A study on work family conflict and well being among dual earner couples

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Abstract- This paper describes a study on dual earner couples in work family conflict, family work conflict and well being. This study of dual earner couples involves the examine of level of work family conflict and well being among dual earner couples.

Key words: work family conflict, family work conflict, well being and dual earner couples.

I. INTRODUCTION

The rise in the number of dual earner couples has fueled interest in the area of work family studies, when the breadwinner/homework template was the norm in the 1950s, work and family were considered separate and primarily gender specific domains. Separate bodies of literature existed on the workplace and on the family, but rarely was the connection between the two studied. Interest in studying the relationship between work and family grew as the number of dual earner couples rose, and the boundaries and roles within the home and the workplace blurred.

The struggle faced by dual earner couples has also spurred interest in work family studies. Workplace and government policies in the mid-1900s were based on the assumption that someone was at home full-time to care for the needs of the family leaving the worker unencumbered by outside demands. As the number of dual earner couples has grown, the mismatch between workplace and public policies and the reality of working families has become increasingly problematic. Although the length of the average work week has changed little over the past twenty years, the aggregate amount of time that couples spend at work has increased dramatically. The average couple in 1997 worked ten hours a week more than the average couple in 1970. This has created couples have difficulty maintaining the home, nursing relationships within the family, and caring for children and aging family members. To cope, many couples delay or limit childbearing, turn down jobs that require a heavy workload, travel or relocation, and reduce their commitment to work in order to meet the needs of the family.

II. WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT

A number of concepts have been developed to describe the relationship between work and family domains, including “work-family conflict,” “work-family interference,” “work-family facilitation,” and “spillover.” While some of these concepts recognize the potential for positive relationships between these two domains (e.g., spillover), the majority of the theoretical and research literature has focused on the negative relationships between work and family. Inter role conflict has been proposed as the mechanism that accounts for the negative relationships between work and family domains. Inter role conflict occurs when the multiple roles individuals fulfill on a day-to-day basis conflict with one another. The term work-family conflict (WFC) refers to when inter role conflict occurs between the work and family domains. As defined by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), WFC is “a form of inter role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect” (p.77). While this definition is still accepted, it has been refined to recognize that the relationship between these two domains is bidirectional. WFC is now used to specifically refer to the inter role conflict that occurs when work interferes with family and family-work conflict (FWC) refers to the conflict that occurs when family interferes with work.

While WFC and FWC are reciprocal, each is associated with unique antecedents. Work domain variables lead to WFC and family domain variables lead to FWC (Byron, 2005). Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) categorized key antecedents of conflict between work and family domains into three types: time-based pressures, strain-based pressures, and behavioral incompatibilities. Time-based pressures occur when one is physically present or mentally preoccupied with either the work or family domain, making it difficult to fulfill obligations in other roles. In the work domain, long work hours, schedule inflexibility, shift-work requirements, and overtime or evening work have all been found to create conflict between work and family roles. In the family domain, household and child-care related responsibilities can create time based conflict with work responsibilities. Strain-based pressures involve factors that relate to stress, strain, or tension. Work stress, work role overload, conflict with one’s occupational role, work role ambiguity, and job exhaustion have been identified as possible strain-based pressures leading to WFC.

Family related strain-based pressures include factors such as parental conflict and marital discord. One important caveat to this model is that work and family do
not seem to equally conflict with one another. Pleck (1977) first proposed a theory of asymmetric permeability between work and family domain boundaries. According to Pleck, occupational boundaries may be more clearly defined and more strictly enforced, whereas family boundaries may be more subject to change. Consistent with this theory, research across a wide range of occupations has demonstrated that work conflicts with family more than family conflicts with work. Consequently, the majority of research has focused on work-family conflict.

To summarize, family- work conflict has family based antecedents and leads to work related outcomes, while the work-family conflict facet has work based antecedents and leads to family related outcomes. The overall work-family conflict construct has both work and family related consequences. As such the present study will focus on work family conflict as an overall construct, as researchers have suggested that despite the unique findings for each of two facets, work-family conflict as an overall construct has a greater aggregated impact than each of the individual facets.

III. WELL-BEING

Well being is an increasingly relevant and necessary consideration in the modern workplace. Well being at simplest level is perhaps ultimately about personal happiness, food and living safety and healthy. This means not allow work to undermine our basic purpose and needs in our lives and by extension these of our families and loved ones. Well being of degree of agreement is analyzed in the six dimensions.

- Autonomy
- Environment
- Personal growth
- Positive relations
- Purpose in life
- Self acceptance

Review of literature

Baral (2010) in a study of 485 employees working in varied organizations in India found that working men and women in India experience more work family enrichment than the work family conflict. It was also found that there were no gender differences in the employee perception of work family enrichment.

Alam et al. (2009) explored the correlation between working hours and work family imbalance, for three focused groups, namely, teaching professionals and two groups from corporate houses. It was found that respondents working for 5-7 hours a day did not consider working hours as a factor to affect work and family balance. On the other hand, women managers in corporate sector, having long working hours (9-10 hours a day) agreed that time was a crucial factor for work family imbalance. The study approved the association between working hour and work family conflict. 99 per cent of women managers reported to have work family conflict because of 9-10 hours’ work every day. While only 20 per cent involved in teaching reported.

Dyne et al. (2009) developed a cross level model specifying facilitating work practices that enhance group processes and effectiveness. The model proposed that work practices that support work life flexibility: collaborative time management, redefinition of work contributions, proactive availability and strategic self-presentation enhance overall awareness of others need in the group and overall caring about group goals, reduce process losses and enhance group level organization citizenship behavior (OCB).

Rajadhyaksha and Velgach (2009) also found that women experienced significantly higher family interference with work as compared to men. However there were no significant differences between men and women in the experience of work interference with family.

Bagger et al. (2008) examined the interactive effects of family identity salience, family interference with work and gender on two outcome variables- job satisfaction and job distress. Data was obtained from160 employees at a small national architectural firm. The results suggested that family identity salience acts as a buffer between family interference with work and job satisfaction and job distress. It was found that increase in family interference with work was related to more job distress and less job satisfaction, but only for those who were low on family identity salience. It was further seen that the buffering effect of family identity salience on the negative aspect of family interference with work on job satisfaction was stronger for women than for men.

Fuß et al. (2008) found that socio demographic factor of age group was a significant predictor of work interference in family. The younger was the participant, the higher was the perceived work interference in family. Relationship between work life balance and emotional intelligence has also been studied and significant correlation has been found between the two variables.

Haar and Bardoe (2008) used structural equation modeling to test positive spillover on 420 Australian public and private sector employees. They found work family positive spillover was negatively associated with psychological distress and turnover intentions, while family work positive spillover was negatively associated with psychological distress, and positively associated with family satisfaction. The domain specific positive spillover was found to have the strongest effects on outcomes associated with the same domain (e.g. work family spillover to turnover intentions and family work spillover to family satisfaction).

Carr (2004) adds to these predictors of happiness; optimism, emotional intelligence, giftedness, creativity and wisdom. He agrees on dimensions like, self-systems that contribute to resilience, like positive self-esteem and
positive relationships to make up a comprehensive presentation of the moderators of well-being.

Deiner (1984), Kahneman, Diener, and Schwarz (1999), the psychological well-being is equal to the good life or satisfaction with life in a hedonistic sense. The concept of well-being finds its origin primarily in the hedonistic concept, by which well-beings is operationally defined by a high level of positive effects, a low level of negative effects and high degree of life satisfaction.

**IV. METHODOLOGY**

The research was descriptive in nature. Convenient sampling methods are adopted for this study. This study concluded among 116 dual earner couples in cuddalore district researches generally use convenient sample to obtain a large numbers of completed questionnaires. These questionnaires were distributed personally.

**Limitation**

The present study is focuses on self perceived work life balance of dual earner couples. Hence the respondents for this study are dual earner couples. The research does not know how single earner families perceived their work life balance. Hence, future research is necessary to explore in this aspect.

The study was conducted in cuddalore district in Tamilnadu. So the finding may not be generalized to all dual earner couples. This because other factors like climate, working condition varies from place to other. But findings may be useful some meaningful suggestion to the dual earner couples.

**TABLE –1: SHOW THE DIFFERENCE IN WORK FAMILY CONFLICT AND FAMILY WORK CONFLICT AMONG MALE AND FEMALE DUAL EARNERS.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>t-test</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work family conflict</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall conflict</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data *-1 percent level **-5 Percent Level

**NS- Not Significant**

The table no 4.2.1 explains the differences in the work family conflict and family work conflict among male and female dual earners.

It is found that the work family conflict was low among male respondent and the mean value was 14.42 and the work family conflict among female dual earner employees was slightly high and the mean value is 15.35.

To test this hypothesis spastically performed ‘t’ test was implemented. It was found that ‘t’ value was 1.509 and the ‘p’ value was 0.133. Since the ‘p’ value is not significant the hypothesis was accepted and it was concluded that there was significant difference among male and female dual earners with regards to work family conflict.

It is observed that the family work conflict was low among dual earner in male employees and mean value was 14.94 and the family work conflict among dual earner was slightly high among female dual earner employees and the mean value was 16.5.

To test this hypothesis spastically performed ‘t’ test was implemented. It was found that ‘t’ value was 1.811 and the ‘p’ value was 0.050. Since the ‘p’ value was significant the hypothesis was rejected and it was concluded that there are significant differences among male and female dual earners with regards to family work conflict.

It was observed that the overall conflict was low among dual earner male employee and mean value was 29.37 and over all conflict among dual earner was slightly high among female dual earner employee and the mean value was 31.4.

To test this hypothesis spastically performed ‘t’ test was implemented. It is found that ‘t’ value was 1.812 and the ‘p’ value was 0.050. Since the ‘p’ value was significant the hypothesis was rejected and it was concluded that there are significant differences among male and female dual earners with regards to overall conflict.

**TABLE –2: SHOWS THE DIFFERENCE IN THE WELL BEING AMONG MALE AND FEMALE DUAL EARNERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Male Mean</th>
<th>Male S.D</th>
<th>Female Mean</th>
<th>Female S.D</th>
<th>t-test</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>24.67</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.401</td>
<td>0.163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental mastery</td>
<td>26.04</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.296</td>
<td>0.767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal growth</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>1.214</td>
<td>0.226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive relation</td>
<td>25.16</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.669</td>
<td>0.504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose in life</td>
<td>23.92</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.268</td>
<td>0.206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self acceptance</td>
<td>25.02</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.394</td>
<td>0.165</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data *-1 percent level **-5 Percent Level

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It was observed that the wellbeing autonomy was high among dual earner male employee and mean value was 24.67 and autonomy was low among dual earner female employees and the mean value was 23.96.

To test this hypothesis statistically performed ‘t’ test was implemented. It was found that ‘t’ value was 1.401 and the ‘p’ value was 0.163. Since the ‘p’ value was non significant the hypothesis was accepted and it was concluded that there were no significant differences among in well being male and female dual earners with regards to autonomy.

It was examined that environmental mastery high among in well being dual earner male employees and mean value was 26.04 and environmental mastery was low among dual earner female employees and the mean value was 25.89.

To test this hypothesis statistically performed ‘t’ test was implemented. It was found that ‘t’ value was 0.296 and the ‘p’ value was 0.767. Since the ‘p’ value is non significant the hypothesis was accepted and it was concluded that there was no significant differences among male and female dual earners with regards to environmental mastery in well being.

It was observed that the personal growth with regards to well being was slightly high among dual earner male employee and mean value was 24.8 and personal growth was slightly low among dual earner female employees and the mean value was 24.2.

To test this hypothesis statistically performed ‘t’ test was implemented. It was found that ‘t’ value was 1.214 and the ‘p’ value was 0.226. Since the ‘p’ value was non significant the hypothesis was accepted and it was concluded that there was no significant differences among male and female dual earners with regards to personal growth.

It was observed that positive relation with regards to well being was low among dual earner male employees and mean value was 25.16 and positive relation was slightly high among dual earner female employees and the mean value was 25.41.

To test this hypothesis statistically performed ‘t’ test was implemented. It was found that ‘t’ value was 0.669 and the ‘p’ value was 0.504. Since the ‘p’ value was non significant the hypothesis was accepted and it was concluded that there are no significant differences among male and female dual earners with regards to positive relation in well being.

It was observed that the wellbeing purpose in life was slightly high among dual earner male employees and mean value was 23.92 and purpose in life with regards to well being was low among dual earner female employee and the mean value was 23.32.

To test this hypothesis statistically performed ‘t’ test was implemented. It was found that ‘t’ value was 1.268 and the ‘p’ value was 0.206. Since the ‘p’ value was non significant the hypothesis was accepted and it was concluded that there were no significant differences among male and female dual earners with regards to purpose in life that leads to well being.

Self acceptance in well being was examined that the self acceptance was high among dual earner male employees and mean value was 25.02 and self acceptance was low among dual earner female employees and the mean value was 24.41.

To test this hypothesis statistically performed ‘t’ test was implemented. It was found that ‘t’ value was 1.394 and the ‘p’ value was 0.163. Since the ‘p’ value was non significant the hypothesis was accepted and it was concluded that there were no significant differences among male and female dual earners with regards to self acceptance in well being.

V. CONCLUSION

It was found that there was significant difference in the overall conflict and family work conflict between male and female respondents. It was observed that there was no significant difference in the well being in all the dimensions between male and female respondents.

REFERENCE


