

Supervisor Support and organizational climate as Predictors of Work Family Conflict

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Abstract

The paper based on a study conducted on the women managers working in Delhi NCR, discusses the perceived supervisor and organizational support as predictors of work family conflict. A survey was administered to determine the relationship between these two variables. The participants were 230 women managers in the Delhi NCR. The results of this study provide an analysis of the working women managers' perceptions of the workplace as being supportive and organizational climate as predictors of work family conflict.

Key Words: Perceived organizational support, supervisor support, and organizational climate work family conflict.

Introduction

Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) defined work-family conflict as a "form of role conflict in which the pressures from work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect". Work-family conflict is not only important for individuals and their families, but also for the organizations that employ them. Studies conducted by Allen (2000) have reported that work-family conflict is associated with work-related, non-work related and stress-related deleterious outcomes. Literature suggests that the absence of work-family/life balance, typically defined in terms of elevated work-family conflict has been shown to affect important organizational outcomes, such as job satisfaction (Netemeyer et al., 1996), organizational commitment (Wiley, 1987), employee turnover (Netemeyer et al., 1996), and absenteeism and tardiness (Goff, Mount, & Jamison, 1990; Hammer, Bauer, & Grandey, 2003; Thomas & Ganster, 1995).

Primarily, work-life balance focuses on assisting employees to improve the organization of their time by introducing a number of work-life balance policies. These include reducing work hours, part-time jobs, flexitime, compressed working time, and where work takes place, such as virtual work (work from home) (Wise, Bond & Meikle, 2003)

The social exchange theory posits that social interactions depend on the benefits and costs involved in the exchange. The employment relationship can be characterized as consisting of social and/or economic exchanges (Aryee et al., 2002). According to Blau (1964), social exchanges are voluntary actions, which may be initiated by an organization's treatment of its employees, with the expectation that such treatment will eventually be reciprocated.

Researchers have reported that organizations that support employees' work/life balance, have been found to improve organizational commitment – defined as a belief in and acceptance of organizational goals and values, a willingness to exert effort toward these goals and a desire to maintain organizational membership.

To attract, recruit and retain talented employees, employers must determine what people want most from their jobs and create a work environment that keeps their employees satisfied as reduces their work family conflict. As a result many organizations have come up with many family-friendly programs, to help their employees reduce work family conflict. However recent evidence shows that simple implementation of these policies and practices is not enough to create a family – friendly environment (Allen, 2001; Kossek, Noe, & DeMarr, 1999; Lewis, 1997; Thomas, Beaunais, & Lyness, 1999). It is suggested that other informal workplace characteristics which influence an employees' perception of organizational support like the supervisors support, coworkers support, and the general supportiveness of the work family culture may be even more important and can be provided at little cost to employers, and the employees can access them more easily than other more costly workplace policies and hence it is critical for an organization to focus on them.

A supportive work-family climate is one in which organizations understand and support that a person's family is their first priority, even above the employee's work and the organization. Another dimension of the unsupportive work-family culture/climate in Thompson et al.'s definition is the perceived negative career consequences, implying that workers are indirectly penalized for utilizing work-life benefits.

Supervisors are seen as "agents of the organization, having responsibility for directing and evaluating subordinates' performance, employees view their supervisor's favorable or unfavorable orientation toward them as indicative of the organization's support" (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Supervisors often represent the entire organization to their employees (Allen, 2001, Eisenberger, & Stinglhamber, 2006). As agents of the organization, employees tend to view their supervisors' favorable or unfavorable treatment of them as indicative of the organization's support. The objective of this study is to extend prior research by investigating the impact of perceived organizational support on the perception of work-family conflict of working women managers in the Delhi NCR region.

Measures

Work-family conflict (WFC) was assessed using 5 items scale by Netemeyer et al., 1996, (in Fields 2002). The scale had five response choices ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. A sample item is "The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life". Higher scores reflect higher level of conflict. The Cronbach's alpha of this scale = .815

Organizational Climate was assessed using two items scale by Thompson, Beauvis & Lyness (1999) and one item adapted from Allen (2001), "In this organization, individuals who take time off (leaves) to attend top personal matters are viewed as not committed to their work. Response choices ranged from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. Higher scores reflect higher levels of unsupportive negative organizational climate. The Cronbach's alpha of this scale = .749

Supervisor's Support was assessed using five items from the Whitehall II survey (1989). A sample item is "How often do you get help and support from your immediate supervisor? Response choices ranged from 1 = never to 5 = all the times. Higher score means higher supervisor's support. The Cronbach alpha of this scale is .899

Participants and Data Collection

Non probabilistic convenience sampling was used to collect the data. Only female managers working in various organizations like FMCG, Banking and Insurance sector, Retail Industry, BPO and KPO's, ITES and other sector were included in the study. Two hundred and thirty participants were included in analyses. The majority of participants (73%, n=167) were married; and 27% (n=63) were single. The ages of the participants ranged from 20 to 60 years, with the 32% respondents in the age group of 20-30 years; 32% in the 31-40 years age group; 10% in the 41-50 years age group and 15% in the 51-60 years age group. There was no respondent in the age group of 60+ years, this could be because, and in most organizations the retirement age is 60 years.

Analysis and Discussion

Pearson's product moment correlations were conducted to measure the strength and direct relationships between the continuous variables of the effect of work on family i.e. the work conflict, and the perception of a supportive organizational climate, and supervisor support. A Pearson's correlations is presented in Table 1. All the study variables, work to family conflict, supportive organizational climate, and supervisor support had statistically significant correlations.

The analysis shows that there is a high positive correlation between work family conflict and unsupportive organizational climate with 'r' value of .672, significant at 99% confidence level. It means that work family conflict is affected significantly due to unsupportive organizational climate. Negative correlation was found for work family conflict with supervisors support with 'r' = .74

confidence level. This implies that employees who have a supportive supervisor would have low family conflict.

Table 1 : Descriptive and Correlations of study variables

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3
Work to Family Conflict	2.9652	.88787	1		
Supervisor Support	3.9091	.78508	-.741**	1	
Unsupportive Organizational Climate	3.1304	1.00334	.672**	-.855**	1

** All correlations significant at the 0.01 level.

Also there is a negative correlation between supervisor support and unsupportive organizational climate, meaning thereby that the employees will experience higher level of work to family conflict in the presence of an unsupportive supervisor and negative organizational climate

Table 2: Model summary of the Regression Analysis of Work family conflict on the predictor variables.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.753 ^a	.568	.564	.59645	.568	142.439	2	217	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Supervisor support, Unsupportive org Climate

The model summary in table 2 indicates that fifty seven (56.8%) of the variance in work family conflict can be accounted for by unsupportive organizational climate, and supervisor support as shown in table 2.

Table 3: Regression Analysis Predicting Work-family conflict from Organizational climate and Supervisor support

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4.551	.610		7.460	.000
	Unsupportive org Climate	.231	.077	.259	3.006	.003
	Supervisor support	-.598	.099	-.520	-6.037	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Work to Family Conflict total

Overall, the regression model for work family conflict was significant and large ($R^2 = .56$, $F = 142.439$, $p < .001$). Finally, the variance inflation factors (VIF) were examined for evidence of multi-collinearity. While it has been suggested that VIF scores of 10 or higher represents

problems (Ryan, 1997), the scores from the present study were all below 3.0, indicating no evidence of multi co-linearity unduly influencing the regression estimates.

Limitations

The data for this study were collected from Delhi NCR representative sample however, several limitations to the present study should be considered. The first limitation is the use of cross-sectional data, which implies that cause and effect relations cannot be inferred from the findings reported here. A second limitation is the self-report single source data, which according to Thomas & Ganster (1995), is a common problem in work-family conflict research because the key constructs are often based on perceptions and thus depend on self-reported data, which can raise concerns about common method variance.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Organizations face an increasing need to attract and sustain a productive workforce to ensure continued organizational success. The objective of the current research was to investigate the role of organizational support on work family conflict. The results of Pearson Correlation and Multiple Regression proved that there was a significant positive correlation between work family conflict, supportive organizational climate and supportive supervisor. The regression analysis indicates that 56% variance in the work to family conflict of an employee, especially women managers can be attributed to, supportive organizational climate and supervisor's support. Perceived organizational climate and supervisor support are critical for work-family conflict.

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