



A Study on Work Family Conflict & Work Engagement Among Working Women

Deepika Ajmani, Master's in Arts, Psychology, Panjab University, Chandigarh

deepikaajmani516@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The primary concerns of the women working in organizations these days are work to family and family to work conflicts. The current research is motivated to provide better understanding of contemporary corporate women and their conflicts. Accordingly, the purpose of this research study is to investigate the relationship between work family conflict and work engagement among working women aged 25-45 years. Work engagement is assessed on three parameters of vigor, dedication, and absorption. For this purpose, a total sample of 38 working women in different corporate sectors was collected. Standardized scales were used to measure the work family conflict, family work conflict and work engagement. Separate scores were collected for all the subscales. Descriptive statistics are obtained, and Pearson correlation was calculated. The results revealed significant negative correlation between dedication and family work conflict. Dedication, vigor, and absorption were significantly positively correlated. The results also showed significant positive correlation between work family conflict and family work conflict with absorption. The

results strongly imply that supporting family and flexible working environment in organizations for women is required for their well-being.

KEYWORDS: Work family conflict, Family work conflict, Work engagement, Working Women

INTRODUCTION

“It takes a great deal of courage and independence to decide to design your own image instead of the one that society rewards, but it gets easier as you go along.”

~ Germaine Greer

It's 2024 and yet the world talks about creating an environment where all the people are treated equally. In present times, no doubt women are getting an equal status of power and prestige. They have marked their success in various professions but still the question of equality remains unanswered in my mind. The question being why is it that only women are required to strike a balance between their personal and professional lives while men are expected to provide for their family. Working women are always seen to juggle to conjoin the aspirations of their family and work. Being a full-time working woman comes with lots of stress, pressure, and guilt for not being able to give equal importance and time to work, children and family. Work-family conflict also negatively affects the work performance and strained relationships with family.

According to Sultana's (2012) results indicated that most working women had many kinds of obstacles while trying to strike a balance between their duties towards their jobs and their families. Unlike women who do not work, they experience stress from social visits, personal matters, and sick children. Women playing multiple roles in family and at work are considered as major victims of work family conflict. Balancing the demands of work and family can be mentally and

emotionally exhausting which is the reason that affects the performance of women at work. Work family conflict can drastically impact the overall functioning of the families, organizations, and the wellbeing of the individuals (Hassan et al., 2010).

Women are also expected to be fully engaged in their work in the corporate world and the pressure to be at par with men. Additionally, women are the ones who are taking care of their families as well and as a result their engagement at work may decrease (Crompton et al., 2007). From a LinkedIn survey by Joshi (2022) it has been demonstrated that 78% working women in India are taking time off from their careers to improve their well-being. Also, performing dual roles and provided with less working flexibility at the workplace, makes them feel exhausted.

Work engagement is associated with mental well-being and physical health. It's about the dedication that one has for their work and having a great sense of responsibility, energy and connection with their work and responding to various demands efficiently. Work engagement also means that a person can be emotionally, cognitively, and physically engrossed in his or her work. This is one of the reasons that the women are still in entry level positions.

WORK FAMILY CONFLICT

Work family conflict is now becoming the major issue for study among the working women because of their dual role conflicts in family and work. Work family conflict defined by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) as “a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect.”

A study conducted by Kinnunen and Mauno (1998) on 501 employed women and men in Finland with the aim to investigate the prevalence, antecedents, and consequences of work family conflict. The results found out that work family conflict was more prevalent than family-work conflict

among both men and women. Family work conflict and work family conflict had negative consequences on family well-being and occupational well-being respectively.

A study was conducted to examine how work demands affects family and family responsibilities affect work life i.e. family work conflict among female professionals. A sample of 50 working females was taken and the result found out that there is a strong negative relationship between long working hours and spouse support with work family conflict. Further, it was suggested that a positive working environment should be developed for employees and proper norms to be made at organization level as it is related to job contentment and performance (Khursheed et al., 2019).

A study was conducted by Opie and Henn (2013) to investigate the impact of work family conflict and work engagement among working mothers. A total sample of 267 was collected from working mothers that worked with diff organizations. The standardized scales that were used included Utrecht Work Engagement scale and Basic Trait Inventory. The results found out that work family conflict negatively predicted work engagement. In addition, the results also found that personality trait (conscientiousness) positively predicted work engagement. Whereas personality trait (neuroticism) negatively predicted work engagement.

WORK ENGAGEMENT

Schaufeli et al. (2002) defined work engagement as “a positive, satisfying, emotional state while working.” It is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. Vigor is exemplified by high energy levels, mental resilience, and the motivation to invest effort at work. Dedication is demonstrated by a sense of importance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge toward work. Absorption entails full concentration, being deeply engrossed in work, the quick passage of time and a reluctance to detach oneself from work.

Chandra and Susanti (2020) conducted a study on women employees of an organization. The aim was to determine the relationship between work family conflict and work engagement. A sample of 87 female employees was used for the study. The results indicated that there is a negative relationship between work engagement and work family conflict.

Another study on work engagement conducted by Verma et al. (2017) on 726 employees from to municipal work units in Finland. Standardized Scales were used to measure the work engagement. From the study it was concluded that work engagement had a positive relationship with physical and mental health factors. Milllear and Gervais (2014) concluded in their study about working women well-being and asserted that if resources are available to them to address the demands of the work environment to maintain their well-being.

PURPOSE

The purpose is to study the relationship between work family conflict and work engagement among working women.

HYPOTHESIS

There will be a significant relationship between work family conflict and work engagement.

METHOD

SAMPLE

A data of 38 working women in the age of 25- 45 years was collected, working in different sectors like banking, educational field and other corporate sectors from Chandigarh and Haryana.

MEASURES

- **WORK FAMILY CONFLICT (WAFCS):** The scale was developed by Haslam et al. (2015). It is designed to measure work family conflict and family to work conflict. The scale consists of 10 items from which 5 items measure family to work conflict and other 5 items measure work to family conflict. It is a 7- point Likert scale ranging from 1(very strongly disagree) to 7 (very strongly agree). The scale has good reliability value i.e. $>.90$ and validity, the scale was found to have excellent predictive validity.
- **WORK ENGAGEMENT:** Utrecht work engagement scale was developed by Schaufeli et al. (2006). This scale measures work engagement and wellbeing. It has 3 subdimensions i.e. vigor, dedication, and absorption. The scale consists of 17 items. The Cronbach's reliability of the scale is .93 approx. It has a response key ranging from 0 (Never) to 6 (Everyday).

PROCEDURES

Participants meeting the inclusion criteria for the study and those who were willing to participate and who filled consent form were included in the study. The participants were informed about the purpose of the research study and the standardized questionnaires were filled through google forms with full instructions mentioned on it and verbally instructed.

ANALYSIS OF DATA**RESULTS**

The aim of the study was to determine the interrelation between work family conflict and work engagement among working women. The responses were collected through standardized scales and these responses were analyzed using Pearson Correlation method.

Table 1

N Mean & Standard Deviation

	WFC	FWC	VIGOR	DEDICATION	ABSORPTION
N	38	38	38	38	38
Mean	17.2	12.6	23.9	22.4	24.7
Standard deviation	4.89	5.96	6.01	6.45	6.55

Table 2*Correlation of work family conflict, family work conflict and vigor, dedication, absorption*

	WFC	FWC	VIGOR	DEDICATION	ABSORPTION
WFC	—				
FWC	0.475 **	—			
VIGOR	-0.171	-0.140	—		
DEDICATION	-0.024	-0.369 *	0.656 ***	—	
ABSORPTION	0.115	0.009	0.730 ***	0.626 ***	—

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Note: WFC: Work Family Conflict; FWC: Family Work Conflict

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The aim of the study is to study the relationship between work family conflict and work engagement among working women. Despite modernization in the world, people still expect from women to bridge the gap between their career and professional lives. The pressure of being the one to manage family and career impacts their work performance, vigor, dedication, and absorption levels. This continuous juggle in combining and managing work and family roles leads to conflict between these two spheres (Nikandrou et al., 2008).

For studying the same, a total sample of 38 working women aged between 25-45 years was taken. These variables were measured through standardized scales. The key findings of the research are first, there is a significant negative correlation between family work conflict and dedication ($r = -0.369$, $p < .05$) among working women. The present results are consistent with the finding of Lu et al. (2016) study that also found family work conflict has a negative impact on job dedication.

Another, study supports the result that when family roles are intervened with work, women become less inclined to work than males (Lyu & Fan, 2022). This means that family work conflict increases the dedication of working women towards work decreases. Second, results from the study indicates significant positive correlation ($r = 0.475$, $p < .01$) between family work conflict and work family conflict. Similar results were found in Hatam et al. (2016) study done on 400 nurses and paramedical staff of hospitals to investigate the relationship between family work and work family conflicts and organizational commitment. The results revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between work family and family work conflict. Third, the results also found a significant positive correlation between subdimensions (Vigor, dedication & absorption) of work engagement. Fourth, findings also highlight a positive relationship between absorption, family work conflict ($r = 0.009$) and work family conflict ($r = 0.115$). This result is further supported by Listau et al. (2017) that absorption was positively correlated with work home conflict. Overall, our findings suggest that working women are quite effectively maintaining balance, but present research also discusses the importance of family support and flexible working.

CONCLUSION

The present research contributed to the literature on working women and the relationship between work family conflict and work engagement. Taken together, results indicate there is a significant positive relation between work family conflict and family work conflict and negative correlation is found between dedication and family work conflict. In addition to the previous measures taken there are still certain steps that need to be taken by both organizations and families to relieve the pressure on working women. To reduce the work family conflict, flexible hours, work from home options, understanding managers can help women to handle personal commitments and family

emergencies and the evidence to this is Wiedeman and Hofmeyr (2020) study which found that there exists a positive relationship between flexible work arrangements and employment engagement and has a positive influence on employees well-being. The day-to-day work can leave women overwhelmed with tasks such as household chores, meal preparation and errands. A supportive family that offers shared responsibilities with a partner, sibling or in-laws can significantly reduce the family work conflict. By delegating some of the responsibility's women can focus both on their careers and spend quality time with family. Also, women must realize that they need to stop judging themselves and they can't be there for each and everything. In terms of future research, it would be useful to extend current findings by examining these variables with other factors like job workload, job satisfaction, mental health etc. and a comparative study can be done with married / working mothers and non-married working women.

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