

## **GENDER DIFFERENCE: WORK AND FAMILY CONFLICTS AND FAMILY-WORK CONFLICTS**

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### **Abstract**

The present study was conducted to explore the prevailing differences between work-to-family interference, and family-to-work interference among men and women employees. The population was a random sample of 210 men and women employed in Karachi aged 25–50 years. Work-family conflict, and family-work conflict was measured by (Niemeyer, Boles, & McMurrin - 1996) 10-item scale, which was scored on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Data collection also included questions about their current functioning with regard to family support, control over work responsibilities and work hours flexibility along with demographic questions about, age, gender, education, marital status, number of dependents and nature of employment. Data was analyzed through descriptive statistics to assess prevalence of work-to-family interference and family-to-work interference. Overall results indicate no significant gender difference with regard to work-family interference and family-to-work interference. This is theoretically an unexpected result, however, it might be due to the sample size which was too small to identify such differences. Further study is necessary to accurately identify the predictors of work-family interference and family-to-work interference in collectivistic societies.

**Key-words:** Work-family conflict, family-work conflict, gender  
**JEL Classification:** A13, J16, Z13, R20, M15

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### **Eclectic Literature Review:**

In the recent past most of the research in the domain of work and family has been originated within diverse disciplines like sociology, psychology, occupational health, business management, and gender and family studies. Work and family symbolize two of the most critical roles of an adult life. It's obvious that work can interfere with family and family can interfere with work, factors like globalization, equal employment opportunities, working hours, and changes in the demographic makeup of employees have posed significant challenges for both organizations and employees. In particular, with the increase in dual-career households, employees are ever more performing both work and family roles all together and dealing with job-related demands that place limits on the performance of family role and vice versa. Hence; researchers are primarily interested in identifying causes of work-family interference.

The work-family interface is defined as a unified relationship between work and family. Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, and Rosenthal, (1964); first examined this inter-role conflict that people experienced between their work roles and other life roles. Later Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) defined work-family conflict (WFC) as, "a form of inter-role conflict in which role pressures from the work and family domain are mutually incompatible in some respect" competing work activity or when family stress (FWC) has a negative effect on performance in the work role". There are three aspects of the work-family interface that are related to conflict: (1) bidirectional nature (Carlson & Kacmar, 2000), (2) time, and (3) psychological carryover (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Piotrkowski, 1979; Voydanoff, 1988). Work -family conflict is explained as reciprocal interference of work and family roles leading to significant personnel and organizational problems. Studies focusing on role stress have suggested that employees are frequently confronted with role stress, heavy workloads, long

work hours, irregular work schedules, job insecurity and are at risk of conflict in the work-family interface (Karatepe & Baddar, 2006; Karatepe & Sokmen, 2006; Namasivayam & Mount, 2004).

A group of authors including: Carlson and Kacmar (2000); Eagle, Icenogle, and Maes (1998); Eagle, Miles, and Icenogle (1997); Frone, Yardley, and Markel (1997); Greenhaus and Powell, (2003); Gutek, Searle, Klepa, (1991); Matsui, Ohsawa, and Onglotco (1995); Netemeyer, Boles, and McMurrian (1996); Williams and Alliger, (1994) agreed that conflict in the work-family interface has a bidirectional nature. Such as Frone, Russell and Cooper, (1992) have shown that work-family conflict and family-work conflict as the two forms of inter-role conflict. Where work-family conflict refers to “a form of inter-role conflict in which the general demands of time devoted to, and strain created by the job interfere with performing family related responsibilities”; and family-work conflict refers to “a form of inter-role conflict in which the general demands of time devoted to, and strain created by the family interfere with performing work-related responsibilities (Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996).

Similarly, Greenhaus and Powell (2003) showed that work-family conflict occurs when participation in work activity interferes with participation in a competing family activity or when work stress has a negative effect on behavior within the family domain. For example, conflict may occur when an employee is accepting a promotion that requires more hours which in turn decreases the number of hours at home with the family. On the other hand, family-work conflict is experienced when participation in a family activity interferes with participation in a competing work activity or when family stress has a negative effect on performance in the work role.

Industrial and organizational psychologists and other researchers have attempted to better understand work-family

conflict construct by examining the bidirectionality of work family conflict, different types of conflict, several reactance models of work-family conflict, and different causal models explaining how conflict affects individuals. However, gender differences in work and family conflict have been a consistently important theme in work-family research (Lewis & Cooper, 1999). Pleck (1977) considered gender as an important factor in work-family conflict in his theory of the work-family role system. He has conceptualized work-family interface that includes gender as an important factor. Further he explained that the work-family role system is composed of the male work role, the female work role, the female family role, and the male family role. Each of these roles may be fully actualized, or may be only partly actualized or latent, as is often the case with the female work role and the male family role.

According to Lambert (1990) gender differences must be studied in depth. Extensive review of the literature has suggested two hypotheses concerning gender differences in domain source conflict: domain flexibility and domain salience. The domain flexibility hypothesis predicts that the work domain is a greater source of conflict than the family domain for both women and men. The domain salience hypothesis predicts that the family domain is a greater source of conflict for women than the work domain and the work domain is a greater source of conflict for men than the family domain. Izraeli, (1993); Evans & Bartolome (1984) assumed that the work domain is less flexible, thus work affects family life more than vice versa and there is no gender differences. Contrary to this, Cooke and Rousseau (1984) proposed that conflict is greater from the domain that is more salient to the person's identity. Therefore, women experience more conflict from the family domain and men from the work domain. Hall (1972) noted that women may experience more role conflict as a result of simultaneity of their multiple roles. Beside gender, some family domain pressures like the effect of presence of young children (Lewis & Cooper, 1988); (Kopelman & Greenhaus, 1981),

spouse time in paid work (Coverman & Sheley, 1986); (Voydanoff, 1988) and work domain pressures like number of hours worked per week (Voydanoff, 1988); (Burke, Weirs & Duwors, 1980) are associated with work family conflict.

Moreover, studies have shown that employed women generally face more demands (from paid work, child care, and housework) than employed men (Robinson & Godbey, 1997). The degree of this difference for women is made up by housework: when men and women differ on number of hours dedicated to housework, flexibility of the activity, and the challenging and or creativity of the task. Hochschild (1989) also reported that employed mothers work an extra month per year of 24 hour days when compared with employed fathers with their number of hours dedicated to housework. Similarly, research has shown that men do not adjust the time that they spend on home and family activities according to their wives' employment decisions (Shelton & John, 1996). Consequently, even if women increase the number of hours they work, men are not likely to spend more hours on housework. It's not just time that leaves women with the feeling of imbalance. Housework is gendered that is, there are tasks that women are expected to perform and others that are generally men's expected responsibility. Women cook, clean, and care for children, while men usually take care of home repairs and lawn maintenance, (Robinson & Godbey, 1997). In this regard "male" activities are more flexible while "female" responsibilities are often necessary to do every day. Therefore men do their tasks as leisure-like and discretionary activities (Larson, Richards, & Perry- Jenkins, 1994); (Shaw, 1988). Greenhaus and Beutell, (1985), and many scholars have hypothesized that women experience more work-family conflict than men because of their typically greater home responsibilities and their allocation of more importance to family roles. However, more recent researchers have discovered that men and women do not differ on their level

of work-family conflict (Blanchard-Fields, Chen, & Hebert, 1997; Duxbury & Higgins, 1991; Rice & Frone, 1992; Wallace, 1997)

On the basis of the above discussion the present study aims to explore gender and domain differences in work family conflict among women and men employees employed in Karachi. Specifically, this study attempts to scrutinize which of the two domains that is work-family conflict or family-work conflict, causes more conflict for men and women and examine gender differences on the basis of Niemeyer, scales measures of work-family conflict in Pakistani population.

#### **Hypothesis:**

1. Null Hypothesis: There is no relationship between gender and the degree of work-family and family work conflict.  
Alternative hypothesis: There is a relationship (difference) between gender and the degree of work-family conflict & family-work conflict.
2. Null Hypothesis: There is no relationship between gender and the nature of work-family and family work conflict.  
Alternative hypothesis: There is a relationship between gender and nature of family-work conflict and work-family conflict.

#### **Methodology:**

The present study was conducted to observe gender differences pertaining to work-family interference among employees both men and women from diverse professions which include: teachers, managers, doctors, bankers and others. To assess work-family conflict (WFC) and family-work conflict, (FWC) Niemeyer, Boles, & Mcmurrian's (1996), scale was used. It includes two subscales: WFC and FWC and each subscale consists of five items with 7-point likert rating scale ranging from strongly

disagree to strongly agree where 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= slightly disagree, 4= neutral, 5= slightly agree, 6= agree and 7= strongly agree. Niemeyer, Boles, & Mcmurrian (1996), described high internal consistency of five items subscales for both WFC and FWC that is Cronbach alpha range from .82 to .90. The scale measures the respondent's degree of agreement with statements. The scale scores range from 5 to 35, a high score indicates a high level of perceived conflict between WFC and FWC, while a low score reflects a low level of perceived conflict between WFC and FWC. Along with the work-family conflict scale, demographic questions about age, gender, education, marital status, number of dependents and nature of employment were asked. The demographic section also included eight moderating variables including: respondent's perceived family, friends and partner's support for WFC & FWC, perceived control over work responsibilities, perceived flexibility in work hours, and perceived boss's support for both WFC and FWC measured through self-structured questions.

Those eight questions are as follows:

- 1) on a scale from 1 (no control) to 7 (complete control), how much control do you have over your work responsibilities?
- 2) on a scale from 1 (no flexibility) to 7 (complete flexibility), how would you describe your work hours?
- 3) on a scale from 1 (no support) to 7 (complete support), how would you describe the level of support you feel you have from your partner for conflict that arises as a result of work interfering with family responsibility?
- 4) on a scale from 1 (no support) to 7 (complete support), how would you describe the level of support you feel you have your partner for conflict that arises as a result of family responsibilities interfering with work?

- 5) on a scale from 1 (no support) to 7 (complete support), how would you describe the level of support you feel you have from your family members and friends for conflict that arises as a result of family responsibilities interfering with work?
- 6) on a scale from 1 (no support) to 7 (complete support), how would you describe the level of support you feel you have from your family members and friends for conflict that arises as a result of family responsibilities interfering with work?
- 7) on a scale from 1 (no support) to 7 (complete support), how would you describe the level of support you feel you have from your boss/supervisor for conflict that arises as a result of work interfering with family responsibilities?
- 8) on a scale from 1 (no support) to 7 (complete support), how would you describe the level of support you feel you have from your boss/supervisor for conflict that arises as a result of family responsibilities interfering with work?

The targeted population was both men and women, regular full time employees, working in Karachi. The sample was a random selection consisting of 105 men and 105 women (N=210), age ranged 25–50 years. The study was conducted through one to one contact. Participants completed the work-family conflict, family-work conflict and demographic questionnaire. All the data was collected by going into the field during September, 2010.

**Results & Discussion:****Table 1: Descriptive statistics for demographic variables (age, gender, marital status, educational level, no of children and nature of employment)**

Demographic Characteristic	Frequency	%
<b>N=</b>	210	
<b>Gender</b>	Male= 105	50%
	Female= 105	50%
<b>Age</b> ( M=26.4yrs )	20-25= 73	34%
	26-30=56	26%
	31-35=20	9.5%
	36-40=26	12.5%
	41-45=11	5%
	46-50= 24	11.3%
<b>Marital status</b>	Married= 120	57%
	Single= 90	42%
<b>Education level</b>	Masters=78	37%
	Graduate =58	27%
	Intermediate=34	16%
	Matric =23	10%
	Others=17	8%
<b>No of children</b>	0= 66	55%
	1=11	9%
	2=27	22%
	3= 11	9%
	4= 5	4%
<b>Nature of employment</b>	Full time= 164	78%
	Part-time= 44	20%
	No answer=2	0.9%

Data was analyzed through descriptive statistics to analyze the demographic characteristics of sample and moderating variables. 26.4 years appeared as an average age of respondents. Demographic findings show that most of the participants i.e. (57%) are married and (55 %) of married respondent have no children. On the other hand, the remaining married respondents have respectively two (22%) , three (4%)

and one (9%) as number of children, this reflects that just 4% of the total married population possessed somewhat large family size with four children. The rest of total respondents i.e. (47%) are single. Among all respondents (37%) have completed their masters, (27%) graduate, (16%) intermediate and (10%) matric as their last educational qualification (see table 1.1).

**Table 2: Descriptive statistics for Eight moderating factors for FWC & WFC**

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Male m</i>	<i>Female m</i>
<b>Control over work responsibilities</b>	5.53	5.27
<b>Working hours Flexibility</b>	4.59	4.4
<b>Perceived partner's Support for WFC</b>	5.05	5.27
<b>Perceived partner's Support for FWC</b>	4.8	5.2
<b>Perceived Friends &amp; Family's Support for WFC</b>	5.0	5.2
<b>Perceived Friends &amp; Family's Support for FWC</b>	4.8	5.1
<b>Perceived Boss Support for WFC</b>	4.4	4.5
<b>Perceived Boss Support for FWC</b>	4.2	4.5

Table1.2 presents the mean values for all moderating variables which work as buffer to WFC & FWC including work hour flexibility, control over work responsibilities, family, partner, friends and boss's support for the work-family and family-work conflicts. Social support and relations with co-workers and managers is an important part of an individual's social environment and lack of it can be a contributing factor to their stress. Our findings clearly support this argument as most of the respondents experienced moderate level of WFC (mean=21) & FWC (mean=17.8). Where 19 is the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile for FWC score and 22 is the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile for WFC score distributions. This indicates that about half of the total respondent's scores on WFC & FWC scale are either less or equal to 19 and 22 (see Table1.3). Furthermore, standard deviation for FWC (std. deviation = 6.3) and (std. deviation = 5.7) for WFC which indicates that majority of respondent's scores don't fall into the mean scores for both FWC and WFC scores. Moreover, this is also supported when both male and female respondents of the study received complete

support from their husbands, family members and friends i.e. (5.2%). All respondent irrespective of the gender reported that they receive higher level of support and encouragement from their families, friends and partners when work and family domains become troublesome. On the contrary, most of the participants received moderate level of their boss's support i.e. (4.5%) to manage with WFC & FWC. The amount of support received by men and women from their bosses is found relatively the same i.e. (4.2%).

In general there is a relation between responsibility and control when it comes to work. If individual's have lots of responsibilities at their jobs and little or no control over it to have it interfere more with work as well as family obligations than control at work responsibilities. Respondents of this study reported that they have enough control i.e. (5.5%) over their work responsibilities and can also work with flexible working hours. Furthermore, for women flexibility at work i.e. (4.4%) reduces the amount of family work conflicts when they are able to determine the hours they work in which moderates the WF & FW interference.

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Work-Family Conflict & Family-Work Conflict**

Percentiles	FWC	WFC
25	13	17
50	19	22
75	23	25
All respondent's Mean score	17.83	21
Std. Deviation	6.36	5.75
Std. Error	0.43	0.39
Variance	40.45	33
Male	17.5	20.5
Female	18.1	21.4

**Table 4: Chi-Square Tests (SPSS 17.0)**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	26.735 <sup>a</sup>	26	.423
Likelihood Ratio	33.125	26	.158
N of Valid Cases	210		

a. 32 cells (59.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .50.

Chi-square was analyzed through (SPSS 17.0) to test the hypothesis. It was hypothesized that there is no relationship between gender and the degree of work-family and family work conflict which is rejected at alpha ( $p=0.05$  level  $> \chi^2=26.7$ ). The probability of the chi-square test statistic  $p=38.8$ , at the alpha level of significance of 0.05 was greater for FWC & WFC (chi-square=26.7), therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted (see Table 4). It was also hypothesized that there is a relationship between gender and the type of work-family and family work conflict as women experience more family-work conflict and men experience more work-family conflict this hypothesis was also rejected at alpha ( $p=0.05$  level  $> 38.8$ ). The probability of the chi-square test statistic  $p=38.8$ , at the alpha level of significance of 0.05 was greater for FWC & WFC (chi-square=23), therefore, rejected the research hypothesis. The research hypothesis that differences in “degree of perceived work-family and family- work conflicts” are related to differences in “gender” is not supported by this analysis (see Table 5).

**Table: 5 Chi-Square Tests (SPSS 17.0)****Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	23.048 <sup>a</sup>	24	.517
Likelihood Ratio	26.120	24	.347
N of Valid Cases	210		

a. 29 cells (58.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .50.

These findings are more in the line with previous studies that there were no differences between the gender in experience of work-family conflicts. Even which present findings don't support that family is the greater source of conflict for women and work for men. Furthermore, source of family-work conflicts are associated with moderating variables like the number of small children, number of children and time spent at work. Since majority of respondents are married with no children might be the indicative of rejection. When it is even contrary to our societal gender role expectations and responsibilities; women carry out most of the family responsibilities from child care to the household. In this way these findings can support little when most of the respondents are young with small family size hence the family doesn't generate enough pressures when it clashes with their work responsibilities.

This is also an indicative of evolving family- friendly organizations in Pakistani society. Social support i.e. family, friends, partner and boss's support is generally considered a moderator between stress and conflicts; individuals who receive high support experience low strain than others. This is also comparable to the respondents in the present study.

When both male and female respondents equally perceived that they have enough control over their current work responsibilities and working hour flexibility and appeared as dominating moderating factors for WFC and FWC in the present study. It also indicates that working environment in industries like academia, health and banks is becoming conducive to work in our local context.

However, with a small and convenient sampling generalization of the results hold limitations of the study. Moreover, unequal distribution of sample from different and specific occupation also resulting limits to the generalization. On the basis of above discussion we conclude that sources of WFC & FWC can be better examined if employees are with comparable occupational and of employment status. Such as Karasek's theory, suggested that lower level managers reported higher levels of conflict than others. Therefore, there is still a need to study work family conflict construct in detail and identify what those different organizational and moderating variables like support, controllability and work hour flexibility, work load, and work environment to determine gender differences for WFC and FWC. Future research may also focus on exploring the factor analysis and convergent-validity of two different constructs such as Carlson scale for its local implication so that it can be brought into human resource management functions.

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