



IMPACT OF WORK AND FAMILY SPECIFIC VARIABLES ON WORK INVOLVEMENT AND INTER ROLE CONFLICT

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Abstract

Demands exerted on an individual in the work front and home front is a major determinant of the ability to balance work and life. Such demands can be perceived as contradictory or complementary depending upon the personality and circumstances of an individual. Over five decades the effect of job demands on employees is examined in organizational psychology literature and role theory states the effect that job demands can have on work-family conflict. Such challenges are also posed by family life or family demands for working people. Similarly there is research evidence linking work involvement to work-family conflict and family involvement to family-work conflict (Adams, King, & King, 1996; Frone et al., 1992). High involvement in a role may be related to work-family conflict because it increases the focal person's awareness of and preoccupation with problems within that role, thereby increasing the likelihood of perceiving that role as interfering with the demands of other roles. The current study seeks to understand the impact of work and family demands on involvement and inter role conflict of women employees in the IT sector of Kerala.

Key words: Inter role conflict, Work demands, Work involvement, IT sector, Work-family conflict, Family-work conflict.

Introduction

Conflicting demands emanating from the duties and responsibilities associated with multiple roles played by women is the cause for role overload and subsequent role conflict. Work life balance is popularly viewed as absence of conflict in the respective domains of work and family. Higgins et al (1992) affirms that people have less control over their work lives than their family lives and implies that work operates as a dominant constraint over an individual. Their study proved work-family conflict to have a significant negative influence on an individual's quality of work life and quality of family life, which, in turn, were highly related to life satisfaction. Good work life balance and well-being can be achieved when there is no role conflict, and when people are satisfied with their work and family roles (Clark, 2000). The focus on the domains of work and family is vital as family and work are regarded as the most important elements of everyone's life, and any competing demands from work and family life cause conflict and negatively affect the wellbeing of workers (Clark, 2000; Frone, 2000).

The term 'Work Involvement' signifies the value of work in an employee's life which is a function of historical cultural conditioning and socialization. Involvement with work in general or the centrality of work in one's life is a normative belief about the value of work in one's life, and it is more a function of one's past cultural conditioning or socialization (Kanungo, 1982). High level of family involvement is also found to be positively correlated to family-work conflict and leads to work life imbalance. Socio-demographic variables have often been used as control variables when studying the predictors and consequences of work-family conflict, as these variables have consistently been associated with work-family conflict. Hence, the present study applies the traditional concept and uses certain work specific and family specific profile variables instead of a qualitative scale to assess the impact of work demands

and family demands on work life balance. The study centres around measuring the impact of selected work and family specific variables on work involvement , family involvement, work-family conflict and family-work conflict.

Review of Literature

Although the impact of family demands on the experiences of work-family conflict has not been studied as extensively as the effect of job demands on work-family conflict, it has been established that certain characteristics of family life contributes toward the experiences of work-family conflict and is positively related to work-family conflict (Baruch, Biener, Barnett, 1987; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Greenhaus et al (2001) studied the moderating effect of involvement in career and family on work family conflict and withdrawal from profession among the members of AICPA who were married with children. The results indicated that work family conflict was related to withdrawal intentions and behavior which were stronger in individuals who were found to have relatively low involvement in their careers, in comparison to those who were highly involved. The study did not find any relationship or interaction between family involvement and WFC . In another study Greenhaus et al (2003) assessed three components of work–family balance : time balance (equal time devoted to work and family), involvement balance (equal involvement in work and family), and satisfaction balance (equal satisfaction with work and family) and found that an equally high investment of time and involvement in work and family would reduce work–family conflict and stress thereby enhancing an individual’s quality of life. The personality and responsibilities in the family sphere have a final say in the attitude of involvement of an individual in the family activities compromising work schedule or requirements. Highly involved employees are likely to believe in the work ethic, to exhibit high growth needs, and to enjoy participation in decision making. As a result, they seldom absent, are willing to work long hours and they will attempt to be high performers (Newstrom & Davis, 1997). Although role involvement may lead to work–family conflict, it can potentially enable individuals to integrate their work and family roles. Dautuvar & Anjali (1997) explored the influence of occupational stress, organizational commitment, job involvement and personality of lower and middle level managers working in electrical manufacturing company in western India. Result revealed significant positive correlation between job involvement and several areas of occupational stress, organizational commitment and personality types. Greenhaus et al (2001) studied the moderating effect of involvement in career and family on work family conflict and withdrawal from profession among the members of AICPA who were married with children. The results indicated that work family conflict was related to withdrawal intentions and behavior which were stronger in individuals who were found to have relatively low involvement in their careers, in comparison to those who were highly involved. The study did not find any relationship or interaction between family involvement and WFC . In another study Greenhaus et al (2003) assessed three components of work–family balance : time balance (equal time devoted to work and family), involvement balance (equal involvement in work and family), and satisfaction balance (equal satisfaction with work and family) and found that an equally high investment of time and involvement in work and family would reduce work–family conflict and stress thereby enhancing an individual’s quality of life.

Objectives of the study

1. To identify the work specific and family specific variables which influence the dimensions of work-life balance.
2. To assess the impact of work and family demands on work and family involvement
3. To understand the effect of selected variables on inter role conflict.

Research Methodology

The current study is confined to the urban agglomeration of Kochi and is descriptive and analytic in nature. The sample of the study is 513 women employees working in the IT/ITeS companies and is purely based on primary data and employs the survey method by administering a structured questionnaire for data collection using random sampling technique. In order to portray the dominant characteristics of the dimensions used in the study, descriptive analysis using mean and standard deviation is performed. Differences between two groups in the mean scores of variables are studied using Student t test. ANOVA followed by Duncan Multiple Range Test (DMRT) is used to analyse differences among groups and the results are discussed here.

The demographic and socio economic variables of the women employees working in the IT sector are classified into work specific characteristics and family specific characteristics. The socio economic variables recognised as ‘work specific’ by the present study are. Designation, Experience, Monthly salary and Works hours. The important demographic variables in the family domain included in the study are marital status, number of children , family type and type of residence.

Results and Discussion

Work Involvement is the general attitude that reflects the importance an individual attaches to ones work. Family Involvement represents willingness of an individual to focus on the family by exerting more efforts in family activities beyond the expectations of family members. A work involved employee derives intrinsic satisfaction from the job itself and will strive to learn about performing the job more effectively. Work- family conflict is also influenced by the level of involvement, hence it is included as a construct in the study to assess work life balance . The scale used to measure work involvement consists of 12 items based on the scales developed by Kanungo (1982) and Lodahl & Kejner (1965) Likewise, the personality and responsibilities in the family sphere have a final say in the attitude of involvement of an individual in the family activities compromising work schedule or requirements. Hence is included in the study to assess the impact on conflict in the domains and resultant satisfaction with work life balance. The scale consists of nine variables.

“Inter-role conflict occurs when a person experiences pressures within one role that are incompatible with the pressures that arise within another role” (Kopelman et al 1983). Frone (2003) states that “the measurable four aspects of the balance between work and family roles are: (a) work-family conflict, (b) family-work conflict, (c) work-family enhancement, and (d) family-work enhancement.” Due to relatedness of the domains, participation in the work role affects the performance in the family role, and similarly participation in the family role may interfere or enhance performance in the work role. The items in the scales used to measure WFC and FWC has been adapted from Netemeyer et al (1996) with slight modifications.

In this study, the reliability of the study coefficients were estimated for the scales, such as work involvement, family involvement, work family conflict and family work conflict

Work specific variables

Designation, Experience, Work hours and constitute the selected work specific profile variables that act as work demands for the study. To understand whether these variables influence the women employee's perception of work life balance the following hypothesis have been formulated.

Hypothesis (H₁) : Family specific profile variables create a significant difference on the women employees' perception on the dimensions of Work and Family Involvement and Inter-role conflict

Table 1.1: ANOVA with respect to Designation

Dimensions	Designation				F-value	P-value
	Programmers	System Analyst	Managers	Others		
WI	44.75	44.53	45.97	43.98	2.629	0.050
	(5.04)	(5.39)	(4.07)	(5.82)		0.013
FI	35.90	35.92	36.78	35.10	2.220	0.085
	(4.28)	(4.28)	(2.98)	(5.01)		0.244
WFC	18.53 ^a	18.61 ^{ab}	21.17 ^b	18.92 ^a	2.924	<0.001**
	(5.14)	(5.48)	(3.11)	(5.11)		<0.001**
FWC	19.39 ^b	17.09 ^b	21.25 ^b	17.33 ^a	7.540	<0.001**
	(6.68)	(6.18)	(5.65)	(5.59)		<0.001**

Source: Primary data and calculated.

Note: 1. The value within bracket refers to SD
 2. ** denotes significant at 1% level
 3. * denotes significant at 5% level
 4. Different alphabet among age group denotes significant at 5% level using Duncan Multiple Range Test (DMRT).

As reported in table 1.1 above, Analysis of variance and post-hoc test results indicates significant difference in perception (p value 0.001) with regard to the factors of Work family conflict, Family work conflict, whereas the p- value is not significant with respect to work and family involvement. Hence we conclude that differences in Designation influences the employees perception of inter role conflict ,but not involvement.

Table 1.2: ANOVA with respect to Experience

Dimensions	Experience in years				F value	P value
	Upto 2	2-5	5-8	Above 8		
WI	43.52 ^a	44.93 ^{ab}	45.80 ^b	44.93 ^{ab}	4.921	0.002**
	(4.98)	(5.45)	(5.99)	(4.07)		
FI	34.15 ^a	36.09 ^b	36.55 ^b	36.95 ^b	11.782	<0.001**
	(4.47)	(3.59)	(4.92)	(4.13)		
WFC	19.15 ^b	19.23 ^b	20.12 ^b	17.41 ^a	4.396	0.005*
	(4.94)	(4.65)	(5.17)	(5.53)		
FWC	17.82 ^b	19.78 ^c	21.23 ^c	14.99 ^a	18.688	<0.001**

(5.59) (6.73) (6.71) (4.40)

Source: Primary data and calculated.

Note: 1. The value within bracket refers to SD

2. ** denotes significant at 1% level

3. * denotes significant at 5% level

As depicted in table 1.2 above, the p-value is less than 0.01, hence there is significant difference with respect to years of experience of women employees with regard to the perception

on work involvement, family involvement, work family conflict and family work conflict, since

the p-value is less than 0.01. It can thus be inferred that work experience significantly influences

the employees' perception on all four constructs.

Table 1.3: ANOVA with respect to Monthly Salary

Dimensions of WLB	Monthly Salary(Rs.)				F-value	P-value
	Upto 20000	20001-30000	30001-40000	Above 40000		
WI	44.14 (5.59)	45.32 (5.28)	44.42 (4.82)	44.98 (4.59)	1.631	0.181
FI	35.21 (4.62)	35.62 (4.33)	36.20 (3.56)	36.40 (5.31)	1.639	0.179
WFC	19.03 ^{ab} (4.90)	20.29 ^b (4.98)	17.72 ^a (5.22)	18.64 ^a (5.03)	5.295	0.001**
FWC	17.47 ^a (5.53)	20.42 ^b (7.16)	19.48 ^b (6.17)	17.62 ^a (6.19)	7.759	<0.001**

Source: Primary data and calculated.

Note: 1. The value within bracket refers to SD

2. ** denotes significant at 1% level

3. * denotes significant at 5% level

4. Different alphabet among work hours denotes significant at 5% level using Duncan Multiple Range Test (DMRT)

As per table 1.3, there is significance difference among monthly salary of women employees with respect to the perception of WFC and FWC, but it is inferred that salary does not influence the dimensions of work involvement and family involvement.

Table 1.4- ANOVA of Working Hours

Dimensions	Working hours per week			F value	P value
	Upto 40	41-50	Above 50		
WI	45.08 (4.78)	44.62 (5.61)	44.00 (4.42)	0.888	0.412
FI	35.70 (4.17)	35.65 (4.64)	35.33 (3.92)	0.179	0.836
WFC	19.52 ^a (5.15)	18.31 ^a (4.94)	22.43 ^b (3.94)	22.485	<0.001**

FWC	21.30 ^b (7.33)	17.57 ^a (5.68)	20.49 ^b (6.48)	17.827	<0.001**
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Source: Primary data and calculated.

Note: 1. The value within bracket refers to SD

2. ** denotes significant at 1% level

3. * denotes significant at 5% level

4. Different alphabet among work hours denotes significant at 5% level using Duncan Multiple Range Test (DMRT)

Table 1.4 denotes significant difference with regard to work hours of women employees on their perception of work family conflict and family work conflict. However, work load does not have a bearing on the employees' perception of work involvement and family involvement.

The Hypothesis H1 stands accepted with respect to all the selected work related variables on inter-role conflict, whereas only experience of employees was found to influence the dimensions of work involvement and family involvement.

Family Specific Profile Variables and the Perception on Involvement and Conflict

Women employees seek employment not merely for financial independence but to offer better facilities for their family members and thereby derive contentment and good quality of life.. Hence an attempt is made in the study to understand the impact of selected family specific profile variables that tend to impose family demands on the women employees, such as marital status, number of children , family type and type of residence on their perception of the dimensions of work life balance. The following hypothesis has been formulated:

Hypothesis (H₂) : Family specific profile variables create a significant difference on the women employees' perception on the dimensions of Work and Family Involvement and Inter-role conflict

Table 2.1: t - test of Marital Status on WLB

	Marital Status				t-value	P value
	Unmarried		Married			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
WI	43.80	5.66	45.19	4.96	2.952	0.003**
FI	34.25	4.75	36.57	3.95	6.023	<.001**
WFC	18.42	4.89	19.65	5.11	2.734	.006**
FWC	17.59	5.36	19.50	6.85	3.384	0.001**

Source: Primary data and calculated.

Note: ** denotes significant at 1% level

Table 2.1 depicts that there is significant difference between married and unmarried women employees with regard to the factors of Work involvement($t=2.952$, $p=.003$) Family involvement ($t=6.023$, $p<.001$), Work Family Conflict($t=2.734$, $p=.006$), Family-work conflict ($t=3.384$, $p<.001$),

Table 2.2-- ANOVA of Number of Children

Dimensions of WLB	Number of children				F-value	P-value
	Childfree	One	Two	Three and above		
WI	43.65 ^a (5.48)	45.81 ^b (5.35)	45.86 ^b (3.15)	45.00 ^b (4.99)	3.949	0.009**
FI	36.05 (4.01)	36.91 (4.14)	36.46 (3.86)	37.29 (1.54)	.971	0.407
WFC	19.82 ^a (4.68)	18.70 ^a (4.82)	20.36 ^a (5.80)	22.93 ^b (4.18)	4.009	0.008**
FWC	18.08 ^a (5.78)	18.79 ^{ab} (7.22)	21.41 ^{bc} (6.96)	23.36 ^c (5.58)	5.424	0.001**

Source: Primary data and calculated.

Note: ** denotes significant at 1% level

The table 2.2 reports that number of children of the employees influence the perception on the constructs of WI, WFC and FWC ($p < .050$) whereas it does not influence Family involvement.

Table 2.3: t- test of Family Type on WLB

Dimensions	Type of Family				F-value	P-value
	Joint		Nuclear			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
WI	44.20	4.84	44.79	5.48	1.162	0.246
FI	35.63	5.55	35.61	3.90	0.058	0.954
WFC	90.68	14.50	89.90	12.89	0.598	0.550
FWC	32.16	5.43	33.01	5.08	1.689	0.092

Source: Primary data and calculated.

Note: ** denotes significant at 1% level

As evident in Table 2.2, the P value is not significant on the any of the dimensions. Hence family type does not influence employees perception of involvement and conflict.

Table 2.4 t- test of area of residence on WLB

Dimensions	Type of Residence				t-value	P-value
	Urban		Rural			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
WI	44.39	5.26	44.92	5.34	1.108	0.268
FI	35.49	4.59	35.78	4.24	0.746	0.456
WFC	18.34	4.79	20.23	5.20	4.258	<0.001**

FWC	17.26	5.49	20.68	6.88	6.259	<0.001**
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Source: Primary data and calculated.

Note: ** denotes significant at 1% level

Table 2.4 depicts that there is significant difference at 1% level with respect to residential status on the factors of WFC ($t=4.258$, $p<.001$) and FWC ($t=6.259$, $p<.001$), but area of residence is not found to impact the dimensions of work involvement and family involvement.

The hypothesis H2 stands accepted with respect to all the selected family specific variables on WFC and FWC excluding family type. Irrespective of being in a nuclear or joint family, women employees' perception of inter-role conflict does not differ significantly. Further it is also inferred that involvement in work and family is significant only with respect to marital status.

Conclusion

This research piece tried to explore the impact of selected profile variables on the identified dimensions of work life balance using ANOVA and post-hoc DMRT. The variables were classified as work specific and family specific, which impose work demands and family demands respectively on the women employees, thereby influencing their ability to strike a balance between work and life. It was found that in comparison to family specific variables, the work specific variables were found to exert more influence on the employees work life balance, as majority of the dimensions are being impacted by work demands. Under family specific variables, marital status was found to significantly influence the identified dimensions.

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