

Impact of Perceived Organizational Support for Work Life Balance on the Job Outcomes of the Dual Career Couples in Private Sector Banks in Colombo, Sri Lanka

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Abstract—In Sri Lanka, studies on dual-career couples are a still new concept to explore much. Though several decades have passed since the phrase was first introduced, no initiatives were taken to identify work life balance of dual career-couples in Sri Lanka, in establishing relationship between their perceived organizational support for work life balance and job outcomes. Thus, based on this empirical and knowledge gap in this area, this study attempts to investigate the impact of perceived organizational support for work life balance on the job outcomes of the dual career couples in private sector banks in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Based on the literature survey, conceptual framework has developed to test the degree of impact of perceived organizational support for work life balance on the job outcomes of the dual career couples. The data was collected from 50 dual career couples in selected private sector banks in Colombo district, Sri Lanka, by using a structured questionnaire, with five points Likert scale. Therefore this study is quantitative in nature. The data analysis included the univariate and bivariate analyses and it was done by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 16.0 version. Pearson correlations and regression analysis had used to find out the nature of relationship and impact between the variables.

According to the findings of the study, perceived organizational support for work life balance was positively correlate and impact on the job outcomes of dual career couples. Furthermore, findings revealed that the enriched job and supervisor support had more impact on job outcomes of dual career couples than the work-family benefits and policies and work family culture. Thus, it is concluded that the perceived organizational support for work life balance is an important factor to improve the job outcomes of dual career couples in private banks in Colombo district, Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Dual career couples, Job outcomes, Perceived organizational support, Work life balance

1. INTRODUCTION

Several decades ago there was a global social pattern where husbands were considered as the breadwinners of the family, whereas wives stayed at home and were mainly engaged in bringing up their children and doing household tasks (Jyothi

and Neelakantan, 2013). However, as families increasingly need two salaries to be economically feasible and as men's and women's roles have changed in both workplace and at home and the women participation have increased in the paid labor force and therefore the number of dual career couples have increased dramatically for all time in global level (Haddock et al, 2006). As a result, today both, husbands and wives have their own career aspirations and this trend has caused a range of implications for their families, as well as, for their employing organizations (Jyothi and Neelakantan, 2013). According to Thurairajah (2013) none of the organization can achieve its objectives without a certain level of career satisfaction and having conflict between work and family from its employees. Therefore work-life balance has become a subject matter of concern to scholars as well as business leaders because of the contemporary demographic, technological, environmental changes and changes in the individual expectations and aspirations (Baral and Bhargava, 2010).

Greenhaus et al (2003) defined work-family balance as the extent to which individuals are equally engaged in and equally satisfied with work and family roles. Issues of work and family have always been a part of our life and work life and family life are linked together and each can affect to the other in both positive and negative ways (Haddock et al, 2006). According to the Abele and Volmer (2011) employers are in much interested in managing their human resources and they will provide tools to support dual career couples to arrange their work life and family life successfully and sometimes organizations will react to their specific needs when dual career couples provides a competitive advantage to the organization. Eisenberger et al (1986) suggested that employee perception of the organization's commitment to them, referred to as perceived organizational support and it is based on employees' global beliefs concerning the extent to

which the organization values their contributions and cares about their wellbeing.

According to Hall and Richter (1989) many organizations value the importance of work-life balance and have a sincere desire to address it. This trend has forced organizations to introduce interventions for helping employees to manage the competing demands of work and family lives while being productive at the work place (Baral and Bhargava, 2010). Some of these interventions are, enriched job, providing benefits and policies, providing social support (supervisor support) and developing a family-friendly organizational culture (work-family culture). According to the findings of Baral and Bhargava (2010), it shows a positive impact of such interventions on job outcomes such as degree of job satisfaction, level of commitment and engagement in organizational citizenship behaviors. But there is no any adequate workplace norm and practices have responded to these demographic shifts and work-life balance problems yet (McCarthy et al, 2013). It is important therefore, to examine the impact of perceived organizational support for work-life balance on job outcomes of dual-career couples in private sector banks in Colombo District, Sri Lanka, which has not been adequately addressed yet.

2. PROBLEM BACKGROUND AND THE PROBLEM OF THE STUDY

In the 21st century it is a challenge for many working families to maintain a balance between work life and family life. Therefore dual-career couples face many stressors in balancing career, family, social obligations and work expectations (Baral and Bhargava, 2010). As a result, society has recognized the conflicts unique to dual-career couples (e.g. number of hours worked per week, the amount and frequency of overtime required, an inflexible work schedule, unsupportive supervisor, and an inhospitable organizational culture) and has responded (Abele and Volmer, 2011).

As described by Wei et al (2013), conflicts between competing work and family demands can have negative effects at the workplace, at home and on the individual, while work-life balance interventions can reduce the stress associated with balancing multiple roles. Therefore nowadays, organizations tend to introduce specific measures and initiatives in order to assist their dual-career couples to achieve work-life balance, and thus to achieve their commitment and contribution to the achievement of organizational objectives in an effective manner (Baral and Bhargava, 2010). Further they mentioned that, the need for a balance between work and personal life has become an integral element of employee expectations from employers.

Since, dual-career couples have additional family responsibilities on the top of their professional responsibilities, balancing both of these responsibilities proves to be a highly challenging task to accomplish and may cause pressure and stress for employees that will consequently lead to lower job

outcomes at work, as well as, issues in maintaining good family relationships (Karatepe, 2012). Therefore organizations need to be more proactive rather than reactive in terms of assisting their employees to deal with these issues.

Though there are many western country researches were conducted on the perceived organizational support for work-life balance and its impact on job outcomes, it is very rare to find such researches in Sri Lankan context. Thus there is a need to fulfill the existing knowledge gap in this area. Hence, the problem statement of this study is *to what extent the perceived organizational support for work-life balance impact on the job outcomes of dual-career couples in private sector banks in Colombo district, Sri Lanka.*

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Based on the literature survey, perceived organizational support for work-life balance has identified as the independent variable and the job outcomes of dual-career couples has identified as the dependent variable of this study. According to the conceptual framework of this study, perceived organizational support for work life balance has divided into two main categories such as, formal organizational support and informal organizational support (refer figure 1).

According to the Baral and Bhargava (2010) work-life benefits and policies and enriched job has considered as the formal dimensions of the perceived organizational support for work life balance, while supervisor support and work-family culture has considered as the informal dimensions of the perceived organizational support for work life balance (Behson, 2005).

The conceptual framework of this study as follows:

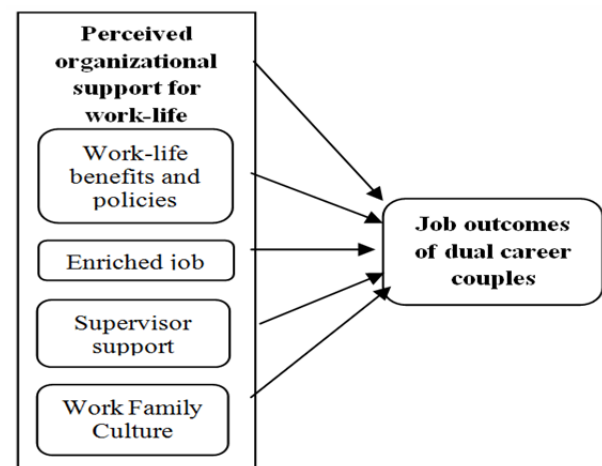


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

As per the Wayne and Shore (1993) perceived organizational support for work life balance creates a feeling of obligation to serve for achieving organizational goals. Employees with high levels of perceived organizational support, judge their jobs

more favorably (e.g. increase job satisfaction, organization commitment, and organization citizenship behavior) and are more invested in their organization (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002).

4. RESEARCH METHOD

Population of the study is professional dual career couples who work in few selected private sector banks in Colombo district, Sri Lanka. The 'Snowball' sampling method is applied to collect information about the dual-career couples in Sri Lanka, because no government departments are preparing the data about dual-earner families in Sri Lanka. Therefore, it is very difficult to know the exact size of the population. So, the Snowball sampling method was preferred instead of other methods of sample selection. Therefore, by the personal observation of the researcher, approximately sample size was 50 respondents who are between 18-45 years of age, with at least one child, educated at least up to Advance Level were selected for this study.

In order to achieve the objective of the study both primary and secondary data collection methods were used as well as quantitative and qualitative data gathering approaches were used. In this context, "Questionnaire" was used as a primary data collection method while "Official Records and Documents" were used as secondary data collection method.

The data collected from primary (questionnaire) source were analyzed using the computer based statistical data analysis package, SPSS (version 16.0) for validity, reliability and relationship testing. The data analysis included univariate and bivariate analyses.

5. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

This study has developed five main hypotheses for testing and the discussions will be carried out using the results of the Pearson's Correlation analysis and the results of Regression analysis. The entire null hypotheses were tested using those results. As all hypotheses were concerned with a positive relationship ($H > 0$), two-tailed test was used in the correlation analysis.

The first objective of this study was to examine the relationships between perceived organizational support for work-life balance and job outcomes of dual career couples. As expected, it was found that there is a positive relationship between perceived organizational support for work life balance and job outcomes of dual career couples in private banks in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The Pearson correlation between the two variables of perceived organizational support for work life balance and job outcomes of dual career couples is 0.393, which is moderately positive. Hence, the found relationship is statistically significant as correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2-tailed). Thus, it can be statistically claimed that there is moderate positive relationship between

perceived organizational support for work life balance and job outcomes of dual career couples in private banks in Colombo district, Sri Lanka.

As per result of regression analysis between the perceived organizational support for work life balance and job outcomes of dual career couples, the regression coefficient (b) is 0.522, which is significant at 1% (sig. $T=0.005$). Therefore, according to the results of both tests, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Hence the data support the hypothesis that there is positive impact between perceived organizational support for work life balance and job outcomes of dual career couples in private bank in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

According to the results of the Pearson's correlation, it can be seen that, there is a negligible relationship between work family benefits and policies and job outcomes of dual career couples in private banks in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

The value of the Pearson correlation between work family benefits and policies and job outcomes of dual career couples is 0.061 which is significant at 1% ($p=0.337$) and it is a weak or negligible relationship. Hence, the found relationship is statistically insignificant and therefore it can be statistically claimed that there is no relationship between work family benefits and policies and job outcomes of dual career couples.

As per the result of regression analysis between work-life benefits and policies and job outcomes of dual career couples, the regression coefficient (b) is 0.128, which is significant at 1% (sig. $T=0.674$).

According to the results of both tests, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Hence the data support the hypothesis that there is weak positive impact between work-life benefits and policies and job outcomes of dual career couples in private bank in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The results are consistent with the findings of past researches such as Barala and Barghava, (2010) and Wayne et al. (2006). The reasons for such findings may be attributed to the fact that the measures of work family benefits and policies identified in this study are of more generic in nature and specific policies, benefits and programmes for work-life balance of dual career couples are not very common even in high performing private banks in Sri Lanka.

According to the results of Pearson's Correlation analysis of work family culture and job outcomes of dual career couples, the correlation coefficient is 0.219, which is significant at 1% ($p=0.063$). As per result of regression analysis between work family culture and job outcomes of dual career couples, the regression coefficient (b) is 0.143, which is significant at 1% (sig. $T=0.127$).

Therefore, according to the results of both tests, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Hence the data support the hypothesis that there is

positive impact between work family culture and job outcomes of dual career couples in private bank in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

According to the past literature of Baral and Bhargava (2010) and Hackman and Oldham (1974) employees who perceived their jobs to be high on core job characteristics were more likely to report higher levels of job satisfaction, affective commitment and engagement in organizational citizenship behaviours. These findings are in the line with this study findings.

According to the results of Pearson's Correlation analysis of supervisor support and job outcomes of dual career couples, the correlation coefficient is 0.313, which is significant at 1% ($p=0.013$). As per result of regression analysis between supervisor support and job outcomes of dual career couples, the regression coefficient (b) is 0.327, which is significant at 1% (sig. $T=0.027$). Therefore, according to the results of both tests, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Hence the data support the hypothesis that there is positive impact between supervisor support and job outcomes of dual career couples in private bank in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

The findings of Behson (2005) suggest that informal aspects of the work environment such as supervisor and co-worker support explain greater share of the variance associated with employee outcomes than formal benefits and policies. Consistent with these past researches, it has found a positive relationship between supervisor support and job outcomes of dual career couples, which suggests that employees may feel the obligation to return the supportive behaviour in terms of job satisfaction, organizational commitment and organization citizenship behaviour when provided with supervisor support. Supervisor support possibly creates an obligation to indulge more in in-role behaviours than extra-role behaviours such as citizenship behaviours (Wayne and Shore, 1993).

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Therefore, according to the results of both tests, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Hence the data support the hypothesis that there is positive impact between work family culture and job outcomes of dual career couples in private bank in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Most researches have investigated the direct associations between work-family culture and employee outcomes. As per the findings of the Baral and Bhargava (2010) Work-family culture is positively related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior. As per

the findings of Eisenberger et al, (1986), if workers perceive that their organization culture shows concern and sensitivity to its employees and their needs and values including work-family needs, they will respond by showing positive job-related outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behaviour. According to the social exchange theory, work-family culture can be conceived as an organization-based resource, which should lead to many positive employee outcomes (Wayne and Shore, 1993). From the dual career couples' point of view, supportive work-family culture would be more important to women due to their gender-reinforced needs and greater sensitivity to support them in work-family settlement (Wayne and Shore, 1993).

6. RECOMMENDATIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND FURTHER STUDIES

The findings of this study have practical implications for organizations and dual career couples. Considering the significant positive associations of job characteristics and supervisor support with work life balance as well as job outcomes of dual career couples, organizations may enhance the quality of employees' work and family lives by redesigning jobs and enhancing supervisor support. Job-redesigning can be done by providing more autonomy, skill variety, task significance, task identity and feedback for dual career couples. Supervisor support can be increased by providing training to supervisors to better deal with dual career couples' work-life balance issues. Considering the role of work-family culture in enhancing the level of job satisfaction and organizational commitment, employers should take initiatives to develop a family-friendly culture and thus to achieve the citizenship behaviour from the dual career couples.

Given the insignificant association between work-family benefits and policies and job outcomes of dual career couples organization can improve the relationship with dual career couples by enhancing the level of work life balance. For that purpose, organizations can make efforts to introduce any kind of intervention which will be meaningful and effective. Thus, organizations not only should make strategic efforts to develop dual career couples through organizational interventions, but also should consider their family as integral part and facilitator of dual career couples as well as organizational outcomes.

Further research studies are suggested to carry out to examine the problems face by the dual career couples when balancing their work and family life and to find out some other various types of organizational interventions or other dimensions of perceived organizational support for work life balance and to investigate the effect on both job outcomes and work family enrichment of dual career couples in Sri Lanka.

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