

Women Managers & Professionals: Work-Family Conflict & Job Satisfaction

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This study examines the consequences of both work-to-family conflict (WFC) and family-to-work conflict (FWC) among a sample of managerial and professional women in India. Data were collected from 224 women, working fulltime in diverse organizations using anonymously completed survey questionnaires. The respondents indicated relatively low level of FWC compared to WFC. WFC had a negative correlation with affective commitment and psychological well-being. FWC was found to be negatively correlated with family satisfaction and psychological well-being. Interestingly, both WFC and FWC did not show significant impact on job satisfaction.

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Introduction

Competing demands between work and home have assumed increased relevance in recent years for employees across the world due, in large part, to demographic, economic, technological and workplace changes. India is no exception. The changes are seen in terms of rising numbers of women in the workforce (Census of India, 2001; Human Development Report, 2010; Naqvi, 2011), more dual career couples (Rajadhyaksha & Bhatnagar, 2000) and nuclear families (Bharat, 2003), increase in customer centric services sector, and more sophisticated communications technology enabling continuous contact with the workplace and customers even after the work hours (Baral, 2009). These changes have placed immense pressure and time demands on men and women to strike the crucial balance between work and home. Women professionals are more prone to such pressures of striking a balance between work and home front since they have to take more family responsibilities compared to men irrespective of their working status (Aryee, Srinivas & Tan, 2005; Bharat, 2003; Chauhan,

2010; Naqvi, 2011). Managing and integrating work and family is considered as one of the major challenges facing managerial and professional women in achieving successful careers in organizations (Bharathi & Baral, 2012; Kaiser et al., 2011; Koyuncu, Burke & Wolpin, 2012).

A high level of work-family conflict may have detrimental consequences for employees as well as the organization.

Engagement in multiple roles such as work and family roles has been found to have many positive implications (e.g. enhanced skills, mood, well-being and morale) (Balmforth & Gardner, 2006; Bhargava & Baral, 2011). However, the negative side of engagement in multiple roles cannot be discounted. The results of a variety of studies, conducted across different countries, cultures and occupations have demonstrated that a high level of work-family conflict may have detrimental consequences for employees as well as the organization (for a review, see Allen, Herst, Bruck & Sutton, 2000). Specifically, research has shown that work-family conflict is related to increased turnover intentions and reduced job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and family satisfaction (Aryee et al., 2005; Balmforth & Gardner, 2006; Beutell, 2010; Karatepe & Kilic, 2007; Kinnunen, Feldt, Mauno & Rantanen, 2010; Koyuncu et al., 2012; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998; Rathi & Barath, 2013). The harmful consequences of work-family conflict have been exten-

sively investigated among employees representing a variety of occupations. Nevertheless, the influence of work-family conflict on various individual and organizational outcomes among women in managerial and professional roles remains relatively underexplored, particularly in the Indian context. Juggling between the two most important roles i.e., work and family has been particularly challenging for women managers and professionals. Many women “opt out” of their career because of family concerns (Hewlett, 2002). This is a very common phenomenon particularly in traditional cultures such as India where the burden of raising a family and kids is still the responsibility of the female partner, irrespective of her career or working status. Given this background, the aim of this study is to examine the consequences of work-family conflict among managerial and professional women at work.

Work-Family Conflict

“Work-family conflict” is “a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect” (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985:77). It is typically characterized in the literature by time-based, strain-based and behavior-based conflicts. Research has established two directions of work-family conflict: work-to-family conflict (WFC), in which work activities hinder performance at family or other non-work roles, and family-to-work conflict (FWC), in which life-role responsibilities thwart performance at work (Frone, Russell &

Cooper, 1992; Netemeyer, Boles & McMurrin, 1996). Typically, the specific antecedents of the WFC lie in the work domain whereas the antecedents of the FWC lie within the family domain (Byron, 2005; Fu & Shaffer, 2001). In terms of outcomes of work-family conflict, WFC mainly impairs job-specific well-being, whereas FWC mainly impairs family-specific well-being (Allen et al., 2000). Cross-domain relations are typically weaker (for a review, see Ford, Heinen & Langkamer, 2007).

Women in Management in India

The Grant Thornton's International Business Report (IBR) (2013) suggests that although there is an increase of women managers in senior level positions in India, the proportion is significantly low at 19 per cent as opposed to a global 35 per cent. Moreover, 49 per cent of Indian businesses currently offer flexible working options to women at the work place, as opposed to a global average of 67 per cent. This shows that women continue to be underrepresented at more senior levels of management despite their increasing entry into managerial and professional jobs. Several factors have been found to account for this underrepresentation, an important one being women's responsibilities for home and family functioning, often resulting in

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work-family conflict. However, because of higher levels of literacy among women, and greater initiatives taken by organizations to promote gender diversity and equality, more women are entering the workforce in India.

Recent changes in the demographic characteristics of the Indian workforce with more number of women in the workforce (Census of India, 2001; Naqvi, 2011) and increasing number of nuclear as well as dual career families (Bharat, 2003; Komarraju, 1997), has resulted in an enhanced importance placed on issues of work-life balance by scholars, individuals and organizations alike. There are many studies on work-family conflict experiences of men and women in the Indian context (Aryee et al., 2005; Buddhapriya, 2009; Chauhan, 2010; Namasivayam & Zhao, 2007; Poster & Prasad, 2005; Rathi & Barat, 2013; Valk & Srinivasan, 2011). However, it is very much pertinent to study the work-family conflict experiences of women and resulting outcomes since women continue to increasingly participate in managerial and professional workforce in recent years. Social changes and economic development of India in the past few decades have offered many educational and employment opportunities for women similar to that of men (Naqvi, 2011). Higher literacy rates among women, greater awareness of gender-role equality, increasing number of organizations in gender-neutral industries such as IT, ITES, and corporations' diversity and inclusiveness policies are the factors that have positively influenced the increasing participation of women in the workforce.

Modernization, social changes and emphasis on education have enabled women to enter new professions and occupations; and such a change has also led to the emergence of new social attitudes towards educated women (Ghosh & Roy, 1997). Indians, being part of a collectivist culture, give high priority to their family and social responsibilities (Hofstede, 2001), since family and social relationships occupy a central position in their life. In India, gender role socialization is more prominent (Bharat, 2003; Naqvi, 2011; Rajadhyaksha & Smita, 2004). Moreover, Indian women take larger part in familial responsibilities irrespective of their working status (Aryee et al., 2005). While balancing their work and family roles, women tend to assign greater priorities to and spend more time on their family responsibilities, independent of their work demands (Aditya & Sen, 1993; Aryee et al., 2005; Desai, 1996; Narayana, 1982).

Recently, particularly in urban India, there has been noticed an attitude change towards participation of women in the work force and men are taking increasing responsibility for household things, both of which point towards an emerging reality of work-family interface (Baral, 2009; Bharat, 2003; Raut, Lewis & Kagan, 1999). This definitely creates interest in understanding work-family dynamics as experienced by women in the changing Indian context.

Hence, the present study aims to investigate the extent to which Indian urban women managers and professionals experience work-family conflict (both

WFC and FWC) and the negative consequences of such conflict. This will certainly help organizations in helping women managers and introducing initiatives to alleviate their work-family conflict experiences.

Consequences of Work-Family Conflict

Previous research has shown that both types of work-family conflict may have detrimental consequences for employees as well as organizations (e.g. Beutell, 2010; Grandey, Cordeino & Crouter 2005; Kinnunen et al., 2010; Netemeyer et al., 1996; Spector et al., 2007). Researchers report that both WFC and FWC are negatively associated with job satisfaction (Beutell, 2010; Karatepe and Kilic, 2007; Netemeyer et al., 1996; Spector et al., 2007), family satisfaction, and well-being (Beutell, 2010; Kinnunen et al., 2010). Research literature suggests that if work is considered to be the source of this interference then the employee may develop a negative attitude toward his or her job, resulting in lower job satisfaction (Beutell, 2010; Grandey et al., 2005). On the other hand, if work role is highly valued by an individual and is an important part of that person's identity then the individual's perception that family is a threat to work time and energy may create a negative attitude toward family. This is mainly due to the

Researchers report that both WFC and FWC are negatively associated with job satisfaction, family satisfaction and well-being.

reason that family is considered as the source of interference (Beutell, 2010; Grandey et al., 2005), which further can result in lower family satisfaction.

Indians, being members of a collectivist culture, confer high importance to fulfill their family and social responsibilities (Hofstede, 1980). Indians usually feel content by spending quality time with their family members, neighbors, friends, and relatives (Rathi & Barath, 2013). Hence, when, because of the job related tensions and strains, they cannot spend that quality time with family members, it may enhance negative attitude towards their job. At the same time, when family demands and responsibilities interfere with the fulfillment of job responsibilities especially in the case of women, they will perceive lower satisfaction with their family. In general, both WFC and FWC should negatively affect the psychological well-being (Carlson et al., 2000) and perceived level of work-life balance (Hill, Hawkins, Ferris & Weitzman, 2001). Based upon this, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H1. Both WFC (H1a) and FWC (H1b) will be negatively related to job satisfaction.
- H2. Both WFC (H2a) and FWC (H2b) will be negatively related to affective commitment.
- H3. Both WFC (H3a) and FWC (H3b) will be negatively related to family satisfaction.
- H4. Both WFC (H4a) and FWC (H4b) will be negatively related to psychological well-being.

- H5. Both WFC (H5a) and FWC (H5b) will be negatively related to perceived level of work-life balance.

Sample & Procedure

Data were collected from 224 women, working fulltime in diverse organizations representing manufacturing and services sectors situated in Western India using anonymously completed survey questionnaires. Out of the 224 participants, 112 (50 per cent) were married and 78 (34.8 per cent) respondents reported to have at least one child. Average age was 28.86 years (SD = 6.29). Around 70 per cent of the participants were from junior and middle management positions. Almost all the respondents (98.7 per cent) either were graduates or post graduates. Average working hours per week was reported to be 45.73 hours (SD = 4.79).

Independent Variables

Work-family conflict i.e., both WFC and FWC were measured using 5 items each from the 10-item work-family conflict scale developed by Netemeyer et al. (1996). Respondents indicated level of agreement to each statement on a 5-point scale ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (5) with higher scores indicating high levels of work-family conflict in either direction. An example item from WFC scale is, “Things I want to do at home do not get done because of demands my job puts on me” and an example item from FWC scale is, “Things I want to do at work don’t get done because of the demands of my family or spouse/significant

other.” For this study, Chronbach’s alpha values for WFC was 0.90 and for FWC 0.91.

Dependent Variables.

Job satisfaction is defined as the extent to which employees like their work (Agho, Price & Mueller, 1992) and was measured using 6-items scale by Agho et al. (1992). Respondents indicated their level of agreement to each statement (e.g., I find real enjoyment in my job) on a 5-point scale ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (5). Alpha was 0.81.

Affective commitment was measured using 6-items scale of Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993). Respondents indicated their level of agreement to each statement (e.g., I would be happy to spend the rest of my career in this organisation) on a 7-point scale ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (7). Alpha was 0.84.

Family satisfaction is the extent to which one feels happy and satisfied with the present family situation and was measured using 3-items scale developed by Kopelman et al. (1983). Respondents indicated their level of agreement with each statement (e.g., Generally speaking, I am very satisfied with my family) on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (5). After reversing one reverse-scored item, responses were summed so that higher scores indicated greater family satisfaction. Alpha was 0.70.

Psychological well-being is the state at which an individual can function psychologically well enough to realize his/her true potential (Ryff, 1995). The psychological well-being scale had six dimensions such as self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. Ryff and Keyes (1995) developed an 18-items short version of Ryff’s original 84-items scale that measured each dimension of psychological well-being on a 6-point Likert-type scale, ranging from “very strongly disagree” (1) to “very strongly agree” (6). These abbreviated scales were highly correlated (0.70 to 0.89) with the original scales with high-demonstrated reliability (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). An example item in the scale is “When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out”. Negatively worded items were reverse-scored and responses were summed so that a high score represented greater psychological well-being. Reliability for this short version of psychological well-being scale was found to be 0.84.

Perceived Level of Work-life Balance

Hill et al.’s (2001) 5-item work-family balance scale, was used to measure the degree to which an individual was able to balance simultaneously the emotional, behavioral and time demands of both paid work and family or personal duties. The original rating scale ranged from 1 to 5 on four items and from 1 to 7 on one item. Each of these ratings were given different values, such as strongly

Table: Means, Standard Deviations & Correlations of Study Variables

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Age	28.86	6.29											
2. Marital Status			.53**										
3. Average Working Hours	45.73	4.79	.06	-.01									
4. Parental Status			.68**	.67**	.02								
5. Job Satisfaction	3.45	.68	.17**	.09	-.06	.13*	(0.81)						
6. Family Satisfaction	4.07	.68	.06	.07	-.04	.04	.11	(0.70)					
7. Affective Commitment	4.69	1.24	.31**	.14*	-.13*	.25**	.48**	.03	(0.84)				
8. Psychological Well-Being	4.63	.66	.14*	.13	.14*	.10	.21**	.20**	.17*	(0.84)			
9. Work-Life Balance	3.56	.72	.09	.12	-.07	.03	.41**	.18*	.18*	.42**	(0.90)		
10. Work-to-Family Conflict	3.70	1.41	-.13*	-.06	.16*	-.01	-.22**	-.14*	-.26**	-.32**	-.50**	(0.90)	
11. Family-to-Work Conflict	2.89	1.39	-.10	.05	-.02	.08	-.20**	-.18**	-.18**	-.33**	-.32**	.54**	(0.91)

Note: N = 224, * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; two-tailed test. The numbers in parenthesis on the diagonal of the table are Chronbach's alpha estimate.

agree/disagree, very easy/difficult, never/almost always and extremely successful/unsuccessful, for example "How easy or difficult is it for you to balance the demands of your work and your personal and family life". A total average work-life balance score was calculated. High scores represented a good ability to balance work and personal life demands. Cronbach alpha was 0.90.

Control Variables.

Age, marital status, parental status and working hours were controlled for their influence on work-family experience and job outcomes. Dummy variables were created for gender (0 = male, 1 = female) and parental status (0 = not having any child, 1 = having at least one child) while, age (in years) and average no of working hours were on continuous scales.

Results

Table I shows the descriptive information and zero-order correlations among variables in the current study. As expected female managers and professionals reported higher levels of work interference with family (WFC) than family interference with work (FWC). The simple correlations in Table I provide

Table 2. Results of the Regression Analyses

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables									
	Job Satisfaction		Affective Commitment		Family Satisfaction		Psychological Well-being		Work-Life Balance	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Step 1 Control Variables										
Age	.16	.01	.29**	.23**	.06	.01	.12	.00	.11	-.02
Marital Status	-.03	-.04	-.10	-.11	.07	.08	.09	.08	.16	.14
Parental Status	.05	.11	.12	.17	-.05	-.01	-.05	.05	-.15	-.05
Average Working Hours	-.07	-.05	-.15*	-.12	-.04	-.03	.14	.16*	.07	.01
Step 2										
Work-to-Family Conflict (WFC)		-.14		-.18*		-.05		-.23**		-.45***
Family-to-Work Conflict (FWC)		-.13		-.07		-.17*		-.20**		-.06
R ²	.04	.09	.13	.18	.01	.04	.04	.17	.03	.25
Adjusted R ²	.02	.06	.11	.15	-.01	.02	.02	.15	.01	.23
Total F	2.03	3.39*	8.10***	7.74***	.46	1.57	2.22	17.09***	1.58	12.25***
R ² Change		.05	.13	.05	.01	.03	.04	.13	.03	.23
F Change		5.94**	8.10***	6.25**	.47	3.75*	2.22	7.39***	1.58	32.69***
Dfs	4,219	2,217	4,219	2,217	4,219	2,217	4,219	2,217	4,219	2,217

Note: N = 224, * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001; Values in the table are standardized beta coefficients. Model 1 includes only the variables listed in Step 1 and Model 2 includes the variables listed in Steps 1 and 2.

Female managers and professionals reported higher levels of work interference with family (WFC) than family interference with work (FWC).

preliminary support for almost all the hypotheses. WFC was positively and moderately associated with FWC ($r=0.54$, $p < 0.01$).

Hierarchical regressions were performed to test the study hypotheses. Results are presented in Table 2. They indicate that the control variables together, which were entered in the first step of regression, had no significant main effect on any of the dependent variables except on affective commitment ($F = 8.10$, $p < .01$).

The hypotheses H1a and H1b stated that WFC and FWC would be negatively related to job satisfaction. Results indicate non-significant relationships between WFC and job satisfaction as well as between FWC and job satisfaction. Thus, H1 received no support.

The hypotheses H2a and H2b stated that WFC and FWC would be negatively related to affective commitment. Results indicate only WFC was negatively related to affective commitment ($\beta = -0.18$, $p < .05$), providing support for hypothesis H2a.

The hypotheses H3a and H3b stated that WFC and FWC would be negatively related to family satisfaction. Only FWC was found to be negatively related to family satisfaction ($\alpha = -0.17$, $p < .05$),

providing support for only hypothesis H3b.

Hypotheses 4a and 4b posited that both WFC and FWC would be negatively related to psychological well-being. Both WFC ($\alpha = -0.23$, $p < .01$) and FWC, ($\alpha = -0.20$, $p < .01$) were negatively related to psychological well-being providing full support for hypothesis 4.

The hypotheses 5a and 5b posited that both WFC and FWC would be negatively related to perceived level of work-life balance. Results suggest that only WFC was negatively related to the level of work-life balance ($\alpha = -0.45$, $p < .001$) providing partial support for hypothesis 5.

Discussion

Overall, the findings replicate some of the earlier study results. At the same time, some interesting findings also have emerged from this study which need mention.

As expected female managers and professionals in this study reported higher levels of work interference with family (WFC) than family interference with work (FWC). Probably, women professionals rely on alternatives such as formal and informal social support to help them reduce their domestic burden. Earlier studies (Raut et al., 1999; Sekaran, 1992) also reported that Indian career women prefer to delegate domestic work to paid help, thus maintaining an equilibrium and avoiding conflict without increasing their own workload. Whereas,

the same support system they might not have gathered at the workplace.

It is widely accepted that work-family conflict has detrimental consequences in terms of lowered job satisfaction. Nonetheless, in the present study, the same was not found to be the case at least for Indian women employees. There was no significant correlation between any of the types of work-family conflict and job satisfaction. These findings contradict the findings of some of the recent studies in the Indian context (Aryee et al., 2005; Namasivayam & Zhao, 2007; Rathi & Barath, 2013). However, those studies did not exclusively focus only on the attitudes of women employees and gender differences were not examined on the link between work-family conflict and job satisfaction. This warrants further examination.

As expected, WFC was negatively associated with affective commitment. However, no association was found between FWC and affective commitment. The null association may be because affective commitment largely stems from the job source than the family source. The results of the study indicate that when female employees perceive that demands of their work role interfere with the fulfillment of the family roles then it may negatively influence their attitudes toward the job, which can further result in reduced commitment to the organization.

Overall, the above results did not fully support the domain specific conse-

quences of work-family conflict in the case of women employees. Researchers argue that the outcomes of work-family conflict reside in the domain receiving the conflict. For example, in the case of FWC, the detrimental effect will be seen in the job in terms of lowered job satisfaction (Frone et al., 1992; Kinnunen et al., 2010; Koyuncu et al., 2012).

With respect to family related consequences, the results of the study did not find support for the prediction that women managers who experience greater WFC would report lower family satisfaction. The null association may be because of social support from the family members which may buffer the negative association. When a female employee decides to take up a job and continue with her career, family support is very much necessary. For that reason, probably, a negative association between FWC and family satisfaction was observed. It means when a female manager is unhappy with the source of conflict (here family), it is logical that she will not be happy with her family life. In a way, the results actually provide support for attribution specific hypotheses of work-family conflict literature. It means when a female manager experiences higher level of family-to-work conflict she attributes that reason to family and feels dissatisfied with the family.

With regard to well-being related consequences, consistent with the expectation, women managers in India who perceived greater work-family conflict irrespective of the direction of conflict reported lower psychological well-being.

Respondents and their employing organizations might consider initiatives that reduce these conflicts since it affects the psychological health of women.

Given the limited number of studies to distinguish the two constructs of work-family conflict and perceived level of work-life balance (Hill et al., 2001), this study contributes to the work-family literature by providing support for the hypotheses that higher work-to-family conflict (WFC) would increase the perceived level of work-life balance. It means women employees assess their overall level of work-life balance to be low if work related stresses and strain affect their family lives. It seems logical given the kind of attachment and involvement Indian women show towards their family and family related responsibilities.

Implications

Despite that women are more prone towards work-family conflict, many studies espouse that women managers bring different perspective to solving business problems because of their gender. Organizations continuously are looking for women talents (Gupta, Koshal & Koshal, 1998). Based on the results of this study, organizations should take necessary action to minimize the work-family conflict (at least WFC) experienced by women to enhance job attitudes such as affective commitment, overall psychological well-being and perceived level of work-life balance. It has been noted that relatively very few Indian organizations undertake to support the retention and advancement of professional and manage-

rial women (Bharathi & Baral, 2012; Rajadhyaksha, 2012). Individuals and organizations will benefit in terms of women talent retention by considering ways of reducing levels of work-family conflict. One way to reduce work-family conflict is to schedule the working hours for women in such a way that they can get sufficient time for their spouse, children, and other family members, and can fulfill their family and social responsibilities. Organizations can create workplace policies and programs that promote greater work-life balance and reduce work-family conflict. These include flexible work arrangements, telecommuting, providing scope for part time work, reducing the emphasis on being physically present in the workplace when not necessary (face time), and rewarding results, not hours worked. More promising outcomes will be realized when organizations explicitly link employee needs (e.g. family responsibilities) with business goals. Although organizations in India are espousing values of gender equality and inclusiveness, these have not yet been realized in the lives of Indian women. This study's findings also suggest that understanding the challenges associated with women undertaking both work and family roles should be one of the potential starting points for introducing and implementing meticulously women and family-friendly initiatives.

Limitations & Future Scope

Use of self-reported measures and cross-sectional design of the research are some of the limitations of this study. The respondents for this study were mainly

from private organizations situated in one of the metro cities of India. So, it is not certain if the results would generalize to other regions in India or to women in the public sector where working women account for higher proportions. In future, replicating the study with a larger sample of women from both public and private sectors would address the issue of generalizability. Most importantly, one may argue that the hypotheses tested in this study could apply to any population including men (not simply Indian managerial women). Future studies are required to make the results credible by comparing the results with a contrast group. Assessments of the amount and quality of spouse/partner support, family and organizational support would add other important contextual variables to the research. Inclusion of only married women with children might prove to be a better test of the effects of work-family conflict.

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