Work-Family Conflict and Non Sharing Jobs: The Link Explored for Dhaka

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Abstract

Work family conflict is an area of growing interest to the duo; ie: the Government and employers alike. According to Greenhaus and Beutell (1989) work family conflict is defined as a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect. The focus on this arena is gaining momentum due to the fact that women play a critical combination of roles 'caring' at home and 'working' at the workplace. As governments and employers are becoming increasingly dependent on the contribution from women workforce, this dilemma of work-family balance and the resultant conflict appears to be a serious concern.

This phenomenon surfaces as ubiquitous in developing as well as developed countries. Watchdogs in Bangladesh are also showing greater interest in this. The aim of the present study is to understand the nature of work-family conflict of a specific cluster in Bangladesh – the female school teachers. This particular cluster of white collar professionals has been selected due to the nature of their job as being non-sharing type. School teachers lack 'flexibility' in their profession as the timings are rigid and the scope of alternative arrangements for service delivery is limited. These aspects are stated to lead to heightened level of stress among the professionals. A sample of 120 female school teachers has been selected through stratified random sampling from four different strata (Pre School, Mid School and Senior School, including administrators) for the study. A structured questionnaire was used to collect information from the sample and the data collected were analyzed using various statistical techniques.

The study revealed the presence of high degree of work-family conflict among the female professionals.

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Further it had negative effect on the level of performance, both at work and home. Another major finding is that the children of the professionals suffer the consequences of the work-family conflict.

Key words: Work Family conflict, Dhaka, School teachers.

Introduction

The concept of Work Family Conflict (WFC) surfaced in the research literature in the early 80s. According to Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), WFC is a form of interrole conflict in which the demands for time and energy counteract with one another from two most important domains of human life; work and family.

Work-family conflict is a two-dimensional construct. The first dimension is known as work-to-family conflict indicating conflict arising out of work roles and then interfering with family roles and the second dimension refers to family-to-work conflict which arises when family-related roles interfere with work-related roles (Rathi and Barath, 2013; Beutell, 2010; Kinnunen et al., 2010; Kossek and Ozeki, 1998).

Governments and employers in the developed world have concern about the issue of work-family balance since a happy wholesome balance between the two spatially dislocated domains 'organization' and 'home' addresses a two-fold problem. For the governments of many Western countries where birth rates are declining, the issue is not merely connected with having better lives but with producing new lives for the future labor force (EC, 1999). Conversely, the shrinking workforce poses a threat to the employers' side as to how to attract and retain the competent young mothers. Indeed, the root of work-life balance debate stems from the perceived recruitment and retention problems (IDS, 2000,). A number of studies in European countries reveal the fact that childcare responsibility primarily and exclusively belongs to a mother which leads to the formulation of policies revolving around facilitating the working conditions of women (Kersley et al., 2006; McDonald et al., 2005;Hu 'Iskamp, 2007; Niejahr, 2007).

The scenario in the developing countries is different with respect to 'loose' labor market with abundant supply of cheap labor, unlike Europe, suffering from graying population. Yet, the work-family issues have significance to the quarters of govt. and employers, owing to the increasing and meaningful contribution of white collar female professionals to the workforce.

Progress in the literature on 'work-family' balance has already been recorded in countries like: Taiwan, the Republic of China and India.

The dilemma of WFC issues has been documented in the context of Western culture, like Germany and USA(Herati and Morley 2008;).

Research literature is still building on this arena where the focal point remains the potential impacts of work/family issues on employees, family members, and organizations. (Lu, et al, 2006). However, the developing societies such as Taiwan, the Republic of China. India, Bangladesh follows the western world in researching the work/family issues and their work is only beginning to gain attention.

The central theme of work/family research concerns women's increasing professional life and its consequences. The popular question raised within this topic is: whether and how women can combine satisfying family life and successful career (Kasper et al, 2005). According to Cooper and Williams (1994), most work/family research emphasizes that conflict has impacts on both emotional and physical health, leading to absenteeism and diminishing productivity.

There are three different forms of work/family conflict: time-based conflict, strain-based conflict and behavior-based conflict. Time-based conflict may occur when time devoted to one role makes it difficult to participate in another role; strain-based conflict refers to that strain experienced in one role intrudes into and interferes with participation in another role; and behavior-based conflict occurs when specific behaviors required in one role are incompatible with behavior expectation in another role. (Carlson et al 2005; Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985)

The complex nature of work-family conflict has further been assimilated in to application or strategies for the organization. (Frone et al., 1996; Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985) The practitioner literature comes up with specific prescription such as flexibility, a potential means of reducing stress associated with work-family conflict (Warren and Johnson, 1995).

The fact remains that the issue of 'flexibility' is itself a big domain deserving exclusive attention to the research arena of work-family literature. However, authors in this study pinpoint that flexibility is possible if the nature of job allows alternative arrangements or sharing. This paper explores the issue of work/family conflict for a cluster engaged in non-sharing type of job.

Focus of the Study

Most of the researches on work family conflict are focused on general working women. Aryee et al., 1999; Ng et al., 2002 have conducted their study on working mothers where they portrayed work-family stress as a major problem for working mothers. Study by Lo et al, 2003, also focused on the same cluster. In Bangladesh, the research on this issue appears contemporary but it is drawing focus increasingly. Alam et al (2009) identified the association between working hours and work family conflict on a sample consisting of different cross sections of female white collar professionals in Dhaka city.

This study includes a specific cluster, namely female school teachers engaged in non-sharing jobs. This paper will attempt to explore a first-degree understanding about the pains and perils of work-family conflict.

Research Method

This study used a sample of full-time female school teachers from Dhaka metropolis. The sample chosen on the conceptual foundation that they work at least six hours a day on an average where experiencing high levels of stress is likely, leading to the form of time-based conflict, (Spector et al., 2007).

Stratified random sampling was used in this research to take the advantages of precision over normal sampling. The sample is then divided into four strata on the criteria of varying degree of work-load and use of expertise and experience. They are: teachers from pre-school, (play group to KG-II), mid school (Class I- Class IV), senior section (Class V-XII) and teachers working in administration. As the size of each stratum is different in size; therefore, allocation of sample to each stratum is done on a proportional basis instead of making each one equal. Altogether, 200 survey questionnaires were distributed, out of which, 120 completed the questionnaires (i.e. a response rate of 60.0 percent).

Frone et al. (1996) excluded unmarried women from the study sample on the ground that with no dependents at home the stress factor would be insignificant; so would be time-based conflict. But in this study the authors included both married and unmarried cluster in order to incorporate cultural dimension. Bangladesh and India follow collectivistic culture where human life orbits around the family as nucleus. To Indians, being members of a collectivist culture, fulfilling family and social responsibilities is of utmost priority, (Hofstede, 2001).

Indians usually feel content by spending quality time with their family members, neighbors, friends, and relatives, (Rathi and Barath, 2013). Authors of this study reason that conflict per se stress results broadly from two sources: child care support and family management support. Around 40 percent respondents are within 30 to 40 years of age (SD=0.80943). Around 45 percent of the respondents are mothers of one child.

During the data collection process, first of all, a known teacher of the researcher was approached as the first contact point. After approval of request the questionnaires were handed over directly to the school authority. While distributing the questionnaire to the authority the points were made clear that the 4 strata were maintained, no insistence should be put upon the respondents and that respondents should cooperate of their free will.

The scales used in this study consist of items measured on a five-point Likert Scale with response options ranging, unless otherwise indicated, from1 for "strongly disagree" to 5 for "strongly agree." Greater scores represented more perceived work-family conflict.

Table I: Respondents' Profile

	Respondents	
	n	*Percentage*
Years in job		
Less than one years	*18*	*15*
Between 1-5	*18*	*15*
6-10 years	*35*	*29.2*
Above 10 years	*49*	*40.8*
Level of education		
Graduate	*55*	*45.8*
Masters	*59*	*49.2*
Others/ Diploma	*6*	*5*
Age		
20-30	*27*	*22.5*
31-40	*47*	*39.2*
41-50	*43*	*35.8*
Above 50	*3*	*2.5*

Average daily working hour
6 hours	*36*	*30*
7 hours	*9*	*7.5*
8 hours	*9*	*7.5*
9 hours	*63*	*52.5*
10 hours	*3*	*2.5*

No of Children
No children	*27*	*22.5*
1	*52*	*43.3*
2	*35*	*29.2*
Missing data	*6*	*5*

Family composition
Stay with Parents in Law	*29*	*24.2*
Stay with Parents	*6*	*5.0*
Stay at separate homes	*85*	*70.8*

Research Findings:

Reliability Analysis

The reliability of the various measurement scales is shown in Table II. The reliability of the scale is above 0.6 in all variables category. An alpha coefficient of 0.6 and above is considered good for research in the arena of social sciences (Cronbach, 1990). Five point Likert scale is used in this case (1= strongly disagree, 2= agree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly disagree).

Table II: Reliability of Scales

Scales	Alpha Coefficient
Work hour and conflict	0.737
Job stressor	0.705
Parental demand	0.715
Spouse support	0.726
Children	0.756

Descriptive Statistics

In this research two areas are considered as predecessor for work –family conflict with respect to Dhaka's situation, child care support and family management support. The important finding is that parental demand contributes more significantly to work family conflict than working hour or job related stressors. This is congruent with the other important finding where majority of the respondents express their concern that children are the most affected segment due to work family conflict.

Table III: Descriptive Statistic

Questions	Mean	Median	Mode
Working hours positively associated with work-family conflict	*3.19*	*4*	*4*
Job stressors positively associated with work-family conflict	*3.25*	*3*	*4*
Parental demand positively associated with work-family conflict	*3.95*	*4*	*4*
Spouse support help to reducework-family conflict	*3.9*	*4.0*	*4*
Children are affected because of work family conflict	*4.3*	*4.5*	*5*

Five points Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 =disagree, 3 = neutral, 4= agree, 5 = strongly agree)

A. Respondent Relation with Work Family Conflict Variables

Table IV : Working Hour and Years in Job

			Years in job					
	Less than 1 year		1-5 year		5-10 years		More than 10 years	
Working hours positively associated with work- family conflict	Strongly disagree	0 (0)	Strongly disagree	0 (0)	Strongly disagree	3 (8.6)	Strongly disagree	0 (0)
	Disagree	**15 (83.3)**	Disagree	9 (50)	Disagree	6 (17.1)	Disagree	6 (12.2)
	Neutral	0 (0)	Neutral	0 (0)	Neutral	9 (25.7)	Neutral	9(18.4)
	Agree	3 (16.7)	Agree	9 (50)	Agree	15 (42.9)	**Agree**	**34 (69.4)**
	Strongly agree	0(0)	Strongly agree	0 (0)	Strongly agree	2(5.7)	Strongly agree	0 (0)

Within parenthesis percentage of the respondents

The association between working hour and WFC is perceived to be stronger with increasing length of service. While majority of the respondents with less than one year of experience (83%) reject the notion of association; 69% of the respondents with more than 10 years of experience perceive the other side of the coin as true. This finding could presumably be attributed to the fact that seniority increases responsibility; so does job stressor keeping the working hour constant.

Table V: Correlation Between Years in Job and Working Hours

Variables	Years in service
Working hours positively associated with work -family conflict	0.424(**)
N	120

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

B. Working Hours and Age

	Age group							
	20-30		31-40		41-50		Above 50	
Working hours positively associated with work-family conflict	Strongly disagree	0 (0)	Strongly disagree	3(6.38)	Strongly disagree	0 (0)	Strongly disagree	0 (0)
	Disagree	18 (66.6)	Disagree	12 (25)	Disagree	6(13.9)	Disagree	0 (0)
	Neutral	0	Neutral	9(19.14)	Neutral	9(20.93)	Neutral	0 (0)
	Agree	9	Agree	21(44.68)	**Agree**	**28**(65.11)	Agree	**3(100)**
	Strongly agree	0 (0)	Strongly agree	2(4.25)	Strongly agree	0 (0)	Strongly agree	0 (0)

Within parenthesis percentage of the respondents

The association between working hour and WFC is perceived to be stronger with increasing age despite the common denominator of minimum 6 hours of working for each of the stratum. This could be primarily attributed to more stress deriving from family domain since age increases demand of time for both supporting child and family. For the younger age cluster, the scenario looks reverse as 66.6% rejected the notion. This finding is grounded on the same reasoning that they are not yet into motherhood, so would face less demand of time at home.

Table VI : Correlation between Age group and Working Hours

Variables	Years in service
Working hours positively associated with work -family conflict	0.350 (**)
N	120

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

C. Children Care and Work Family Conflict with Years in Service

	Years in job							
	Less than 1 year		1-5 year		5-10 years		More than 10 years	
Children are affected because of work family conflict	Strongly disagree	---	Strongly disagree	---	Strongly disagree		Strongly disagree	----
	Disagree	--	Disagree	---	Disagree		Disagree	----
	Neutral	9 (50)	Neutral	3 (16.7)	Neutral	6 (17.1)	Neutral	6 (12.2)
	Agree	3 (16.7)	Agree	3 (16.7)	Agree	6(17.1)	Agree	24 (49.0)
	Strongly agree	6 (33.33)	Strongly agree	12(66.7)	Strongly agree	23 (65.7)	Strongly agree	19 (38.8)

Within parenthesis percentage of the respondents

The association between children care and WFC is perceived to be strong across the clusters of respondents irrespective of the varying degree of length of service. This particular finding is striking in the backdrop of the previous two where the increase in age or length of service contributed to stronger association between WFC and working hour. This strong omnipresent voice among the respondents that children are affected due to WFC clears out one fact: demand for child care support is perceived to be of utmost importance.

Conclusion

Cross-cultural and cross-occupational research reports that WFC is negatively associated with job satisfaction (Beutell, 2010; Karatepe and Kilic, 2007; Karatepe and Sokmen, 2006; Netemeyer *et al.*, 1996; Spector *et al.*, 2007), family satisfaction, and well-being. (Beutell, 2010; Kinnunen et al., 2010; Lu *et al.*, 2010; O'Driscoll *et al.*, 2004)

This Dhaka based study explores the facts that resonate with the findings from the existing WFC literature. With increasing age or longer the years in service, along with greater burden of child care, the resultant sum total of impacts appears lethal as manifested in the form of 'burnout syndrome'. School teaching, unlike teaching in university, is non-sharing in nature and lacks flexibility in working hours, thus adding to residual effect of time-based conflict.

Further, the opportunity for career development or job enrichment is pretty scanty for the school teachers since career ladder is almost non-existent, or scope for job rotation is limited. While the body of knowledge drawn from a cross-section of human resource management, organization behavior and psychology, acknowledges that prolonged endurance within an environment with such two-way pull entraps one into a vicious cycle of demotivation –frustration and low self-worth that would further aggravate the 'spillover' from work to family sphere.

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