Identifying the Various Aspects of Work Family Conflict: A Review

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Abstract—*Work-family conflict has become a matter of great concern over last few decades. There is a great amount of spill over among the two and that is a reason and an area of concern so that the amount of stress, anxiety, absenteeism, conflicts can be reduced and productivity at both fronts can be enhanced. The current paper is an attempt by the researcher to explore the various aspects and reasons of work-family conflict.*

1. INTRODUCTION

It is getting increasingly challenging for the individuals to secure harmony in the middle of work and family life. The modern world of work characterized by constant change and economic instability has brought about more prominent demands being put on employees. Organizations need their employees to be emotionally and cognitively dedicated to their work in order to remain competitive in the twenty-first century. Therefore, the employees are working for longer hours and encountering greater demands at workplace. This increased pressure to perform has made it more challenging for the employees to satisfy their family expectations.

The phenomenon of work-family conflict has received considerable research attention in recent years, owing to the significant impact it may have on the health and well-being of individuals as well as on organizational outcomes. This study focuses on the review of literature of work-family conflicts reasons and various aspects.

Work and family represent two of the most important aspects of adult life. Each of these variables contributes extraordinarily to our understanding of human behavior. Although researchers have analyzed both variables theoretically and empirically, generally the examinations of these two essential domains have been conducted independently of each other. However researchers have long speculated that these two variables are connected and have since discovered that this relationship has developed in the form of a conflict.

The current paper explores the major review of literature to find out the major aspects of work-family conflict.

2. THE METHODOLOGY

The entire exposition has been prepared on the basis of deductive reasoning. The exposition mainly addresses the issues related to work family conflict and major reasons for the same. Through this exposition, the author expects the future researchers to undertake researches in the empirical setting of the society for their practical feasibility and fair success. In a way, the exposition is based on exploratory work but it is theoretical in a sense that its issues have not been studied in the empirical setting.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Hasan, Muhammad, Imran (2009) study, conflict is a state in which two or more parties have contradictory objectives and in which their perception and behavior is appropriate with that incompatibility (Mack, 1965). Conflict is a foreseeable authenticity. It may not blur away nor overlooked (Michael and Wayne, 2001; Medina, Munduate, Dorado, Martinez and Guerra, 2005). It is found in individual, group or organizational interaction. Conflict is either "good or bad" and "sinful or immoral". It assumes significance once it is taken care of intelligently. At the point, when the conflict is taken care of unskillfully, and severely, it becomes detrimental and when it is taken care of ethically and creatively, it stops to be frightening and incapacitated, and results in development, maturity and strengthening for individual, group and organization.

Work and family constitute two of the most essential parts of a person's life (Theunissen et al., 2003). Already in the 1960"s and 1970"s, the difficulties posed by the relationship between these two aspects produced significant research interest (McLellan & Uys, 2009). Barnett (1999) is of the opinion that the idea of work and family kept on picking up research attention in the 1980"s – a period in which the limits in the middle of work and family were more particular than they are today. Interest in the spheres of work and family life kept on increasing in the 1990's with researchers having a tendency to concentrate on the differences in anxiety levels between genders, work-family conflicts and adapting (Phillips &

Imhoff, 1997). During this period, the research emphasis was on the relationship between negative well-being outcomes (such as burnout, anxiety and fatigue) and individual-, family-, and work elements (McLelland & Uvs, 2009).

In the 21st century, the phenomenon of work and family is more predominant than ever before. As a consequence of an increasingly competitive work force, employees are confronted with higher demands and increasing pressure to perform (Lewis et al., 2003). Moreover, the desire to continuously enhance household standards has brought about numerous people working harder to satisfy their expanding financial needs (Polach, 2003). Technological and telecommunications advancements, including cellular phones, pagers, portable computers, and the internet, have further affected the work-family interface, as employees have ended up becoming more mobile and have the capacity to work for longer hours and from a variety of areas (Pery-Jenkins, Repetti, & Crouter, 2000; Polach, 2003). Subsequently, the boundaries between family and work domains have gotten to be significantly blurred, which makes it progressively challenging for people to discover a harmony between these two circles of life (Koekemoer & Mostert, 2010a).

The challenge of securing a balance within the work-family interface is getting increasingly prevalent among women (Franks et al., 2006). This is not unexpected, given the recent influx of women into the work, which is a worldwide trend (Elloy & Smith, 2003). For example, the United States of America (US Census Bureau, 2005) and Australia (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001) has reported increasing numbers of women joining the workforce. South Africa is no special case to this global phenomenon (Patel, Govender, Paruk, & Ramgoon, 2006). Information got from releases of the Quarterly Labor Force Survey by Statistics South Africa show that female employment in South Africa expanded from 48 percent in 1995 to 64 percent in 2001 (Casale, 2004). As indicated by the Statistics South Africa (2010), the female share of wage employment (excluding agriculture) has increased in recent years and in 2010, constituted 45 percent. Besides, it is expected that the female labour force in South Africa will grow more quickly than its male counterpart in the years to come (Franks et al., 2006).

Bardoel et al. (2008) recognized the major issues that have contributed to work-family issues in Australia and New Zealand between 2004-2007. The identified issues were grouped in eight categories i.e., organization approaches to work life and work family issues, work characteristics, occupations/industries, government policy and legislation, health outcome issues related to work life, family structure and children, gender and other additional issues. Some researchers like Gutek et al. (1991), Frone et al. (1992a), Williams and Alliger (1994), Eagle et al. (1997), Frone et al. (1997), Hammer et al. (1997), Hsieh et 35 al. (2005), Wesley and Muthuswamy (2005), Kinnunen and Mauno (2007) and Rajadhyaksha and Ramadoss (2010) have concentrated on

evaluating work family conflicts among employees in various situations and also identified the direction of spillovers.

Several definitions of work-family conflict exist, the majority of which have re conceptualized work-family conflicts from a one-dimensional to a multidimensional construct (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). The multidimensional hypothesis radiated from the belief that the boundary differentiating work and family areas is permeable (Rotondo et al., 2003). One's work role can meddle with one's family role, and family pressures may interfere with one's obligations towards work (Mitchelson, 2009). Work-family conflict is accordingly a bidirectional construct.

Gutek et al. (1991) conducted a survey using two different samples of employed people with families, a systematically selected sample of psychologists and a volunteer sample of managers. The findings indicated that the two types of perceived work family conflict (work interference with family and family interference with work) were clearly separable and relatively independent of each other. The people saw less family interference with work than work interference with family. However, when using a sample of 372 employed adults who were married and/or parents, the findings supported the indirect reciprocal relation between work to family and family to work conflict.

Work-family conflict happens more often and has a more noteworthy effect on well-being than family-work conflict (Bellavia & Frone, 2005; Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999; Mauno et al., 2006). As per Greenhaus and Parasuraman (1999), this may be explained as individuals have more scope in changing family plans than they have in changing work schedules. Poelmans et al. (2005) support this thought as they debate that individuals have greater flexibility in satisfying family responsibilities than work duties and obligations. Besides, people might not have the caution to change their work demands as these are dictated by employment contracts, management, and organizational rules and regulations. This study concentrates on work-family conflict, rather than family-work conflict, as it has more influence on well-being of an employee (cf. Mauno et al., 2006).

Family to work conflict was found to have indirect influence on work to family conflict by means of work distress and work overload. Rajadhyaksha and Ramadoss (2010) tested the model given by Frone et al. (1997) on a sample of 405 women in India and found that Indian data moderately supported within and cross domain relationship hypothesized in the model. Hammer et al. (1997) gathered the information from 399 dual-earner couples and work family conflict had strong crossover effects for both men and women demonstrating that individual's level of work family conflict was a significant predictor of their partner's level of work family conflict.

Frone et al. (1992) in a study of randomly drawn sample of 631 employed adults (278 men and 353 women) also found that work to family conflict is more prevalent than family to

work conflict, suggesting that family boundaries are more permeable to work demands than are work boundaries to family demands. Williams and Alliger (1994) also found that the interference of work with family is more than family interference with work in a study of 41 full time working parents (13 men and 28 women). Eagle et al. (1997) found that work and family boundaries were asymmetrically permeable with work to family conflict being significantly more prevalent than family to work conflict.

Wesley and Muthuswamy (2005) in a study of 230 teachers in an engineering college in Coimbatore, India, found that work to family conflict was more prevalent than family to work conflict, thus indicating that permeability of work into family was more than permeability of family into work. Kinnunen and Mauno (2007) gathered information from a sample of 501 employees working in four organizations, i.e., municipal and social healthcare, manufacturing for exports, a bank and a supermarket. The outcomes showed that interference from work to family was more prevalent than interference from family to work among both males and females.

However, there were no gender differences in experiencing either work to family or family to work conflict.

Work-family conflict may start under different conditions and happen in various forms (Carlson, Kacmar, & Williams, 2000). More particularly, work-family conflict is comprised of time-based, strain-based or behaviour-based conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) explain that time-based conflict happens when the time committed to one role makes participation in another role more troublesome, strain-based conflict occurs when strain from one role meddles with participation and performance in another, and behavior-based conflict happens when behaviors performed in one role interfere with the behavioral expectations of another role in a different domain of life.

Multiple roles may compete for a person's time. Time spent on activities within one role generally cannot be devoted to activities within another role. Time-based conflict is consistent with the excessive work time and schedule conflict dimensions identified by Pleck et al. (1980) and role overload identified by Kahn et al. (1964). Time based conflict can take two forms: (1) time pressures associated with membership in one role may make it physically difficult to comply with the expectations emerging from another role; (2) pressures also may produce a preoccupation with one role even when one is physically trying to meet the demands of another role (Bartolome & Evans, 1979).

Work-family conflict also has been associated with the amount and frequency of overtime and the presence and irregularity of shiftwork (Pleck et al., 1980). However, it cannot be expected that flexible working hours will definitely decrease the work family conflicts of all employees. In their thorough investigation of a flexitime program in a government agency, Bohen and Viveros-Long (1981) inferred that the

"modest" schedule flexibility in the agency they examined may have lacked to reduce the conflict of those with primary childcare responsibility, such as employed mothers. Subsequently, the level of flexibility allowed and the needs of the employees may mutually affect the prevalence of work-family conflict.

A second form of work-family conflict includes role-produced strain. There is considerable confirmation that work overload can deliver strain symptoms such as tension, anxiety, fatigue, depression, apathy, and irritability (Brief, Schuler, & Van Sell, 1981; Ivancevich & Matteson, 1980). Strain-based conflict, consistent with the fatigue/ irritability dimension identified by Pleck et al. (1980), exists when strain in one role affects one's performance in another role. Strain-based conflict, consistent with the fatigue/ irritability dimension identified by Pleck et al. (1980), persists when strain in one role affects one's performance in another role. The roles are incompatible in the way that the strain caused by one makes it difficult to comply with the demands of another.

Moreover, Burke et al. (1980b) found that the following work stressors were related to work family conflict: rate of work environment changes; participation in boundary-spanning activities; stress in communications; and mental concentration needed at work. Bartolome and Evans recommend that certain (particularly adapting with a new job, poor job-individual fit and frustration because of unfulfilled desires) produce fatigue, tension, worry, or frustration that makes it difficult to pursue a satisfying non work life. However, it is essential to note that extensive time involvement in a particular role also can create strain symptoms.

Specific patterns of in-role behavior may be incompatible with expectations regarding behavior in another role. It has been suggested, for example, that the male, managerial stereotype emphasizes self-reliance, emotional stability, aggressiveness, and objectivity (Schein, 1973). Family members, on the other hand, may anticipate an individual to be warm, nurtured, emotional, and vulnerable in his or her interactions with them. If a person is unable to adjust behavior to comply with the expectations of different roles, he or she is likely to experience conflict between the roles.

Burke and Weir (refered to in Burke and Bradshaw, 1981) have recommended that the behavioral styles that males show at work (impersonality, logic, power, authority) may be incongruent with behaviors desired by their children inside the family space. In a similar way, Bartolome (1972) has recommended that numerous young male managers find themselves caught between two inconsistent behavior/value systems: the emotional restrictedness presumably reinforced at work and the openness expected by family members. Similar conclusions have been reached by Greiff and Munter (1980), Steiner (1972), and Walker (1976).

All types of work-family conflicts can have an overwhelming effect on the functioning and well-being of individuals,

families, organisations, and societies (Hassan, et al., 2010). Research has demonstrated that work-family conflict may adversely affect the satisfaction (namely job-, family-, marital-, and life satisfaction), health, and behaviour of an individual in both the work- and family domains (Mitchelson, 2009; Poelmans et al., 2005; Rotondo et al., 2003; Streich et al., 2008). Adverse health effects may include physical and psychological problems such as depression, anxiety, mood disorders, and substance abuse (Bellavia & Frone, 2005; Mitchelson, 2009). Likewise, work-family conflict may also bring about dysfunctional behavioural results results, for example, destructive parenting, alcohol consumption, and withdrawal from work or family responsibilities (Cinamon, 2009; Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999). In terms of organizational results, studies have discovered backing for a solid positive relationship between work-family conflict and job burnout (Ahmad, 2010; Reinardy, 2007) and a solid negative relationship between work-family conflict and job satisfaction (Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000; Hassan et al., 2010), organisational commitment, and performance (Streich et al., 2008).

The growing literature on work-family conflict without a doubt reflects the belief that work and family lives are related to each other. The myth of separate worlds of work and family (Kanter, 1977) is clearly dissolving. Despite this progress, considerably more research testing more complete models of work-family conflict is needed. Basic to any additional research is the development of reliable scales for the assessment of work-family conflict (Kopelman et al., 1983). In addition to reliability problems, brief scales may not capture the subtlety of a complex variable. It is the authors' view that scales intended to survey work-family conflicts ought to tap the different forms of role pressure (e.g., time, strain, behavior) incompatibility and should contain things that reflect both work's interference with family and family's interference with work.

4. CONCLUSION

The review of literature of the various studies as done by eminent researches reveals that there are various causes that create conflict in work and family life. The major aspects are highlighted below:

1. The work-family relationship has changed over the years. There is a significant difference in the expectations both at work and family front.

2. Work-family conflict is a consequence of higher demands, increasing pressure to perform and competitive work force.

3. The financial needs of people have increased many folds over the last few decades.

4. Technological and telecommunication advances have affected the work-family interface.

5. The boundaries between work and family have become blurred.

6. There is overlapping of one's work role and one's family role.

7. Work demands unfulfilled due to employment contract, management and organizational rules and regulations.

Studies that have investigated work family conflicts and have broadly classified them into three major categories as stated below.

a. Time Based work-family conflict

b. Strain Based work-family conflict

c. Behavior Based work-family conflict

The growing literature on work-family conflict without a doubt reflects the belief that work and family lives are related to each other. The myth of separate worlds of work and family no longer exists and is not a reality.

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