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Work-Family Balance and its Outcome among Female Teachers in Nepal

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the relationship of family domain and work domain with work/family conflict among female teachers in Nepal. The study has focused on the female school teachers teaching in both private and public schools. The sample identified were 20 private and 20 public schools in Morang and Sunsari districts of Nepal. The researcher had sent questionnaires to 125 identified respondents out of which 113 were utilized and analyzed. The results show that parental demand is insignificant in explaining life stress of female teachers. Similarly, role Ambiguity is documented to explain life stress significantly and positively.

Keywords: *Work life balance, female teachers, Nepal*

INTRODUCTION

The potential impact that work/family issues have on employees, family members, and organizations has already caused a rising interest among researchers based in the developed western countries. Studies have found that the more time a person spends on the job, the more conflict there is between work and family (Bruck et al., 2002). They also argue that work/family issues are at least as important to organizational functioning as family functioning (Barnett, 1998). It has long been argued that life stress of employees is largely triggered by the work-related factors in the workplace. For instance, Karasek's (1979) job demands – decision latitude model focused on job demands experienced by employees as a key determinant of employee stress (Fox, Dwyer and Ganster, 1993; Xie, 1996; Schaubroeck and Merritt, 1997; Schaubroeck, Lam and Xie, 2000). On the other hand, other researchers have suggested that obligations and responsibilities in the family domain can also be the source of life stress among employees (Frone, Russel and Cooper, 1992: Williams and Alliger, 1994). Much of the research on these issues has been from the occupational stress perspective, focusing on stressors such as work/ family conflict and its effects on strains and well-being both at work and at home. In organization, and on the home front, thus the challenge of work/life balance is rising to the top of many employers' and employees' consciousness. Considering the potential conflict between work demands and family demands (Greenhaus and Beutell 1985; Frone et al. 1992; Edwards and Rothbaed 2000), it is reasonable to argue that the influences of work and family demands on life stress arise from the incompatibility of these demands. Amily and work domains of an individual triggers interaction and thus creates relevancy with each other. It is believed that high conflict in work and families are associated with lower balance in work life. Some people experience good balance between them, whereas others experience a high degree of imbalance. Since the pioneering work of Pleck (1997) there has been a general consensus that work and family influence each other in both a positive and a negative way: time, tasks, attitudes, stress, emotions, and behavior spillover between work and family.

OBJECTIVE

The main purpose of study is to explain the work and family demands and how the work interference with family (WIF) and family interference with work (FIW) both direction of work/family conflict leads to life stress among the female teachers.

- To examine the relationship of family domain (family demands) and work

domain (work demands) with work/family conflict among female teachers in Nepal.

- To assess the relationship of work/family conflict with life stress among the identified population.

Hypotheses

The following are the hypothesis related to the framework for the study.

H1: Life stress is affected by parental demand (PD).

H2: Life stress is affected by working spouse (WS).

H3: Life stress is affected by hours spent on household work (HSH).

H4: Life stress is affected by personal take-care (PTC).

H5: Life stress is affected by role ambiguity (RA).

H6: Life stress is affected by role conflict (RC).

H7: Life stress is affected by role overload (RO).

H8: Life stress is affected by hours spent on paid work (HSP).

H9: Life stress is affected by work interference with family (WIF).

H10: Life stress is affected by family interference with work (FIW).

Literature Review

Work-life balance has been defined as 'satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with a minimum of role conflict' (Clark, 2000). Work-life balance is that state of equilibrium in which the demand of both person's job and person's life are equal. Work -life balance is about the interaction between paid work and other activities including unpaid work and families, community, leisure and personal development (State Service Commission, New Zealand, 2005). The potential impact that work/family issues have on employees, family members, and organizations has already caused a rising interest among researchers based in the developed western countries. For instance, they found that the more time a person spends on the job, the more conflict there is between work and family (Bruck et al., 2002). They also argue that work/family issues are at least as important to organizational functioning as family functioning (Barnett, 1998). Much of the research on these issues has been from the occupational stress perspective, focusing on stressors such as work/family conflict and its effects on strains and wellbeing both at work and at home. A clear connection between work/family stressors and employee strain has now been established (e.g. Allen et al., 2000; Amstad et al., 2011). Work and family are the key domains of life to many people (Whitely and England, 1977), and, not surprisingly, work-family conflict (WFC) research has become a major area in organizational research (Parasuraman and Greenhaus, 2002). In addition, this is an important area for practitioners because work-family conflicts have been empirically related to negative work attitudes (Frone et al., 1992a; Parasuraman et al., 1996; Yang et al., 2000), absenteeism (Goff et. al., 1990), tardiness (Hepburn and Barling, 1996), leaving work early (Boyar et al., 2005), turnover intentions (Burke, 1988), and other negative work behaviors (Frone et al., 1996). Moreover, a growing number of working single mothers (Paulin and Lee, 2002), and an increased need to provide elder care for aging family members (Erwin, 2000). These trends and an individual's limited time and energy combine to ensure that work and family roles are likely to conflict for some time into the future, and these conflicts need to be fully understood. Work demands are defined as psychological stressors at the workplace, such as the requirement to work fast and hard; having a great deal of work to do; not having enough time; and having conflicting demands (Fox et al. 1993, p. 290). This definition is in line with that of prior research which focused on role overload of employees in terms of the time and energy necessary to finish task requirements (Yang, Chen, Choi and Zou, 2000). The person-environment (P-E) fit model of stress (French, Caplan and Van Harrison, 1982; Edwards, 1996) helps us understand how work demands increase life stress among employees. A key argument of the P-E fit model is that demands from environmental spheres can cause life stress in a certain situation. In particular, when job requirements and responsibilities are too heavy to be handled by an employee (i.e. demands-abilities misfit), the employee will be in both negative psychological and physical states (e.g., tension, fatigue, and anxiety), which in turn amplify life stress. Research shows that individuals who work in stressful conditions or have extensive family responsibilities are at high risk of poor mental health (Niedhammer I, Goldberg M, Leclerc A, Bugel I, David S. 1998; Schulz R, O'Brien AT, Bookwala J, Fleissner K. 1995).

Family demands have also been identified as a key stressor by the work-family interface researchers (Kopelman, Greenhaus and Connolly, 1983; Frone et al. 1992; Rothbard and Edwards, 2003). Family demands refers to the time spent, level of commitment to, and responsibilities associated with fulfilling family-related obligations such as the tasks of housekeeping and child-care. The P-E fit model (French et al. 1982; Edwards, 1996) described earlier can also be applied readily to the case of the influence of family demands on life stress. Over time, too much attention spent and the physical demands related to taking care of the diverse household work and family-related obligations/responsibilities will affect the psychological and physical well-being of employees (Thomas and Ganster, 1995). The harmful consequences of high family demands on employee stress have been confirmed by several studies in the western setting. For instance, Frone and his colleagues (1992) reported that family demands, such as parental workload, influence employee distress. Family responsibilities, including childcare and elderly care, predominantly fall on women (Degenne A, Lebeaux M-O, Marry C. 2002; Aliaga C. 2007). However, men also appear vulnerable to the combined effects of work and family stress (Takeda Y, Kawachi I, Yamagata Z, Hashimoto S, Matsumura Y, Oguri S, Okayama A. 2004). Overall, past studies have primarily focused on women and the costs of work and family stress in men are still largely unknown. Across the European Union, 90% of working men and 60% of working women simultaneously care for their children and an increasing proportion of these working adults additionally care for their aging parents (Aliaga C. 2007). Hence, studying the mental health impact of work and family balance is a key area for research.

Research Design

This study has followed analytical survey design. Analytic Survey is defined as a survey designed that approaches to measure of association of independent and dependent variable's while controlling extraneous variables.

Population and Sample Size

The study has focused on the female school teachers teaching in both private and public schools. For this, the researcher has identified 20 private and 20 public schools in Morang and Sunsari districts of Nepal. The researcher had sent questionnaires to 125 identified respondents out of which 117 returned the filled questionnaire. 113 out of received questionnaire were fully filled and were in usable condition. Therefore, researcher's analysis and inference are based on the responses of 113 participants.

Data Collection Instrument

Researcher has used 5 point Likert scale for the questionnaire designing, along with demographic variables. The statements are prepared and both subjective and objective evaluation of the statement is made on the subjects. Researcher has set minimum value of Cronbach alpha be 0.7 prior to analysis of factored questionnaire data. In the study cronbach alpha is 0.73.

Methods of Analysis

The current study used a multivariate survey design. More specifically, it used descriptive statistics, reliability analyses, comparative analysis, correlation analysis and regression analysis.

RESULTS

Profile of the Respondents

The demographic information about the sample is represented by table. Among 113 female teachers in Morang and Sunsari districts. Out of total respondents 58 percent are from public school whereas 42 percent are from private school. Highest majority of participants are of age 36-40 (37.17%) followed by age groups 31-35 and 41-45(19.47% in each age group). Lowest age group is above 51 years (5.31%) followed by age group below 30 (7.96%). In terms of experience median experience of the respondents is 9 years. Highest majority of participants have experience of 7-10 years (42%) followed by experience range of 4-6 years (40%). 6% of Participants have experience of more than 10 years. In terms of educational background, majority of respondents are graduate (72%) and other are post graduate (28%). 59% of respondents have 1 child whereas about 24% have two children. 13% of them do not have any child and only 4% of them have children with three or more in number.

Table1. *Demographic profile of respondents*

Category	Variables	Public	Private	Total	Total per cent
Age Group	≤ 30	7	2	9	7.96%
	31 to 35	13	9	22	19.47%
	36 to 40	17	25	42	37.17%
	41 to 45	16	6	22	19.47%
	46 to 50	8	4	12	10.62%
	51 ≥	4	2	6	5.31%
	Total	65	48	113	100.00%
Years of Experience	3 years and Less	11	3	14	12.39%
	4-6 years	23	22	45	39.82%
	7-10 years	24	23	47	41.59%
	More than 10 years	7	0	7	6.19%
	Total	65	48	113	100.00%
Education Status	Graduate	46	35	81	71.68%
	Post Graduate	19	13	32	28.32%
	Total	65	48	113	100.00%
Children Status	No child	6	9	15	13.27%
	One child	40	27	67	59.29%
	Two children	15	12	27	23.89%
	Three or more	4	0	4	3.54%
	Total	65	48	113	100.00%
	Percentage	57.52%	42.48%	100.00%	

**These statistics are based on 113 responses*

CORRELATION ANALYSIS

Family Domain and Life Stress

The analysis presents correlation of various factors of family domain and life stress. Table 2 presents spearman's rank correlation with significance level. The study shows that life stress is positively related with parental demand. The correlation between life stress and parental demand is .530 and is highly significant (significant at 1% significance level). Life Stress and working spouse are negatively related. There is moderately negative correlation between these two (r=-.375) and the statistical significance is very high (p- value ~0). The association between life stress and HSH is weak (r=.142) and it lacks statistical significance. However positive sign indicates that these two have positive association indicating increase (decrease) in HSH is associated with increase (decrease) in LS among the responding participants. There is no statistical significance of the association between life stress and personal take care and the degree of this linear association is also very weak. However, negative sign indicates that the more these school teacher can devote time to their personal take care the less stressed they are, which is consistent with our conventional knowledge. There is very weak negative correlation (r=-.017) between PTC and LS.

Work Domain and Life Stress

The study documents positive association between life stress and role ambiguity. The bivariate rank correlation coefficient between the two is .238 and it is significant at 5% (p-value =1.1%). This indicates female teachers are stressed in their work place as a result of unclarity towards role demanded by their job. Linear association between role conflict and life stress is strongly positive (r=.474) and this relation is very significant (p-value ~ 0) in the sample. This indicates that a significant portion of life stress among female teachers is attributed to role conflict they face in performing their roles at work. There is a weak (r=.104) and insignificant (p-value=.273) association between role overload and life stress among the respondents. However, positive sign of correlation coefficient indicates that high RO results in high life stress which is consistent with our conventional behavioral priori. The study documents weak but significant (at 5%) positive correlation (r=.206) between hours spent in paid work and life stress.

Table2. *Correlation matrix among variables*

	PD	WS	HSH	PTC	RA	RC	RO	HSP	LS
WS	-.386**	1							
HSH	.000								
	.274**	-.258**	1						
	.003	.006							
PTC	.0149	-.220*	.072	1					
RA	.116	.019	.446						
	-.263**	.229*	-.185*	.089	1				
	.005	.015	.050	.349					
RC	-.404**	.284**	-.296**	.014	.198*	1			
	.000	.002	.001	.885	.035				
RO	-.159	.157	-.064	-.030	.114	-.028			
	.092	.096	.498	.752	.230	.767			
HSP	.301**	-.186*	.014	.096	-.221*	-.134	-.163	1	
	.001	.048	.882	.313	.019	.157	.084		
LS	.530**	-.375**	.142	-.017	.238*	.474**	.104	.206*	1
	.000	.000	.134	.857	.011	.000	.273	.029	

*** significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). * significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

Regression Analysis

The hierarchical regression shows the effect of result of equation 5) after controlling categorical and demographic control variables (age, experience, children status and level of formal education). The model is robust (adjusted R2=.522) explaining more than fifty two percent of variation of the dependent variable, LS. The model survives from various test including normality test and multi co- linearity test. Following are evident from this multivariate analysis.

Table2. *Summary of Output of Regression equation (5)*

Category	Variables	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-stat	p-value
Family	PD	.023	.038	.204	.838
	WS	-.043	.075	-.526	.600
	HSH	.197	.055	2.66	.009**
	PTC	-.103	.061	-2.05	.038*
work	RA	.182	.081	2.688	.008**
	RC	.115	.080	2.585	.020*
	RO	.052	.075	.701	.485
	HSP	.009	.033	.128	.899
Sectoral dummy Public=0	Dp	.757	.109	5.359	.000*private=1
DW-Statistic	Adjusted R2	.522	1.554		
	F-statistic	14.607	p-value (F)	.000	

**indicates significance at 5% , **indicates significance at 1%*

Family Domain

Parental demand is insignificant in explaining life stress of female teachers. However, the positive sign of coefficient indicates that increase in parental demand would increase life stress among this population. Working Spouse has no significant effect in contributing life stress among the female teachers. However, negative sign of coefficient is consistent with priori that supporting spouse reduces the level of stress for working females. Hours spent at household work significantly explain life stress. High (low) demand of time spent in household activities would increase (decrease) life stress among female teachers. Personal take-care explains life stress significantly among female teachers. The more female teachers devote time to themselves the less stressed they are.

Work Domain

Role Ambiguity is documented to explain life stress significantly and positively. The study evidenced that higher the level of perceived role ambiguity higher is life stress among working females. Similarly, role conflict also explains life stress significantly and positively. Higher level of stress among respondents has been found to be significantly explained by high level of role conflict in working setting. Role overload does not contribute to life stress in the sample data. Hours spent on paid work fail to explain its contribution on life stress among the respondents.

Hypothesis Test -Summary

H1: Life stress is affected by parental demand (PD).

There is significant positive relationship between life stress and parental demand.

H2: Life stress is affected by working spouse (WS).

Life stress and working spouse are negatively related. The association between these variables are moderate with high statistical significance.

H3: Life stress is affected by hours spent on household work (HSH).

There is weak association between hours spent on household work and life stress and the relationship lacks statistical significance.

H4: Life stress is affected by personal take-care (PTC).

There is no statistical significance of the association between life stress and personal take care and association is also very weak.

H5: Life stress is affected by role ambiguity (RA).

There is positive and highly significant association between role ambiguity and life stress.

H6: Life stress is affected by role conflict (RC).

There is strong positive and highly significant correlation between life stress and role conflict.

H7: Life stress is affected by role overload (RO).

There is weak and insignificant relationship between role overload and life stress among respondents.

H8: Life stress is affected by hours spent on paid work (HSP)

There is weak but significant positive relationship between hours spent on paid work and life stress.

H9: Life stress is affected by work interference with family (WFI).

Life stress is significantly and positively affected by work interference with family.

H10: Life stress is affected by family interference with work (FIW).

Family interference with work does not explain life stress in our sample data.

Discussion and Conclusions

Work life Balance has been an important topic in Human Resource Studies. Its importance is even far reaching for women in patriarchal society like ours because of cultural factors that require high household demands that these working females need to fulfill even when they are involved in income generating work outside family. The study has aimed to understand antecedents of life stress that channel from family and work domains. Employing survey design through structured questionnaire in 20 public and 20 private schools in Morang and Sunsari followed by statistical analysis of 113 respondents through random sampling the study has documented several inferences as described in the findings section. Drawing from findings, the study forwards following conclusions from this empirical study. The most important family domain antecedents include time spent for household works and personal take-care. While time spent in household works have positive association with level of stress, time taken for personal take care have been documented as stress reducing factor as it lowers stress level of working females. In other words, the more time the household works demand the more stressed working females are. On the other hand, the more time these female devote to their personal take-care the less are their stress level. Among the antecedents from work domain, role ambiguity and role conflict are found to be the highest stress causing factors. Lack of clarity of work responsibilities is the main cause of work stress followed by conflicting work demands in terms of reporting and satisfying multiple supervisors. Effect of role overload is not pronounced signaling it is not the quantity of work but clarity about job and conflict of multiple reporting that have affected life stress of these working females.

The study documents that life stress channels from family domain to work domain in our study data. The reverse route is less pronounced and insignificant. This means, working females perceive that their higher household responsibilities hinder their work domains and cause stress. The study also documents that the stress level of public sector teachers is significantly lower than that of their private sector counterparts. This may be interpreted as: public school jobs have high security. The competitive nature of private sector and high demands to produce results provides extra stress to female teachers. Female teachers at age group 35 to 45 are at highest stress level. They are

followed by age group below 35 and age groups above 45 are at the lowest level of stress. This signifies the mid-career crisis which gradually decreases with their age.

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