References

- Allen, T. D., Herst, D. E., Bruck, C., & Sutton, M. (2000). Consequences associated with work to-family conflict: A review and agenda for future research. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 5(2), 278-308.
- Aminah Ahmad, (1995), *Role Conflict and Coping Behaviour of Married Working Women*. *Pertanika, Journal of Social Science and Humanities* 3: 97104.
- Aminah Ahmad, (1996), *Work Family Conflict among Married Professional Women in Malaysia*. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 1996, 136(5), s.663-665.
- Bedeian AG, Burke BG, Moffett RG,(1998), Outcomes of work-family conflict among married male and female professionals. *J Manag.* Vol.14:475-91.
- Boise L, Neal MB. (1996), Family responsibilities and absenteeism: Employees caring for parents versus employees caring for children. *J Managerial Issues*. Vol.2:218-38.
- Buetell NJ, Greehaus JH. (1980), Paper presented at The Annual Meeting of The Academy of Management. California: Some sources and consequences of inter-role conflict among married women.
- Carlson DS, Kacmar KM, Williams LJ. (1998) Paper Presented at Academic Management Meeting. California: 1998. The development and validation of a multi-dimensional measure of work-family conflict.
- Chassin L, Zeirs A, Cooper KR. 1985. Role perceptions self role congruence and marital satisfaction in dual worker couples with preschool children. *Social Psychological Quotient*. Vol.48:301-11.
- Doress-Wortes PB. (1994) Adding elder care to women's multiples roles: A critical review of the caregiver stress and multiple roles literature. *Sex Roles*. Vol.31:597-613.
- Dorio, J. M., Bryant, R. H., & Allen, T. D. (2008) *Work-related outcomes of the work-family interface: Why organizations should care*. In K. Korabik, D. S. Lero & D. L. Whitehead (Eds.), *Handbook of Work-Family Integration: Research, Theory, and Best Practices* (pp. 157-176). San Diego: Elsevier.
- Fatimah Abdullah, (1985) *Women and work: An analysis of role conflict*. *Akademika* 27: 7793 [In Malay].
- Frone MR, Yardley JK, Markel KS. (1997) Developing and testing an integrative model of the work-family interface. *J Vocat Behav*. Vol. 50:145-67.
- Galinsky E, Bond JT, Friedman DE. (1996) The role of employers in addressing the needs of employed parents. *J Socl Issues*. Vol.52:111-36.
- Higgins CA, Duxbury LE, Irving RH. (1992) Work-family conflict in the dual-career family. *Organ Behav Hum Decis Process*. Vol.51:51-75.
- Huang et al., (2004) *The Relationship between Work-To-Family Conflict and Family-To-Work Conflict: A Longitudinal Study*. *Journal of Family and Economic Issues* 25(1), 79-100.
- Hughes DL, Glinsky E. (1994) Gender, job and family conditions and psychological symptoms. *Psychol Women Quart*. vol.18:251-70.
- Khan RL, Wolfe DM, Quinn R, Snoek JD, (1994) Rosenthal RA. New York: Weley; Organizational stress.
- Kopp RG, Ruzicka FM. (1993) Women's multiple roles and psychological well-being. *Psychol Rep*. vol.72:1351-4.
- Lo, S. 2003. Perceptions of work-family conflict among married female professionals in Hong Kong.
- Maskowska Z. (1995) Psychosocial characteristics of work and family as a determinant of stress and well-being of women: A preliminary study. *Int J Occup Med Environ Health*. Vol.8:215-22.
- National Population and Family Development Board (NPFDB), (2004) *Fourth Malaysian Population and Family Survey (MPFS-4), 2004*. *Personnel Review*, 32(3), 376-390.
- Phillips SD, Imholff AR. (1977) Women and career development: A decade of research. *Annal Revw Psychol*. Vol.45:31-55.
- Piotrkowski CS, Rapoport RN, Rapoport R.(1987) Families and work. In: Sussman M, Steinmetz S, editors. *Handbook of marriage and the family*. New York, NY: Plenum.
- Reddy et al, (2010) Work life Balance among Married Women Employees, *Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine*, Vol.32(2), pg 112-118.

- Rotondo, D. M., Carlson, D. S., & Kincaid, J. F. (2003) Coping with multiple dimensions of work – family.
- Rodbourne, D.R. (1996) “Learning as we go, Work-Life Policies & Practices for Business. Caux Round Table Retrieved. 2005. from <http://www.cauxroundtable.org/1993-1998Publications.html>
- Spinks, N. (2004) “Work-Life Balance: Achievable Goal or Pipe Dream?” *The Journal for Quality and Participation*, Vol.27, Iss. 3, pp.4-11.
- Schular C. (1978) Women and work: Psychological effects of occupational contexts. *Am J Sociol.* Vol.85:66–94.
- Sharma S. 1999. Multiple role and women's health: A multi-linear model. *Equal Oppor Int.* vol.18:16–23.
- Sharma U. 1998. New Delhi: Mittal Publishers; 2006. Female labour in India.
- Super DE. A life-span, life-space approach to career development. *J Vocat Behav.* Vol.16:282–9.
- Thomas LT, Ganster DL. 1995. Impact of family-supportive work variables on work-family conflict and strain: A control perspective. *J Appl Psychol.* Vol.80:6–15.
- White, M., Hill, S., McGovern, P., Mills, C., & Smeaton, D. 2003. High – performance management practices, working hours and work – life balance. *British journal of Industrial Relations*, 41(2), 175-195.
- Yang N, Chen CC, Choi J, Zou Y. 2000. Sources of work-family conflict: A Sino-U.S. comparison of the effects of work and family demands. *Acad Manage J.* vol.43:113–23.