

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Interception of Energies: Spillover Effects of Work Family Conflict and Enrichment affecting Work Life Balance across Dual Earner CouplesMaria Arzu^{1*}, Rubina Hanif², Mubashir Shah³, Arooj Fiyaz³**ABSTRACT**

Objective: To determine the spillover effects of work family conflict, work family enrichment and its effect on work family balance from one partner to another.

Study Design: Cross-sectional study.

Place and Duration of Study: The study was carried out at Department of Psychology of the National Institute of Psychology, Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad from September 2017 to July 2018.

Materials and Methods: The sample comprises of dual earner couples (age range- 25 to 60). Inclusion criteria constitute of couples having a married life of a year with at least an active service of one year. Both the partners were assessed on work family enrichment scale (work to family enrichment and family to work enrichment), work family conflict scale (work to family conflict and family to work conflict) and work family balance scale respectively.

Results: The psychometric properties of all the scales depict normality of curve. Similarly the results coincide with the proposed hypothesis suggesting spillover of energies from one domain to another and similarly from one partner to another. Correlational analysis indicates significant relationship with demographic variables such as working hours, years of service, monthly income and number of children.

Conclusion: The increased female labor force in our society has led to the peripheral penetration of energies from one domain to another across borders. This study was carried out to investigate the positive and negative consequences of crossing the domains and ultimately the effect on overall harmony or balance. Thus, results yielded that negative transmission of energies across borders negatively affected both psychological health of individuals as well as their occupational spheres and vice versa respectively.

Key Words: *Work Family Balance, Work Family Conflict, Work Family Enrichment.*

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Introduction

The two basic approaches to survival are work and family. Usually the society describes the values attached to work and family based upon its own

culture. Work is a human struggle to achieve survival that involves use of resources like time and energy. The gain after utilizing these resources comes up in the form of financial reward from the employer. The way in which a society defines the family unit is also often guided by its culture. Work has been linked with well-being which is further primary to productivity. So, the role of one domain should not be confused or mixed with other as the two involves responsibilities, roles and activities that are different. According to Clark and Farmer¹ work brings sense of accomplishment and meaning in employees after getting paid for their work while home job is not paid and brings happiness as a result of strong bonding with members of family. The other approach to survival that is family is an important

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component of society. Traditionally, family system comprises of two systems, nuclear and extended families. The cultural dynamics of society have brought changes where the extended families have converted to nuclear system, which include spouse and children only.

So, the area of interest in the present era is addressing the work-family boundary dynamics. These boundaries demarcate the limits and lines between work and family but also include how individuals overcome the barriers, move from one to other side and balance the two realms. Generally, the present research is interested to study these transitions of behaviors and attitudes from one role to another in maintaining balance. The work family literature is quite vast and has had explored the role of conflict, enrichment, role behavior, boundary management etc. Researches on work family border management have seen both individual (e.g., skills people use in harmonizing the work and family domains) as well as organizational (e.g., organizational strategies and tactics use to enhance employees functioning) perspectives. Thus, the need of time is to gratify both the domains in order to achieve balance in one's life.

Decades ago, many economic and societal changes brought tremendous change in the work and family obligations. Females were considered as responsible for household chores and males were breadwinners to support their families financially. In the past few decades, economic and social factors have combined to create changes in work and family roles. Recent scenario depicting both the genders in multiple roles unlike the typical mindset has been explored to study dual earning couples in managing balance and success in various roles. This increase in the need to have two earnings in home to become financially sound and secondly increased demand of females to get professional recognition as well as achieving balanced family life. Studies have found that many workforce including females experience a great deal of stress and burden because of managing multiple roles in one instance as compared to their male counterparts (Fassinger, 2000).²

According to Allen (2010)³ he two predictors of balance enrichment and conflict are considerably different from work and family balance. Whereas these are the connecting mechanisms between work

and family, since balance is overall representation of individual's ability to integrate resources and enjoy multiple roles in various domains. Summing up the concept, balance has two important components that are conflict and enrichment. The two components depend upon the outputs and inputs. The inputs are presumed to be the personal resources within an individual which he/she utilizes to segregate borders and draw boundaries between the roles or demands. Personal resources include self-efficacious beliefs, cognitions, latitude of decisions etc. whereas the outcomes are the resulting mechanisms of the predictors that include balance, wellbeing, harmony and facilitation of roles. Preserving and generating role domains are central to human's nature. The most important theories focusing on work and family transition of roles from one sector to another include border-and-broaden theory and spillover theory. These theories have deep roots in the role theory more specifically organizational role theories. Roles that include multiple routine activities around their social system generate an organizational output in an individual's life.

Clark (2000)⁴ resented the border theory of work and family. Important tenants of the theory describe the ways by which individuals survive and achieve harmony in the life spheres i.e., family and work and also defining boundaries in between. According to it, individuals act as border crossers since they daily transit from one sector to another. It has very well defined the limits and borders of the two domains, work and family, with the elucidation of role boundaries. The theory has explained another concept that is permeability and flexibility that may disturb harmony resulting in either conflict or enrichment respectively.

Chen, Powell, and Greenhaus (2009)⁵ proposed that spillover theory explains how work and family commitments affect one another both positively and negatively. Individuals failing to demarcate the boundaries of work and family fall in spillover effect. Existing literature suggest presence of both positive (i.e., facilitation of other domain) and negative (i.e., processes in one limit or inhibit the success of the other) spillover. Positive spillover results in beneficial transfer of values, skills and behaviors whereas negative spillover brings about adverse outcomes

like conflict, psychological stress and strain among the working couples as both accelerate in the same horizon. Similarly, the rationale yields that work life balance and interception of energies plays an important role in both home domain and organizations.

Materials and Methods

A sample consisting of N = 400 including both males (n = 200) and females (n = 200) were approached in the twin cities Islamabad Rawalpindi respectively. The sample comprised of dual earning couples having a married life of a year, age ranged from 23 to 60 years and having an active service of a year. To fulfill the purpose of the research following research tools were used with prior permission from the authors and were not translated in our native language. The scales include demographic forms, work and life balance scale (Brough et al., 2014 four-item scale)⁶, work to family conflict scale (Netemeyer, Boles & McMurrin, 1996)⁷, family to work conflict scale (Netemeyer, Boles & McMurrin, 1996)⁷, family-to-work enrichment scale (Carlson et al., 2006)⁸, work-to-family enrichment scale (Carlson et al., 2006)⁸.

The data collected was entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 21.0 for Windows) and AMOS 22, computer program for quantitative analysis. Paired sample t-test was used to study the spillover of conflict and enrichment among husbands and wives on maintaining equilibrium. Finally, the relationships and transference of energies from one spouse to another were analyzed through path analysis under structural equation modeling.

Results

Table 1 shows a significant difference in the reactions of husbands and wives towards work family enrichment in both directions. Since, the means depict that wives have higher scores (M = 69.51) as compared to their counterparts we can conclude that wives have shown better flourish and enrichment both at work and home spheres than their husbands.

Table 2 shows that there is no significant difference in husbands and wives on the conflict scale in both directions work to family and family to work, respectively. That indicates that if husband is suffering conflict that is likely to produce similar

Table 1: Mean, Standard Deviations & t Values on Work to Family and Family to Work Enrichment for Husbands and Wives (N = 400)

	Husbands (n = 200)		Wives (n = 200)		t	95% CI		Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD		LL	UL	
En	65.76	12.51	69.51	11.07	-3.16	-6.06	-1.41	-.002
WFE	32.39	6.36	34.95	6.30	-4.03	-3.80	-1.31	.00
FWE	33.37	7.34	34.85	6.99	-2.05	-2.89	-.06	.04

*En = Work Family Enrichment Scale, WFE = Work to Family Enrichment, FWE = Family to Work Enrichment

effects in the other partner.

Table 2: Mean, Standard Deviations & t- Values on Work to Family and Family to Work Conflict for Husbands and Wives (N = 400)

	Husbands (n = 200)		Wives (n = 200)		t	95% CI		Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD		LL	UL	
Cn	37.19	14.11	38.35	13.64	-.83	-3.89	1.56	-
WFC	20.48	7.76	21.51	13.64	1.33	-2.53	.48	-
FWC	16.70	7.95	16.88	6.99	-.22	.78	1.72	-

*Cn = Work Family Conflict Scale, WFC = Work to Family Conflict, FWC = Family to Work Conflict

Table 3: Chi-square, degree of freedom and Comparative Fit indices of proposed model for Work Family Enrichment as predictor of Work Family Balance among Married Couples

	$\chi^2(df)$	NFI	IFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA	$\Delta^2(\Delta df)$
Model 1	122.74 (4)	.59	.60	-1.21	.57	.27	
Model 2	126.40 (10)	.58	.60	1.30	.58	.16	3.66 (6)
Model 3	9.5(7)	.98	.99	.99	.99	.03	116.9 (1)

NFI = Normed Fit Index, IFI = Incremental Fit Index, TLI = Tucker Lewis Index, CFI = Comparative Fit Index, RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation

The non-significant paths were deleted from the main model and the modified model was shown in Figure 1.

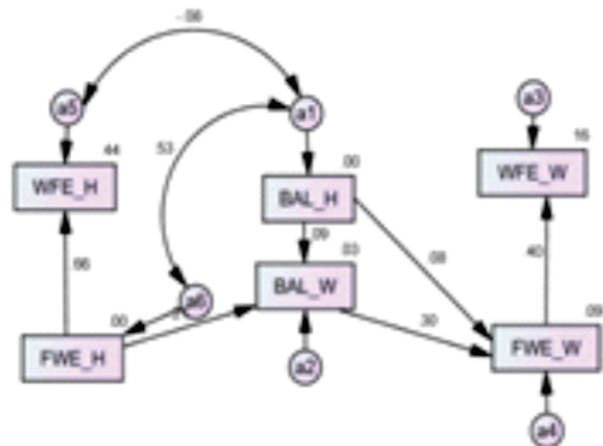


Fig 1: Model representing the relationship between work family enrichment and family work enrichment with work life balance

As depicted in Figure 1 significant relations were found between work life balance in husbands and wives. It revealed that work life balance in husband is

a positive predictor of work and family balance in their wives ($\beta=.15, p\leq.01$). That corresponds with our hypothesis that “work life balance in husbands predicts balance of work and family domain in their spouses”. Model depicts that wives achieve family to work enrichment once their husbands feel sufficient work and family balance. Another finding supports our hypothesis that “enrichment at family or home domain is a positive predictor of enrichment at work place for both husband and wives” ($\beta.39, p<.01$). Considering the Asian sample the results also depicts that work life balance in husbands is a positive predictor of family to work enrichment in their wives. These findings support our proposed hypothesis that “enrichment either at work or home domain transfers from one partner to another that will eventually lead to attain work and family balance”. So, the overall model depicts that balance in husbands predicts enrichment (family to work) in their spouse.

Table 4: Chi-square, degree of freedom and Comparative Fit indices of proposed model for Work Family Conflict as predictor of Work Family Balance among Married Couples (N = 400)

	$\chi^2(df)$	NFI	IFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA	$\Delta\chi^2(\Delta df)$
Model 1	517.16 (10)	-.02	.02	-.48	.01	.35	
Model 2	518.25 (12)	.02	.02	-.23	.01	.32	1.09 (2)
Model 3	1.77 (6)	.99	.99	.96	.97	.00	.68 (6)

Hypothesized model presented in Figure 2 shows all the direct and indirect paths travelling from husband's domain to wives domain of work and family. The model fit was achieved in model 3 and that model includes all the significant paths both direct and indirect. According to the Figure 2, significant direct positive relation was observed between husband's family to work conflict and wives similar corresponding domain that is family to work ($\beta=.10, p\leq.05$). Thus adequately supporting our proposed hypothesis that “conflict (either at work or home) in one partner transmits its negative spillover to other partner”.

Spillover Effects of Work and Family Balance Another path transferring from one border to another was seen in which husband's increased family to work conflict leads to corresponding increase in their wife's work to family conflict ($\beta=.09, p\leq.05$). Slightly, consistent with our culture as males are considered bread makers and females being responsible for household chores; unequal distribution of energies by husbands left their wives under conflict that is

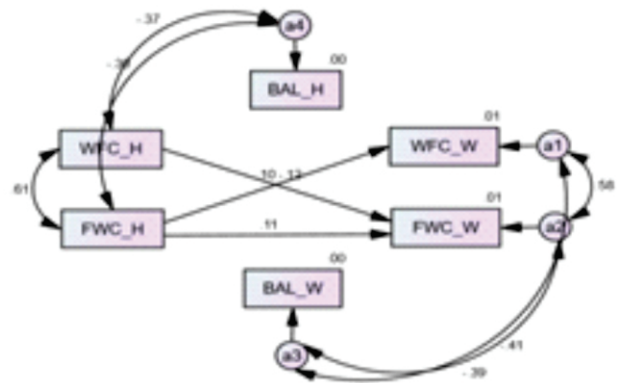


Fig 2. Model representing the relationship between work family conflict and family work conflict with work life balance

mostly reported at their workplaces inhibiting their productivity. A negative path was identified between transmission of resources when one border keeper allowed permeability of negative energies. Negative spillover of husbands work related conflict spreads in wife's family related boundaries. Increased work related conflict reported by husbands predicted decreased family related conflict in their wives ($\beta-.12, p\leq.05$) since, maintaining work family balance.

Discussion

The present research has conducted to investigate the bi-directional process of work and family enrichment and conflict upon an individual's work life balance consistent with the broaden-and-build theory (Fredrickson, 1998, 2001).⁹ According to the theoretical perspective transmission of energies from one domain to another either leads to positive or negative spillover. Positive spillover was explained through enrichment model examining the transition of positive attitudes, energies, moods and behaviors from work to family or vice-versa. Similarly, the negative mechanism reflects work and family conflict that depicts transference of unpleasant moods, intermingling resources and psychological distress from work to family sphere or vice-versa. Furthermore, very few studies have investigated both the directions of enrichment and conflict (i.e., work to family and family to work) together and their effects on the dual earner couples.

As evident from literature that family boundaries are more permeable than work boundaries (Frone, Russell & Cooper, 1992)¹⁰, similar in our Asian cultures that expect flourishing at home as more important than work that will ultimately bonus

enrichment at work place (Aryee & Luk, 1996).¹¹ Research findings suggest that success in one domain, that is work, will provide transfusion of positive affects to the other role i.e., family (Wayne, Randel & Stevens, 2006).¹² Findings correlate with our study (Table 1) that works to family enrichment is positively related to family to work enrichment in both husbands and wives. Thus, supporting the hypothesis that “flourishment in one domain may enrich the other sphere subsequently in a positive manner”.

Conclusion

Current research has evoked considerable organizational issue that needs an appropriate balance both at organizational as well as domestic level. Since, the organizational setup has changed and mostly comprises of female population that too in the Asian realm so considering an adequate balance will increase the work efficiency of both spouse. Similarly, positive exchange of energies from one domain to another will benefit the family balance respectively. Hence, recent study addresses the bi-directional effects of work and family balance to evoke both positive i.e., enrichment as well the negative i.e., conflict related to inappropriate balance.

Future Implication

The present study is of considerable importance for organizational and community setups because the family and work linkages can be helpful in structuring problem solving skills, marital therapies and facilitating working ambience. Based upon the present work, organizational psychologists and family therapists can shape various awareness programs, skills and considerable understanding of the two realms. Similarly, the sample comprises of only working couples so an important impact is missing that includes the house wives. Future

research should address a comparative study between working and a non working partner.

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