

## THE ROLE OF EDUCATION AS AN INFLUENCING FACTOR TOWARDS WORK FAMILY CONFLICT OF WOMEN EMPLOYEES IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SECTOR IN INDIA

*B. Aiswarya\* and G. Ramasundaram\*\**

**Abstract:** *The main objective of this study is to examine the impact of work life conflict of women employees in IT sector India with respect to the educational background. A convenience sampling technique was used to select women respondents. Quantitative as well as qualitative data were obtained using structured questionnaire. Demographic, socio-cultural factors and economic characteristics were used as explanatory variables while the dependent variable is work life conflict. A sample of 598 was used for the analysis. Cluster and correspondent analysis is administered to derive the findings. It has been found out that there is a direct proportional relationship between the education and the work life. Finally, based on the key findings, some workable recommendations are given.*

**Keywords:** *Work life conflict, women, education, Information technology sector.*

### INTRODUCTION

Women, today, function within multiple roles simultaneously operating in both work and family domains as a mother, spouse, housekeeper, and as well as maintain a full time employment outside the home (Eagle *et al.*, 1997; Frone *et al.*, 1992a; Gutek *et al.*, 1991; Wiley, 1987).

An important issue facing our society is the changing work and family roles of Indian women. Because many women occupy both work and family roles their experience in work and family represent primary social contexts for examining women's lives. (McBride, 1990). Women today function within multiple roles simultaneously operating in both work and family domains as, a mother, a spouse, a housekeeper, and as well maintain a full time employment outside the home. The relationship between these dual roles has thus become a topic of interest among organizational researchers. In most studies researchers have found that carrying out these dual roles often lead to work family conflict for both men and women. The profound demographic trends has elevated the need to understand and manage the interface between the formal expectations of a specified role or position.

---

\* Department of Management Studies, Sathyabama University, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India, *E-mail:*

\*\* Professor -Department of Management Studies, St. Joseph's College of Engineering, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India, *E-mail : ramasundaramgr@yahoo.co.in*

Work and family are the two central domains framing the back bone of an individuals' life (Howard, 1992). They are work domain (employment) and non-work domain (family). These two inevitable institutions namely work and family historically coexist. But this separation between work and life began to fade with changes in societal demographics.

The social belief that women should work and care for their families often conflicts with the limited choices and social realities that women face (Paden and Buehler, 1995; Phillips and Imhoff, 1997). Work responsibilities and family obligations compete for time and attention in most working adults. Successfully negotiating the interface of these life domains is challenging.

When individuals allocate most of their time to one arena, the less they will have to allocate to the other resulting in role conflict. Role conflict experienced by women is the subjects of concern and interest that have addressed by researchers (Amatea and Beyette, 1987; Majewski, 1986; Spitze, 1998).

The boundaries between work and family were asymmetrically permeable when the demands from one domain intruded into the other domain with unequal frequency (Pleck, 1985). Among women family demands would intrude into the work role than work demands would intrude into the family role because they assumed primary responsibility for managing home related demands. In contrast, among men work demands would intrude into the family role more than the reverse because they were likely than women to take work.

## **THE CONTEXT OF WORK LIFE CONFLICT IN INDIAN SOFTWARE SECTOR**

One of the fastest growing business sectors that is contributing to an unprecedented economic growth in India since the 1990s, is Information Technology (IT). In the recent past, the Information Technology Enabled Services/ Business Process Outsourcing (ITES/BPO) sector of India has been the center of attention of some research studies in the West. Hence, the present study focuses on software professionals for whom the boundary between work and life is generally thought to be distorted and tries to find out their perceptions regarding work life conflict. Work life conflict has become perceptible as a strategic concern for the management of human resources.

The Indian IT-ITES industry is on a high impetus direction. Rampant growth, however, has come with its own set of challenges. Therefore, the main concern of the present study is to provide information (vis-a-vis, identification of areas of work life conflict policy development and implementation that may require change; and enable them to respond to the changing needs of employees and also ensuring the awareness of the work life conflict policies) that would help the management of the IT companies to evaluate and redesign their current HR strategies in order

to retain their existing employees and recruit new ones in a competitive IT sector environment being faced.

## **BACK GROUND OF THE STUDY**

Work - family conflict occurs when work pressures and family pressures exists at the same time such that compliance with pressures in one domain (e.g., work) makes it more difficult to comply with pressures in another domain (family). Most work family conflict research to date developed and tested antecedents and outcomes of work / family conflict (Greenhaus and Beutall, 1985). Kopelman et al (1983) were among the first to systematically examine the construct of work family conflict. Inter role conflict occurs when one experiences pressures of one role that are discordant with pressures in another role. Kopelman et al (1983) developed three scales to measure each of these constructs.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Work Family Conflict**

Work interference family conflict occurs when work related activities interfere with home responsibilities and family interference work conflict occurs when familial activities and thoughts interfere with work responsibilities. Although strongly correlated with one another they are conceptually and empirically distinct constructs (Duxbury, Higgins, and Lee 1994; Frone, Russell, and Cooper, 1992).

Greenhaus and Beutall (1985) identified three major types of work family conflict. The first is time based; time spent on role performance in one domain often precludes time spent in the other domain. The second work family conflict strain based conflict arises when strain in one role affects ones performance in another role. The last type is behavior based conflict which refers to incompatibility between the behaviors patterns that are desirable in the two domains.

Carlson *et al.* (2000) also discovered that work involvement does significantly correlate with work to family conflict. Thompson and Ganster (1995) found that supervisor support reduced work family conflict. Anderson (1991) found that managerial support was negatively and significantly correlated with work to family conflict and family to work conflict while Frone, Yardely and Markel (1997) concluded that supervisor support was related to work to family conflict and not family to work conflict and co worker support was related to neither). Multiple roles lead not only to increased obligations but also to increased privileges. Rewards such as self esteem, recognition, prestige and financial remuneration offset costs of work roles thus enhancing well being. Intention to withdraw from work force (Aryee, 1992) is a work out come which has been found to be related to high levels

of work family conflict. Other indicators that focus on lack of general well being such as depression (Thomas and Ganster, 1995).

### **Validity and Reliability**

- Work Family Conflict: 0.923 [Reliability of scales is tested with cronbach alpha.]

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Research methodology is the frame work of any research work that explains as to the research design, the data used, sampling technique applied, tools used for analysis and so on.

### **Research Design**

The design applied in this study is conclusive type of descriptive research design. It is appropriate to use this method as this research describes the relationship between different variables and concludes as such. It tries to understand the behavioral differences of respondents. Besides, the view of researcher is not having any role in the conclusion of the study.

### **Data**

Both primary and secondary data are used in this study to attain the objectives. The primary data of this study are first hand information collected from respondents regarding demographic background, like education, marital status, Number of children, and dependents, Working hours ,income level and designation. The secondary data are information about previous studies in role conflict of women across the world, among various sectors like nursing, academics, and other industries particularly in India. Indicators have been gathered from journals and magazines.

Structured questionnaire is used for gathering information from respondents that has been drawn on objectives of study and finally drafted based on pilot study. For testing the reliability, pilot study has been conducted by distributing questionnaires among 50 respondents. On the basis of their views and reliability of scales, questions have been modified and questionnaire has been so redrafted as to meet minimum value of reliability which has been tested further through survey among another 50 respondents.

### **Questionnaire**

Set of questions pertaining to the objectives of the study is prepared with the help of previous studies conducted with reference to variables. Questionnaire consists of both qualitative and quantitative items. Moreover, apart from multiple

choice questions, different types of scales are used to measure the respective variables.

### Sampling

Since the population size is very large, sampling technique is applied to select sample unit. In this study, convenience sampling technique is adopted for selecting the various IT firm and selecting respondents. Sample unit of this study is only women both married and unmarried employed in IT industry in India.

A total of 1000 questionnaires have been distributed to respondents but only 755 have been received after continuous follow-up. Among collected filled questionnaires, only 598 are in usable condition.

### Objectives

- To segment the sample based on role conflict.
- To analyses the association of the conflict segments with respect to education.

### Hypothesis

There is no significant association between conflict segments and educational levels.

### Conflict based segmentation with Dimensions

**Table 1**  
**Cluster Centers**  
Final Cluster Centers

<i>Type of role conflict</i>	<i>Cluster</i>		
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>
Work Family Conflict Time	4.30	3.57	2.53
Work Family Conflict Strain	4.07	2.89	1.91
Work Family Conflict Behaviour	4.18	3.16	2.48

**Table 2**  
**F test for the Conflict based Segmentation with Dimensions**

<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Cluster</i>		<i>Error</i>		<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
	<i>Mean square</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean square</i>	<i>df</i>		
Work Family Conflict Time	115.896	2	.258	595	449.891	.000
Work Family Conflict Strain	161.533	2	.242	595	667.080	.000
Work Family Conflict Behaviour	98.596	2	.292	595	337.301	.000

**Table 3**  
**Number of Respondents in Different Clusters**

	Number of Cases in each Cluster
High conflict segment	114.000
Moderate conflict segment	311.000
No conflict segment	173.000

Cluster analysis is to partition a set of objects into two or more groups based on the similarity of the objects for a set of specified characteristics, a technique for quantifying the structural characters for asset of observations.

This logical description of the raw data is used to measure cluster centroid which is the mean profile of the cluster on each clustering variables. In order to segment the respondents based on the work life conflict, k means cluster analysis is applied.

Clustering process generated three cluster solutions based on the cluster seed points by hierarchical cluster analysis. The cluster solutions are more similar in cluster in size and demonstrated more significant difference between clusters on the set of clustering variables.

For ascertaining the number of clusters hierarchical cluster analysis is used. Dentogram hierarchical cluster exhibits three clear segments and this is also confirmed by the step-cluster analysis. The above table shows the mean value of each factor in different clusters.

Work family conflict time has scored the highest mean value in cluster one and the lowest mean value in cluster three, similarly work family conflict, strain and work family conflict behaviour has scored the highest mean value in one and the lowest in the cluster three.

Therefore, the cluster one is comprising of very high values of work life conflict time, strain and behaviour and moderately contributed in cluster two and the least in cluster three. The mean of four and above shows the cluster one is highly influenced by time, strain and behaviour.

The mean value of three denotes neutral is neither they are highly influenced nor having totally not influenced. The mean value of three less than three in cluster three depicts that work family conflict time , strain and behaviour does not influence the cluster respondents.

The f values in the ANOVA shows that work family conflict time, strain and behavior are significantly different and is statistically right. The clusters based on their origin can be labeled as high conflict segment, moderate conflict segment and no conflict segment.

The above table shows that nearly half of the respondents are in the midpoint between high conflict and no conflict. It means that the respondents belonging to this segment have moderate work life conflict.

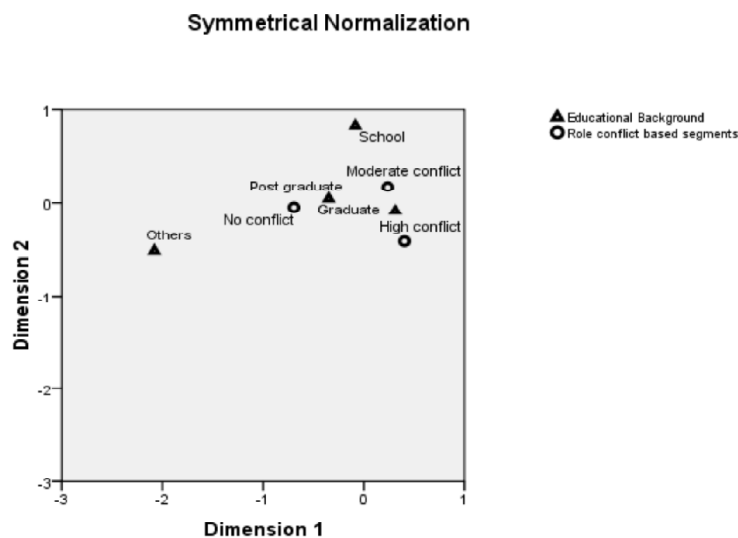
Nearly 28.94 percent of the respondents contribute to the nil conflict segment which is the next to the moderate conflict segment but is higher than the high conflict segment which contributes to 19.06 per cent.

**Table 4**  
**Educational Background and Conflict based Segments**

Role conflict based segments	Educational Background				
	School	Graduate	Post graduate	Others	ActiveMargin
High conflict	4	75	34	1	114
Moderate conflict	20	186	102	3	311
No conflict	10	77	76	10	173
Active Margin	34	338	212	14	598

The majority of the graduates followed by post graduates constitute the moderate conflict segment. The next highest is the no conflict segment in the similar manner but there is only a minor difference between the graduates groups and the post graduate group, whereas in the high conflict segment the graduate group is twice the number of post graduates.

**Figure 1: Graphical Representation of the Association between Educational Qualification and Role Conflict Segments**



## FINDINGS

The under graduates form the highest majority among the high conflict segment followed by the postgraduates. There is considerably a less number of respondents with school education who form the high conflict segment. The composition of the moderate conflict segment is similar to the high conflict segment but the number of the respondents varied. The percentage of postgraduates is less in the high conflict segment when compared to its composition in the moderate conflict segment. The number of undergraduates and postgraduates form an equal proportion in the no conflict segment. The school educated and the others are not closely associated with the conflict segments. The highest percentage of the respondents are found to fall in the moderate conflict segment and the lowest in the high conflict segment.

## CONCLUSION

Thus the above Quantitative analysis and its interpretation derives conclusive discussion on the nature and the intensity of the relationship between the demographic variables and its impact on the Work Life Conflict of Women Employees in IT Sector.

### *References*

- Amatea, E. S., and Beyette, M. L. (1987), Through a Different lens: Examining Professional Women's Interrole Coping by Focus and Mode. *Sex Roles*, 17, 237-252.
- Anderson, E. A., and Leslie, L. A. (1991), Coping with Employment and Family Stress: Employment Arrangement and Gender Differences. *Sex Roles*, 24, 223-236.
- Carlson, D. S., Kacmar, K. M., and Williams, L. J. (2000), Construction and Initial Validation of a Multidimensional Measure of Work-family Conflict, *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 56, 249-276.
- Covin, T. J., and Brush, C. C. (1991), An Examination of Male and Female Attitudes toward Career and Family Issues. *Sex Role*, 25, 393-415.
- Duxbury, L., Higgins, C., and Lee, C. (1994), Work Family Conflict: A Comparison by Gender, Family Type, and Perceived Control. *Journal of Family. Issues*, 15, 449-466.
- Eagle, B. W., Miles, E. W., and Icenogle, M. L. (1997), Interrole Conflict and the Permeability of Work and Family Domains: Are there Gender Differences? *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 50, 168-184.
- Frone, M. R., Russell, M., and Cooper, M. L. (1992), Antecedents and Outcomes of Work-family Conflict: Testing a Model of the Work Family Interface. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 77 (1), 65-78.
- Frone, M. R., Yardley, J. K., and Markel, K. S. (1997), Developing and Testing an Integrative Model of the Work -family Interface. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 50, 145-167.
- Grandey, A. A. and Cropanzano, R. (1999), The Conservation of Resources Model Applied to Work -family Conflict and Strain. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 54, 350-370.



- Greenglass, E. R., and Burke, R. J. (1988), Work and Family Precursors of Burnout in Teachers: Sex Differences. *Sex Roles*, 18, 215-229.
- Greenhaus, J. H., and Beutall, N. J. (1985), Sources of Conflict between Work and Family Roles. *Academy of Management Review*, 10 (1), 76-88.
- Greenhaus, J. H., Parasuraman, S., and Collins, K. M. (2001), Career Involvement and Family Involvement as Moderators of Relationships between Work Family Conflict Psychology, 6(2), 91-100.
- Howard, A. (1992), Work and Family Crossroads Spanning the Career. In S. Zedeck (ed.). *Work Families and Organizations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Kopelman, R. E., Greenhaus, J. H., Connolly, T. F. (1983), A Model of Work Family, and Interrrole Conflict: A Construct Validity Study. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 32, 198-215.
- Majewski, J. (1986), Conflicts, Satisfaction, and Attitudes during Transition to the Maternal Role. *Nursing Research*, 35, 10-14.
- Paden, S. L., and Buehler, C. (1995), Coping with the Dual Income Lifestyles. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 57, 101-110.
- Phillips, S. D., and Imhoff, A. R. (1997), Women and Career Development: A Decade of Research. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 48, 31-59.
- Pleck, J. H. (1985), *Working Wives Working Husbands*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Spitze, G. (1988), Women's Employment and Family Relations: A Review. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 50, 595-618.
- Thomas, L. and Ganster, D. C. (1995), Impact of Family Supportive Work Variables on Work/Family Conflict and Strain: A Control Perspective. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 80, 6-15.

