

MEASURING WORK-LIFE BALANCE: RELATIONSHIPS WITH WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT AND FAMILY-WORK CONFLICT

Ranganathan Venkatesan

*Assistant Professor, Head, Department of Business Administration,
Shanmuga Industries Arts and Science College, Tiruvannamalai, Tamil Nadu, India.
Email: venkat7pub@gmail.com*

Abstract: *Work-life balance is a challenging and tremendous task, between managing work and family conflicts. Conflict arises based on the expected behaviour of the employees. The aim of the present research is measuring work-life balance with work-family conflict and family-work conflict. In addition, the paper aims to find out the different conflicts between work and family, and how to balance the work-life of the respondents. Instruments are adopted from previous research. The sample size is 157 and the data is collected from the respondents working in rural and urban areas of selected districts in Tamil Nadu. Data were analysed using the SPSS, for measuring reliability, validity, loadings, coefficient, and model fit of the data. Employees need to spend more time with their family and friends to reduce stress and conflict. Employees realise that family members and co-workers are essential in maintaining work-life balance. Understanding and sharing work-related information with spouses leads to reduced work-family conflict. The research would help decision makers, employers, and employees enrich the employee's work-life balance, through managing family and work conflicts.*

Keywords: *Work-Family Conflict, Family-Work Conflict, Work-Life Balance*

INTRODUCTION

In the vast literature on work-life balance, one question is not much addressed: why does it need continuous study. Work-life balance is affected by family and work conflicts. Conflicts increase employee stress. The reason for employee stress is identified through various literature and observations; they include job insecurity, increased use of mobile phones, financial crisis, family issues (including relatives living close by), heavy workload, unrest, and misunderstanding with co-workers. Job flexibility, paid work hours, unpaid domestic labour hours, gender, marital status, and level of occupation are important elements affecting work-life balance (Hill, Hawkins, Ferris & Weitzman, 2001). During the pandemic, women employees were forced to stay at home along with the social restrictions; they were busy with their household work and faced difficulty in concentrating on official work.

Increased work-life balance, as a result, increases productivity, enhances concentration in work, and lowers employee turnover rates (Crooker, Smith & Tabak, 2002). Balancing work and life is not always the objective, but rather living a full life is important (Caproni, 2004). Sturges

and Guest (2004) said that personal ethics are based on a wish to 'work to live', not 'live to work'.

Objectives of the Research

In light of this analysis, the aim of our study was to explore two main issues. These are:

- Testing the relationship among work-family conflict, family-work conflict, and work-life balance.
- Factors affecting work-family conflict (WFC), family-work conflict (FWC), and work-life balance (WLB).

Research Questions

This study addresses some important questions. It hopes to answer the following specific research questions:

- What are the conflicts facing employees?
 - How to manage work-life balance?
 - Quality of work-life balance?
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The proposed study is useful for society, to know what conflicts exist, and how to equalise work-life balance and enjoy job satisfaction, because employees spend around eight to ten hours every day (except weekly holidays) with their co-workers. A situation with peaceful or no conflicts, or a minimum level of conflict, and a satisfied working environment are essential for job satisfaction. A satisfying job leads to life satisfaction. Most of the employees work to maintain and enhance a happy life for their family.

The present study reveals the problems of work-to-family conflicts and family-to-work conflicts of the employees. The study suggests to policy makers how to manage and rectify these conflicts and maintain the work-life balance of the employees. The study also provides valuable suggestions to policy makers for employee job satisfaction and life satisfaction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, we will provide a brief literature review in the areas of work-family conflict (WFC), family-work conflict (FWC), and work-life balance (WLB).

Work-Family Conflict (WFC)

Frone, Russell and Cooper (1992) identified work-family conflict among employees more frequently than family-work conflict. Work and home generally differ in purpose and culture (Clark, 2000). Individual experiences within the workplace and within the home can ensure that the functioning of the employee at work and home is smooth (Grzywacz & Marks, 2000). Greenhaus, Collins and Shaw (2003) found the least amount of work-family conflict and stress experience. Work-family conflict indirectly affects job satisfaction and employee performance (Asbari, Pramono, Hidayat, Alamsyah & Fayzhall, 2020). Working long hours leads to success in job and employee achievement, whereas increasingly spending time with the family does not (Sturges & Guest, 2004).

Family-Work Conflict (FWC)

Proper child care arrangements may drastically reduce family-work conflict (Frone et al., 1992). A young child and family-work conflict are the most consistent predictors of employed parents (Frone & Yardley, 1996). Individuals develop cordial relationships with others, leading to a better balance between home and work (Clark, 2000). The parent-child association is unexpected; the parental status

was found to have a negative spillover from family to work (Grzywacz & Marks, 2000). Time spent in the family role is deficient due to increased work burdens (Greenhaus et al., 2003). Increased working hours increases the unsatisfactory balance between work and home (Sturges & Guest, 2004). Family-friendly approaches in organisations is related to reducing work-family conflicts (Aryee, Srinivas & Tan, 2005). In healthcare organisations, there is high perceived work-family conflict among female nurses, compared to male nurses (Hill et al., 2001).

Work-Life Balance (WLB)

Nowadays, the concept of work-life balance is more debatable by researchers and academicians. The perceived job flexibility leads to improvement in the work-life balance (Hill et al., 2001). Work-life balance is defined as equity across the multiple roles, relationship between conflict and facilitation, satisfaction in the multiple roles, and perceived control between multiple roles (Kalliath & Brough, 2008). Hobson, Delunas and Kesic (2001) suggest that time causes the supposed imbalance between work and personal life. WLB is the balancing of individual life complexity and dynamism with environment, community, employer, geography, economics, personality, values, or information (Crooker et al., 2002). The simple meaning of WLB is defining work and life clearly (Guest, 2002). WLB comprises the time balance, involvement balance, and satisfaction balance (Greenhaus et al., 2003). Work-life balance has been defined as 'satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with a minimum of role conflict' (Clark, 2000). Job satisfaction and organisational commitment are based on the work-family facilitations (Aryee et al., 2005). Flexi time, working from home, and reduced working hours are not suitable for senior management persons, for balancing work and family (Drew & Murtagh, 2005). Ademuyiwa, Dahunsi, Adetunji and Adeniran (2021) said that stress and psychological disorder are the major effects observed among the female staff, at the beginning and end of a job. Warren (2021) found working-time, work intensification, and financial hardships have an influence on work-life balance.

Consequence

If work-life balance is not maintained, it leads to negative consequences like high stress levels, poor productivity, lower life satisfaction, and high absenteeism of the individual (Hobson et al., 2001). The research by White, Hill, McGovern, Mills and Smeaton (2003) found a conflict between work-life balance policies and high-performance practices in the job.

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

This chapter discusses the instrument used for survey, measurement procedures engaged, sample selection, and tools for data analysis used in this research. Scale items for assessing key constructs have been adopted from prior studies for validating measures.

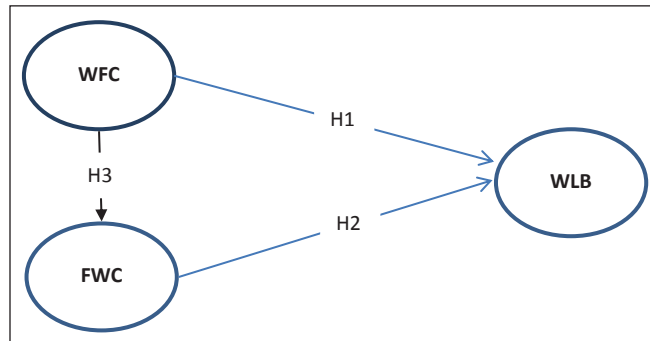


Fig. 1: Proposed Conceptual Models

Hypotheses Development

Literature shows the significance of life satisfaction for the working person. Therefore, the researcher proposes the following hypotheses:

H₁: Work-family conflict positively influences work-life balance.

H₂: Family-work conflict positively influences work-life balance.

H₃: Work-family conflict positively influences family-work conflict.

Measures

Conflict was measured with eight items from the scale by Gutek, Searle and Klepa (1991). In this, work-family conflict (WFC) was measured four times; sample questions include, “On the job I have so much work to do that it takes away from”; response items were averaged to produce a total WFC score of $\alpha = .93$. Family-work conflict (FWC) was measured four times; sample questions include, “My personal demands are so great that it takes away from”; response items were

averaged to produce a total FWC score of $\alpha = .93$. Items represent statements to which the subject responds on a five-point Likert-type scale – ‘never’, ‘seldom’, ‘sometimes’, ‘often’, and ‘very often’. A measure of overall WFC and FWC is derived by taking the mean score across all items included in these variables.

Work-life balance (WLB) was measured with eight items from the scale by Taşdelen-Karçkay and Bakalım (2017). Sample questions include, “I can manage my roles related to family and professional life”; items represent statements to which the subject responds on a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree’. Response items were averaged to produce a total WLB score of $\alpha = .96$. A measure of overall WLB is derived by taking the mean score across all items included in these variables.

Demographic Variables

A demographic section was also included in the questionnaire, containing questions regarding gender, age, marital status, number of children, spouse employability, monthly income, place of residence (urban or rural), geographical area of respondents, educational qualification, and occupation/business. Only one question was open-ended because analysis and interpretation of such questions can be difficult and subjective. The author used the open-ended question merely to get feedback from respondents and this is built into the recommendation section.

Procedures

Data are collected from the working respondents in Tamil Nadu, from renowned districts covering Tiruvannamalai, Villupuram, Vellore, Cuddalore, Dharmapuri, Krishnagiri, Tirupathur, Kallakurichi and Kanchipuram. Respondents include both government and private employees, and business people; responses were collected through print and online questionnaires. The online questionnaire was cost effective, fast, and easily accessible in prompting responses (Zikmund, Carr, Babin & Griffin, 2013).

The total size of the sample is 157 and data was analysed using the SPSS, for measuring reliability, validity, loadings (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010b), coefficient, and model fit of the data.

ANALYSIS

Demographic Analysis

Table 1: Frequency of Demographic Variable

Variables	Items	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	86	54.8
	Female	71	45.2
Marital Status	Single/Unmarried	9	5.7
	Married, spouse not Working, no children	41	26.1
	Married, spouse works, with parents	40	25.5
	Married, children, spouse works, with parents	32	20.4
	Married, children, spouse works	31	19.7
	Divorced/Widowed/Separated	1	0.6
	Divorced/Widowed/Separated with parents and children	3	1.9
Age	Less than 25	13	8.3
	26-35 years	78	49.7
	36-50 years	47	29.9
	More than 50 years	19	12.1
Educational Qualification	School Education	39	24.8
	Under Graduation/ Diploma/Technical	84	53.5
	Post-Graduation	15	9.6
	Profession	19	12.1
Annual Income of the Respondents (in USD)	Less than or equal to 250	82	52.2
	251-425	58	36.9
	426-635	10	6.4
	Above 636	7	4.5
Occupation	Professional	16	10.2
	Managerial or supervisory	14	8.9
	Clerk, sales, office support	64	40.8
	Blue-collar	48	30.6
	Self-working employees	15	9.6
Tenure	Less than a year	7	4.5
	1 to 3 years	42	26.8
	4 to 7 years	56	35.7
	7 to 15 years	24	15.3
	More than 15 years	28	17.8
Area	Urban	71	45.2
	Semi-Urban	36	22.9
	Rural	50	31.8

Variables	Items	Frequency	Percent
Place	Tiruvannamalai	22	14
	Vellore	15	9.6
	Villupuram	22	14
	Cuddalore	21	13.4
	Kanchipuram	21	13.4
	Kallakurichi	14	8.9
	Krishnagiri	14	8.9
	Dharmapuri	14	8.9
	Tirupathur	14	8.9
Working Days in a Week	Monday to Friday	56	35.7
	Monday to Saturday	72	45.9
	Without Holiday	15	9.6
	Flexi Working Days	14	8.9

The detailed demographic variable frequency is listed in Table 1.

Table 2: Mean, Standard Deviation, and Correlation of Demographic Variable

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Correlations								
			Gender	Marital Status	Age	Educ. Qual.,	Annual Income (in USD)	Occupation	Tenure	Area	Place of Res.
Gender	1.452	0.499	-								
Marital Status	3.318	1.325	.846	-							
Age	2.459	0.812	.615	.264	-						
Educational Qualification	2.089	0.908	.519	.173	.423	-					
Annual Income (in USD)	1.631	0.795	.449	.425	.505	.985	-				
Occupation	3.204	1.073	.506	.745	.604	.025	.987	-			
Tenure	3.153	1.139	.025	.046	.301	.243	.488	.429	-		
Area	1.866	0.870	.053	.289	.943	.044	.260	.592	.411	-	
Place of Residence	4.631	2.525	.011	.953	.988	.606	.414	.214	.582	.000	-
Working Days in a Week	1.917	0.898	.842	.939	.746	.146	.210	.378	.484	.107	.257

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Place of residence has a very low positive correlation with gender (0.11); tenure and gender (.25), and occupation and educational qualification (.025) have a very low positive correlation. This indicates that employees do not get the

right job for their educational qualifications. At the same time, educational qualification and annual income are highly positively correlated (.985), which shows that qualified respondents earn more income.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics with Loading

Sr. No.	Label	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Loadings
1	WFC1	After work, I come home too tired to do some of the things I would like to do.	4.147	0.783	0.699
2	WFC2	On the job, I have so much work to do that it takes away from my personal interests.	4.019	0.711	0.789
3	WFC3	My family/friends dislike how often I am pre-occupied with my work while I am at home.	4.261	0.671	0.958
4	WFC4	My work takes up time that I would like to spend with family/friends.	3.892	0.938	0.773
5	FWC1	I am too tired at work because of the things I have to do at home.	4.134	0.941	0.875
6	FWC2	My personal demands are so great that it takes away from my work.	4.261	1.093	0.659
7	FWC3	My superiors and peers dislike how often I am preoccupied with my personal life while at work.	4.376	1.003	0.656
8	FWC4	My personal life takes up time that I would like to spend at work.	4.389	0.852	0.610
9	WLB1	I can satisfy my own needs and the needs of the important people in my life.	4.631	0.701	0.676
10	WLB2	I can manage my roles related to family and professional life in a balanced manner.	4.134	1.172	0.842
11	WLB3	I can make enough time for myself by preserving the balance between my professional life and family life.	4.631	0.701	0.676
12	WLB4	I feel loyalty towards my roles, both in my professional life and my family.	4.261	1.093	0.779
13	WLB5	I manage my professional and family life in a controlled manner.	4.255	0.824	0.888
14	WLB6	I am successful at creating a balance between my multiple life roles (employee/spouse/mother, father, and so on).	4.242	0.977	0.621
15	WLB7	I can deal with the situations that occur due to the conflict between my roles that are specific to my professional and family life.	4.127	0.925	0.925
16	WLB8	I am equally content with my roles in my family and professional life.	4.000	1.000	0.905

In Table 3, all item loadings are more than .5 and are at the level of acceptance. Employees equally content with their roles in their family and professional life are second in importance. Every employee wants to give more attention to satisfying their own needs first; the study indicates the same, as according to the mean value, 'I can satisfy my own needs and the needs of the important

people in my life' is ranked number one. The study indicates that more employees concentrate on work and are not able to spend much time with family and friends (mean value 3.892). It indicates a low score and is last in ranking (16). The mean value of 'employees equally content with their roles in their family and professional life' is 4.000.

Table 4: Correlation Analysis

Correlation Matrix ^{a,b}															
	WFC1	WFC2	WFC3	WFC4	FWC1	FWC2	FWC3	FWC4	WLB1	WLB2	WLB3	WLB4	WLB5	WLB6	WLB7
WFC2	.904														
WFC3	.671	.808													
WFC4	.712	.762	.870												
FWC1	.678	.772	.969	.895											
FWC2	.697	.810	.789	.897	.845										
FWC3	.591	.718	.815	.869	.904	.957									
FWC4	.673	.823	.729	.847	.742	.971	.871								
WLB1	.777	.760	.752	.895	.853	.947	.929	.865							
WLB2	.810	.758	.452	.591	.571	.759	.715	.699	.826						
WLB3	.777	.760	.752	.895	.853	.947	.929	.865	1.000	.826					
WLB4	.697	.645	.614	.897	.720	.893	.840	.833	.947	.759	.947				
WLB5	.518	.407	.343	.683	.452	.752	.644	.735	.809	.602	.809	.894			
WLB6	.624	.547	.490	.589	.662	.769	.810	.641	.881	.857	.881	.769	.704		
WLB7	.665	.561	.153	.297	.275	.576	.487	.555	.647	.907	.647	.576	.597	.803	
WLB8	.475	.523	.573	.807	.681	.915	.882	.873	.897	.635	.897	.915	.903	.774	.527

a. Determinant = .000

b. This matrix is not positive definite.

In Table 4, WLB7 has a very low correlation with WFC3 (.153) and WLB3 has a perfect positive correlation with WLB1 (1.000); this indicates a perfect positive correlation,

meaning that both variables move in the same direction together. Table 4 shows that all items are positively correlated.

Table 5: No of Items, Reliability, Mean, Variance, Standard Deviation, F, and Significance

Variables	N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	F	Sig
Work-family conflict (WFC)	4	0.930	16.3185	8.090	2.84433	28.133	0.000
Family-work conflict (WFC)	4	0.966	17.1592	13.840	3.7202	18.892	0.000
Work-life balance (WLB)	8	0.962	34.2803	44.498	6.67067	39.521	0.000

Number of items in each variable, Cronbach's alphas, means, variance, standard deviations, F values, and significance for the quantitative measures are shown in Table 5. Table 5 confirms that all the Cronbach's alpha scores are satisfactory.

Table 6: Model Summary

Model Summary ^b				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.862 ^a	.742	.739	.42604

a. Predictors: (Constant), A_FWC, A_WFC

b. Dependent Variable: A_WLB

Table 6 shows that for the model summary of the present research, R value is 0.862, and R² value is 0.742; R² values are greater than 0.5 and are at the accepted level. Values are significant. Overall, the model is fit.

Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson (2010a) and Henseler, Ringle and Sinkovics (2009) showed the critical values of T as 1.65 for a two-tailed test (significance level = 0.10 or 10%), 1.96 (significance level = 0.05 or 5%), and 2.58 (significance level = 0.01 or 1%). Table 7 shows that work-life balance with work-family conflict (t = 4.710) and work-family conflict with family-work conflict (t = 6.207) values are significant and accepted. The value of work-family conflict with family-work conflict (t = 0.126) is not at the accepted level and not significant.

Table 7: Path, Mean, Standard Deviation, t, and p values

Hypothesis	Path	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Remarks
H1	A_WLB – A_WFC	.20541	.54652	4.710	.000	Supported
H2	A_WLB – A_FWC	-.00478	.47428	-.126	.900	Not Supported
H3	A_WFC – A_FWC	.21019	.42414	6.209	.000	Supported

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATION

Based on findings, the author put forth the following recommendations. Organisations should take necessary steps to reduce the stress level of employees through organised work. Organisations should take necessary steps to help family members understand the work situation, which will lead to reduced family-work conflict. The study suggests that central participation capabilities of employees will increase work-family balance (Clark, 2000).

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that work-life balance is essential in the present stressful scenario. The number of conflict factors are increasing day-by-day, both in the family and at work. The study indicates that employees need to spend more time with family and friends, as they are always thinking and concentrating on business. Compared to men, women employees are facing a tough work-life balance. However, employed women considerably support the economy of the family. Reducing conflict is essential at the workplace; employees should try to understand each other. Companies may organise weekend or monthly refreshment programmes with family members, which will help the family members understand their spouse's work situation, thus reducing work-family conflict.

LIMITATION AND EXTENSION

The sample size is limited to 157; if the sample size is increased, results may vary. The findings presented in this study are suggestive; the results are not definitive because they are based on the respondents' view. Therefore, further studies are needed to strengthen these findings and to improve the results.

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