

Factors of work-family balance and its outcomes: A synthesis of literature review

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ABSTRACT

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In order to ensure the heightened performance, mostly in the epoch of highly competitive business environment, Work Family Balance (WFB) and its outcomes among employees have become significant to organizations. The majority of the previous studies conducted are based on organizational factors of work family balance such as flexible work arrangements, work support, job stress and technology but few attention has been given to individual factors such as emotional intelligence, well-being and personality which influence work family balance and their interrelationships. Not only that they are based on their relationships, but also that many researchers try to find out the possible outcomes of different levels of work family balance. Most research efforts have given more concentration to organizational and work related consequences such as job satisfaction, turnover intention, absenteeism, commitment performance. This study is an effort to accumulate the noteworthy research efforts reported on work family balance based on organizational and individual influencing factors and their outcomes which are work related and non-work related. In addition, this paper has been undertaken as a prelude for the pursuit of newer and more profound paths to future research such that more attention is on non-work related outcomes.

Keywords:

Work family balance (WFB), individual factors of WFB, organizational factors of WFB, work related outcomes and non-work related outcomes

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1. Introduction

The competitive business world seeks employees active work involvement vis-à-vis family looks for adequate time and energy for participating family chores and programs. The scantiness of

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performing work role due to family burden and family participation due to excessive job demand is termed as Work-Family-Conflict (WFC). On the other hand, employee active participation in both work and family roles is known as Work Family Balance (WFB). Past researches showed increased WFB mitigate the negative effect of work-family-conflict [1]. Work family imbalance has serious repercussion on job performance, job satisfaction, career success and family enrichment. Today's organizations in developed countries have been designing and adopting WFB strategies to reap the full potential of employee performance and to avoid the negative consequence of WFC. What do researchers know about the cause, effect and coping strategies of WFB? Much attention in this area of study has come from work family researches. The structure of WFB problems is now well understood but sufficient empirical research investigating the methods and strategies used by working people to manage those challenges of WFB has not been provided [1]. The positive and negative effects of WFB in western literature are well documented but the factors behind work family balance and imbalance not yet fully investigated. Therefore, the objective of the study is to review the various factors responsible for work family balance and what employee experienced in either their work domain or family domain due to work family balance or imbalance.

2. Theoretical Definitions of Work Family Balance

Researchers have defined work family balance in different ways by utilizing a huge number of measurements. Simply, Clark [2] stated that work family balance can be explained as "to what extent individuals are equally involved and satisfied with work and family roles". On the other hand, Kirchmeyer [3] reported, a balanced life as accomplishing experiences in all domains of life. Usually, researchers have believed that work family balance to be the non-presence of work-family conflict, or the rate of repetition and force with which work meddles with family or family meddles with work according to Greenhaus *et al.* [4]. Work to family obstruction happens when requests and duties of work rendering satisfaction of family requests and obligations of people troublesome. Family to work obstruction happens when family requests and duties make it more troublesome for a person to satisfy work requests and obligations. So, Duxbury [5] work family balance as a blend of part overburden, work to family obstruction and family to work impedance. Voydanoff [6] defined work family balance as a worldwide evaluation of work and family resources to meet the work and family demands so that individual could be able to contribute to both the domains. In addition, Carlson [7] explained work family balance as "accomplishment of role-related expectations that are negotiated and shared between an individual and his/her role-related partners in the work and family domains". Greenhaus and Allen [8] stated, Work family balance as for how much an individual's effectiveness and satisfaction in the roles of work and family areas are well-matched with the individual's life needs.

3. Factors of Work Family Balance

3.1 Individual Influencing Factors of Work Family Balance

The reviews attempted in deciding the individual elements impacting the impression of work family balance among employees which are clarified as personality, well-being and emotional intelligence.

3.1.1 Personality as an Influencing Factor of Work Family Balance

The Big Five factor model of personality traits proposed on the basis of five basic dimensions so far: (i) Extraversion (ii) Agreeableness (iii) Conscientiousness (iv) Neuroticism (v) Openness to Experience by McCrae [9]. Robbins [10] and Wayne [11] focused on the relationship between each of the Big Five personality traits and conflict and facilitation between work and family roles. The study found significant negative associations between conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, openness to experience, and work-family and family-work conflict, while a significant positive relationship was found between neuroticism and work-family and family-work conflict. The findings also present that there is greater facilitation correlated to extraversion between work and family roles and no relation with conflict, whereas neuroticism and conflict are positively related to a huge extent but facilitation has only weak relation. Hence, the relationship among government college teachers of Chandigarh in India was assessed with the work life balance, big five personality dimensions and life satisfaction [12]. The results exposed that work life balance, life satisfaction and extroversion dimension of personality exist the significant positive relation to the capability of building sound networks of social support that can support individuals to live a healthier and balance work life. The Big Five factor model of personality traits proposed on the basis of five basic dimensions so far: (i) Extraversion (ii) Agreeableness (iii) Conscientiousness (iv) Neuroticism (v) Openness to Experience as indicated by McCrae [9]. Robbins [10] and Wayne [11] focused on the relationship between each of the Big Five personality traits and conflict and facilitation between work and family roles. The study found significant negative associations between conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, openness to experience, and work-family and family-work conflict, while a significant positive relationship was found between neuroticism and work-family and family-work conflict. The findings also present that there is greater facilitation correlated to extraversion between work and family roles and no relation with conflict, whereas neuroticism and conflict are positively related to a huge extent but facilitation has only weak relation. Hence, the relationship among government college teachers of Chandigarh in India was assessed with the work life balance, big five personality dimensions and life satisfaction [12]. The results exposed that work life balance, life satisfaction and extroversion dimension of personality exist the significant positive relation to the capability of building sound networks of social support that can support individuals to live a healthier and balance work life.

3.1.2 Well-being as an Influencing Factor of Work Family Balance

According to Ryff and Singer [13], well-being eludes to positive psychological traits, for example, self-acceptance, happiness, hope or optimism. Wilkinson [14] pointed out that three companies in the South Eastern United States on the basis of a non-random sample of participants about the relationship between work-life balance and well-being and also observed that there is a positive association between work family balance and psychological well-being. The study also reveals that gender plays a moderating role between WFB and well-being. Soin [15] conducted a research on part-time teachers from government secondary school and full-time female managers of public banks regarding the relationship between well-being and WFB. In this study, well-being is the measure based on Ryff's psychological well-being scale that constructs and uses six dimensions of purpose in life, autonomy, self-acceptance, environmental mastery, personal relations with others and personal growth. The findings exposed that women engaged in full time jobs have significantly higher levels of stress and lower levels of psychological well-being compared to lower levels of WFB of the part-time working women.

3.1.3 Emotion as an Influencing Factor of Work Family Balance

According to Schutte [16] emotional intelligence may be defined as the “capability to purposefully recognize emotion, express emotion, regulate emotion and harness emotions”. Affandi [17] examines the relationship between the emotional intelligence of leaders and the impact on quality work life, burnout and employee performance of Pakistani medical doctors. The result indicated that emotional intelligence has significantly positive link with the quality work life and traced as the strong quality work life predictor. The impact of emotional intelligence on work life adjusted measurements was seen to be feebly related however noteworthy, while appraisal and articulation of feelings in self and utilization of feelings to encourage execution showed bigger impact. Among the work life measurements, the utilization of work life adjusted projects was maximally affected by emotional intelligence.

3.2 Organizational Influencing Factors of Work Family Balance

In this study, Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA), work support, job stress, technology related factors are considered as organizational influencing factors of work life balance.

3.2.1 Flexible Work Arrangements as an Influencing Factor of Work Family Balance

Bachmann [18] described that flexible work arrangements would be administratively suitable in handling employee policy to help the latter reach a better balance between work demands and family activities and thus help an organization to motivate and retain their potential employees. Christensen defined [19] flexi-time arrangement for work done results in reduced tardiness, absenteeism and even turnover also. Their study showed that flexi-time policy improved employee productivity by minimizing absenteeism, turnover and work family conflict. Hill [20] found the empirical study based on 6,451 employees of IBM in the USA suggested that flexible work time and flexible work location improve employee work life balance. Their study also demonstrates individual with more perceived job flexibility were capable of working longer hours. Hours given to job and family chores are also considerable matter in work family balance. Accordingly, specific and standard work hours benefit workers to reach work family balance because fewer work hours may contribute to a reduction in work family conflict by Wayne [21]. Again Hill [22] stated flex-time helps employees to manage their work duties and family responsibilities more prudently and also keeps work family conflict at a minimum level. A higher degree of management/ superior supports regarding flexible arrangements such as flexitime, flexi hours and compressed work week were positively related with employee ability to balance personal, family and work demands. Recently, most of the work family researchers and organizations have laid higher emphasis on flexible work arrangements and new working conditions compared to other work life balance initiatives mentioned by Lingard [23], Kramar [24], Hill [25], Frone [26], Thriven [27] and Carlson [28].

3.2.2 Work Support as an Influencing Factor of Work Family Balance

Work support states the emotive concern, instrumental aid, others informational and appraisal functions which help to improve one’s feelings of self-importance, Michel [29]. The sources of supports in the work domain may come from management, the immediate supervisor, co-workers, role management and the organization itself. Support, on the other side in family domain, may come from the spouse, family as a whole, hire help to support, self-support (recreational support) and

support from friends & relatives. Several researchers viewed work support as an important alleviating factor to work–family. According to Thompson [30] there is a significant influence on the professional stress of female police officers and they can reduce moral exhaustion and contribute to a better work-life balance. The work on Canadian health care workers indicated that an organization and supervisor support for work-life issues are positively related and helps to reduce work-to-family conflict as the view of Warner [31]. The importance of organizational support in relation with work-life balance in a dynamic work environment of police officers and agents in Québec pointed by Tremblay [32]. Fathima [33] also in their findings recognized the importance of organizational formal and informal supports to employees in the context of the work environment to balance employees work and family aspects. Similarly, colleague support and job resources as positive variables to work life balance while unfair criticism at the job has a negative relation with work family balance among university teachers in Pakistan.

3.2.3 Job Stress as an Influencing Factor of Work Family Balance

According to Stanton [34], job stress is an individual's perceived perception about one's work environment either as threatening or demanding or discomfort experienced by an individual in the work place. Work family balance has closely been linked up with job stress at different degrees depending on the levels of job stress among employees in different occupations as mentioned by Wallace [35] and Wong [36]. The relationships among job-related stress, health, work family balance and work-life conflict of Australian academia was researched by Bell [37]. Results indicated that higher levels of job stress is associated with decreased work family balance and well-being. Over the past few decades, a plethora of research has demonstrated that anxiety related job stress has a negative effect on employees' well-being as pointed by Astin [38], Gillespie [39], and Kinman [40].

3.2.4 Technology as an Influencing Factor of Work Family Balance

Technology reshapes our work and family lives. In many cases, technology might be the cause of our blessing and suffering. Technology as either facilitating or hindering work family balance by creating a more accessible and flexible environment at all times of day and night enabling individual to work anytime and anywhere [41]. The impact of organizations' digital communication technology such as e-mail culture on employees' lives outside of working hours. Waller [42] conducted a study and found both positive and negative impact of digital organizational culture on employee lives.

4. Outcomes of Work Family Balance

From the previous researches and their literature, the outcomes of WFB is broadly categorized into two parts named work related outcomes and non-work related outcomes. The findings of the previous researches based on work and non-work related outcomes are given below:

4.1 Work Family Balance and Work Related Outcomes

Based on the opinions of bus drivers in a research by Hughes and Boziones [46], it was identified that lack of work family balance is the major cause of job dissatisfaction and work life imbalance is highly correlated with withdrawal actions such as turnover and non-genuine sick absenteeism. In addition, Keeton *et al.* [47] conducted a study on career satisfaction, work family balance, and burnout among physicians and found that work family balance is significantly related to employees

(both men and women) career satisfaction but this relationship is mediated by some important factors such as working hours, marital status, gender, and dependent child. Apart from these findings, this study also showed that generation and gender are strongly related to WFB, career satisfaction and burnout. Recent study by Smith [48] on Millennial (born between 1980 and 1995) employees shows that work-life balance is more important for the recent generation of employees than earlier generation. In the same vein, this study also showed that WLB is a powerful tool to ensure employees' quality of work, job performance and enduring job satisfaction. Considering the study based on a proposed model of WFB by Shankar and Bhatnagar [49] the findings show that WFB is highly correlated with employees' commitment, emotional consonance and turnover intention. Additionally, in a study conducted by Noor [50] among the academicians of Malaysian public higher education and found that perceived satisfaction with WFB is negatively related to the turnover intention which is partially mediated by employees' satisfaction and commitment. Likewise, the researchers conducted by Rathi and Barath [51], Varatharaj and Vasantha [52] and Shree [53] on employees working in India revealed that employees satisfaction variables such as career advancement opportunity, recognition, benefits are positively correlated with work family balance. Nevertheless, the study by Nayeem and Tripathy [54] contend that WFB is a major issue of job satisfaction as male teachers involve a higher degree of burnout than female teachers and burnout has a positive relationship with job satisfaction. The results of a study carried out by Maeran *et al.*, [55] and Chimote and Srivastava [56] on the employees in India identified that WFB ensures the reduction of absenteeism, turnover and stress. In addition, work family balance helps to increase the job satisfaction, commitment level, autonomy which have positive impact on organization's productivity. Nevertheless, in terms of organizational perspective, the researchers conducted correlation analysis and found that work family balance is highly correlated with absenteeism and turnover intention.

4.2 Work Family Balance and Non-Work Related Outcomes

Work Family Balance (WFB) according to Allen *et al.*, [57] is also related to non-work related outcomes such as life satisfaction, family satisfaction and family performance. For instance, Hobson *et al.* [58] indicated that lack of work family balance is the cause of stress and stress related illness which reduce life and family satisfaction. In the view of Hyman *et al.* [59] work life imbalance is related to stress, sleeplessness and emotional exhaustion among employees. In a like manner, Shanafelt *et al.* [60] found that burnout is more common to those who have long working hours and who are struggling with work life integration. However, Lakshmi *et al.* [61] are of the view that WFB is still a challengeable issue because work and family can be considered as two major important domains in a person's life and many studies have been done by researchers all over the world regarding the relationship between work and family [62].

5. Conclusions and Future Directions

The majority of the previous study conducted are based on only the factors of work family balance such as emotional intelligence, well-being, personality, work family arrangements, job stress and work support but few studies had been found to show the relationship among these variables. In future, the researchers should more focus on the relationship between these variables. In previous research, several societal factors of WFB (spouse employment, family disagreement, parental responsibilities, and dependent maintenance issues) had been discussed. But, only few studies showed a comparison between self-employed and organizationally employed employees. Most of

the previous studies showed the demographic factors such as gender, age, job experience, and level of income, nature of family which have impact on WFB as an individual, organizational and societal factors. However, the factors relating to individual and societal are future researchable issues than organizational factors. Most research efforts have given more concentration to organizational and work related consequences such as job satisfaction, turnover intention, absenteeism, commitment performance. In future, the researchers are encouraged to be more focused on non-work related outcomes. The majority of the previous study conducted are based on only the factors of work family balance such as emotional intelligence, well-being, personality, work family arrangements, job stress and work support but few studies had been found to show the relationship among these variables. In future, the researchers should more focus on the relationship between these variables. In previous research, several societal factors of WFB (spouse employment, family disagreement, parental responsibilities, and dependent maintenance issues) had been discussed. But, only few studies showed a comparison between self-employed and organizationally employed employees. Most of the previous studies showed the demographic factors such as gender, age, job experience, and level of income, nature of family which have impact on WFB as an individual, organizational and societal factors. However, the factors relating to individual and societal are future researchable issues than organizational factors. Most research efforts have given more concentration to organizational and work related consequences such as job satisfaction, turnover intention, absenteeism, commitment performance. In future, the researchers are encouraged to be more focused on non-work related outcomes.

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