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ANALYSIS OF WORK-LIFE CONFLICT CONSTRUCT IN CASE OF TELEWORK - A CASE STUDY OF TEACHERS FROM KASHMIR VALLEY (INDIA) DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Case Study

Keywords
Work family conflict;
Telework;
Online teaching;
Covid-19;
Teaching;

JEL Classification
E21; O13; Q20

Abstract

The work family conflict (WFC) as a concept for understanding work-life balance dates back to 1985. Although a number of characterizations have been propounded but the tripartite characterization of time¬-based, strain-based and behavior-based conflict is favored and has achieved greater currency. This study seeks to analyze the nature of WFC in case of telework. The case of online teaching in Kashmir valley during the Covid-19 pandemic is taken up in this study. The experience of conflict between work and life is also assessed with regards to different demographics.

INTRODUCTION

The conflict between work and family is one of the major challenges for the modern society as large number of men and women report the interference between family responsibilities and work (Glavin & Schieman, 2012). The reason for this global increase has been attributed to demands of caregiving due to ageing population, greater number of mothers aged under eighteen in labor force and increase in the role of men in family caregiving (Kossek, 2016; Kossek & Ollier-Malaterre, 2012). As the technology becomes ever more invasive in people's lives the boundary between life and work becomes more blurry. The consequence of the ever more invasive technology is greater conflict between work and life (Kossek, 2016).

The work family conflict (WFC) construct can be traced to role theory, conservation of resource theory and life course perspective theories. The role theory has featured, in the established research, more often than not in the context of WFC. Explained within the context of the role theory, the WFC results from the conflict of role demands between work and life. This conflict manifests along three dimensions viz: time, strain and behavior (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). The WFC has been shown to occur bi-directionally i.e., from family to work and work to family (Kossek & Ozeki, 1998).

Time based conflict occurs when time-based demands are such that their need from work and family compete with each other (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Recent studies are of the view that the time-based conflict is perceived subjectively and measures like work hour preferences or time pressures are of contemporary importance (Dugan, Matthews, & Barnes-Farrell, 2012).

Strain-based conflict occurs when the strain caused in one domain impedes the performance in the other role (Kinman & Jones, 2001). A prime example of this is new parents not being able to sleep, which then causes their work to suffer. Behavior-based conflict occurs when behaviors learnt in one domain are not compatible with other domains (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). It has been shown by various researchers that the WFC may not follow a clear tripartite expression in certain contexts. Some instances where the tripartite characterization of WFC does show up are military (Britt & Dickinson, 2006) and prison guards (Kinman, Clements, & Hart, 2016) among many others.

The present study seeks to understand the nature of online work with regards to its relation to tripartite division of WFC construct. The case in question is online teaching in the valley of Kashmir during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted is large scale shut downs and the workforce has been rendered as immobile (Allen, Jerrim, & Sims, 2020). The employers and employees have reacted to this pandemic by coming up with alternative and ingenious work arrangements majority of which are deployed by using communication technology. Among the many alternatives proposed remote work as a practice has found greater currency during the pandemic. Although work from home as a practice was known only in technology and IT sectors, other sectors are fast catching up with technology and chief among them being the educational sector (Kaushik & Guleria, 2020). The universities, colleges and schools have suspended face to face lectures and rather than cancelling the classes or changing the curriculum, the educational institutions are delivering the content through distance learning via the internet (Ortiz, 2020). The situation in India is no different. The country announced is first lockdown on 22nd march 2020 and except some intervening period most of the educational institutions have remained shut (Kazmin, 2021), the implication of this being that most of the educational activities have been conducted online.

Teaching online from home, although seemingly an easier alternative to the face-to-face teaching, has been shown to have negative effects on the physical and psychological health of the teachers (Kraft & Simon, 2020). The sudden shift to online teaching, while continuing to have responsibilities as caretakers, have exacerbated the job stress and made work more demanding. Added to this loss of student learning and discrepant access to technology has further aggravated the already present conflict between work and family life.

Kashmir valley much like the rest of India has seen its educational institution shut since March, 2020. Accordingly, this study seeks to describe the nature and extent of work and life conflict experienced by the teachers in the valley of Kashmir, India while using a modified instrument based on the questionnaire of (Carlson, Kacmar, & Williams, 2000).

SAMPLE

The questionnaire was administered to 94 teachers belonging to seven well known private run schools. Four of the responses were deemed to be inappropriate while the final analysis is carried out using the sample set of 90 teachers. The inclusion criteria being full time teachers teaching the primary, middle, high and higher secondary classes in private schools while excluding the administrative school staff and part-time teachers. The questionnaire was administered using the Google forms with the response period ranging from 4th April 2021 to 30th April 2021.

METHODOLOGY

The study seeks to analyze the nature of the work life conflict among the teachers for which the 17 items are derived from questionnaire of (Carlson et al., 2000) modifying them to the requirements of the study. The variables are distributed assuming the tripartite characterization of work life conflict as described by (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985) viz the time-based conflict, the behavior-based conflict and the strain-based conflict. The questions asked also take into account the bi-directionality of the conflict i.e., accounting for both the work interfering with family and family interfering with the work. Besides that, the information about the demographic variables of age, gender, educational institution, experience, marital status, age of children (if any) and family structure is sought in the questionnaire. The questionnaire is based on 7-point Likert scale such that the responses are coded as: 1 = Never, 2 = Very rarely, 3 = rarely, 4 = Some times, 5 = frequently, 6 = Very frequently, 7 = Always.

Using SPSS, the questionnaire is tested for reliability using the Cronbach's alpha measure. The dimension reduction is carried using Principal Component Analysis (PCA). The Bartletts test for sphericity and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy are employed as pre-tests for the Principal Component Analysis. The VARIMAX with Kaiser normalization is used as rotation method in the PCA.

One-way ANOVA is conducted for determining whether the difference between the WFC scores of different sub-groups of 'work experience' variable is significantly different or not. To further understand the actual nature of the difference between the sub-groups, a post-hoc ANOVA analysis is carried out using Scheffe's test. The independent t-tests are carried out to make clear whether the subgroups in the demographical variables of family type, marital status, gender, age and parenthood perceive WFC differently.

RESULTS

In order to ascertain the reliability of the questionnaire, the Cronbach's alpha was measured. The Cronbach's alpha value for the questionnaire is indicated in Table 1.

Cronbach's alpha of at least 0.5 of each construct is considered to be adequately reliable (Chau & Lai, 2003). A coefficient alpha higher than 0.7 indicates an acceptable level of reliability (Vellis, 2003). The value of 0.947 implies that the questionnaire has high reliability.

The results of Bartletts test for sphericity and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy are mentioned in the Table 2.

(Kaiser, 1974) interprets the value of KMO measure as 0.00 to 0.49 unacceptable, 0.50 to 0.59 miserable, 0.60 to 0.69 mediocre, 0.70 to 0.79 middling, 0.80 to 0.89 meritorious, 0.90 to 1.00 marvelous. Judging the analysis using scale of Kaiser (1974) one is well justified to infer that score of 0.912 is significant and that one may proceed to conduct PCA. Furthermore, in case of the Bartlett's test the null hypothesis that all the population variances are equal, stands rejected, thus pointing to the possibility of latent factors in the data. The principal component analysis carried out using SPSS describes the 75% variance along three components. The percentage of variance that is explained by the three components can also be gauged from the scree plot in fig 1which shows that components 4 and above explain very slight variance. The results are tabulated in Table 3.

After performing VARIMAX rotation with Kaiser Normalization and using 0.6 as cutoff value (rule of thumb) the constituent variables in each component are chosen. The components with constituent variables are described in Table 4.

The three components have a near neat constitution along the tripartite characterization of time-based, strain- based and behavior-based work life conflict. Although the bi-directionality of the conflict has not been affirmed by the analysis.

The results of independent t-tests for the demographic variables of family type, marital status, gender, age and parenthood are described in Table 5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12 and 13.

The t-tests on family type, gender and parenthood do not show any significant differences in the variances between the groups and therefore their effect of the WFC is concluded to be insignificant. The results of the t-tests significant in case of marital status and age. Surprisingly the unmarried teachers show significantly higher WFC than the married ones and those aged above 35 perceived lower WFC than those aged 35 or below.

With regards to the variable of experience which has more than two categories, ANOVA is conducted to determine whether there are significant differences between the groups. The results of one-way ANOVA as conducted on the experience variable are tabulated in tables 14 and 15.

In view of the significance score of 0.037 for F=2.956, the null hypothesis, that there is no significant difference between the subgroups is rejected which implies that there is at least one sub group that stands in contrast with the rest. To further understand the relationship between the various sub-groups, post-hoc analysis is conducted using Scheffe's test. The reason for using Sheffe's test being that the sub groups are of unequal size, the results of which are tabulated in table 16.

The post-hoc analysis implies that those with experience greater than 12 years score significantly lesser than the 0-3 years group. This implies that the individuals with more than 12 years' experience

show significantly lower WFC. This is can also be observed from the mean score plot in fig 2, where one may observe that the mean scores of those aged above 12 are significantly different from the rest of the sample.

DISCUSSION

The PCA of the data shows that the nature of WFC is not significantly different in case of the teachers teaching online when compared to the face-to-face teaching. Or simply, the nature of WFC in online teaching is similar to that of the face-face teaching. In seeking to describe the difference of perception of WFC among different demographic groups the teachers who are older and those with greater experience perceive lesser WFC. A surprising result from the analysis is that the unmarried teachers experience greater WFC than their married counterparts. This study was inconclusive regarding the difference of experience or perception of WFC by married/unmarried, without children/with children and those living in extended/nuclear families. The study was also inconclusive regarding the bi-directionality of WFC in online teaching.

Biographical sketch

The author is presently pursuing a PhD. titled as "Work-Life Balance of Female Nurses in Urban North India" at the Károly Ihrig Doctoral School, University of Debrecen. The author can be reached at khateeb.fatima86@gmail.com

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LIST OF TABLES & FIGURES

Table 1
Calculation of Cronbach's alpha using SPSS

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	No of Items
0.947	**0.948**	**17**

Table 2
The values of the KMO and Bartlett's test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		**0.912**
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1364.126
	df	136
	Sig.	**.000**

Table 3
Principal Component Analysis showing 75% variance explained by three components

Variable.	**Initial Eigenvalues**			**Extraction of Sum Squared Loadings**			**Rotations Sums of Squared Loadings**		
	Total	**% of Variance**	**Cumulative %**	**Total**	**% of Variance**	**Cumulative %**	**Total**	**% of Variance**	**Cumulative %**
1	9.325	54.852	54.852	9.325	54.852	54.852	4.798	28.226	**28.226**
2	2.297	13.51	68.362	2.297	13.51	68.362	4.634	27.261	**55.487**
3	1.076	6.331	74.693	1.076	6.331	74.693	3.265	19.206	**74.693**
4	0.787	4.63	79.323						
5	0.652	3.838	83.161						
6	0.476	2.798	85.959						
7	0.383	2.256	88.215						
8	0.363	2.136	90.35						
9	0.32	1.884	92.235						
10	0.288	1.692	93.927						
11	0.229	1.346	95.273						
12	0.202	1.19	96.462						
13	0.176	1.036	97.499						
14	0.138	0.811	98.309						
15	0.123	0.725	99.034						
16	0.094	0.555	99.589						
17	0.07	0.411	100						

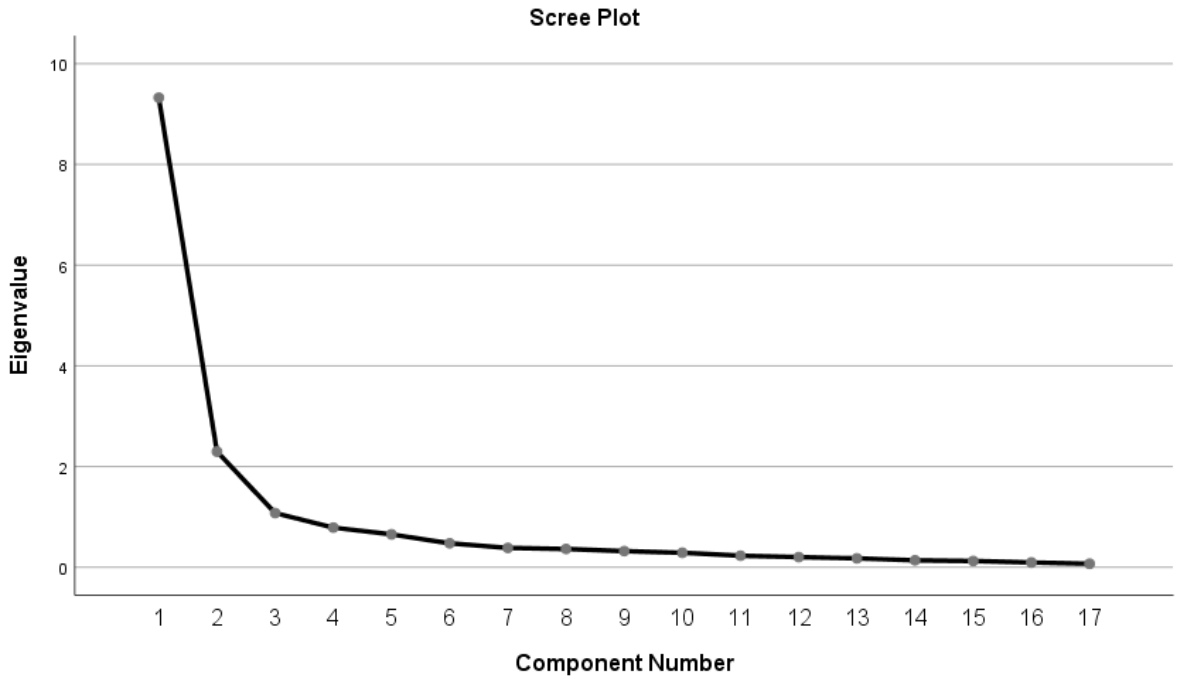

Figure 1
Scree Plot of the component's eigenvalues

Table 4
Variable constitution of the Components with 0.6 as cut off

Variable	COMPONENT		
	1	2	3
VAR-01	0.2	0.826	0.034
VAR-02	0.223	0.841	0.195
VAR-03	0.302	0.848	0.158
VAR-04	0.239	0.428	0.698
VAR-05	0.278	0.263	0.827
VAR-06	0.369	0.3	0.748
VAR-07	0.177	0.771	0.419
VAR-08	0.155	0.775	0.405
VAR-09	0.16	0.78	0.359
VAR-10	0.549	0.324	0.624
VAR-11	0.608	0.238	0.158
VAR-12	0.739	0.152	0.548
VAR-13	0.787	0.084	0.373
VAR-14	0.73	0.289	0.224
VAR-15	0.799	0.164	0.05
VAR-16	0.809	0.148	0.192
VAR-17	0.777	0.232	0.244

Table 5 & 6
Independent t-tests for Nuclear and Extended family type categories

	Family type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
WFC Score	**Extended Family**	43	57.6512	22.89093	3.49083
	Nuclear Family	47	63.766	23.82473	3.47519

WFC Score	**Levene's Test for Equality of Variances**		**t-test for Equality of Means**						
	F	**Sig.**	**t**	**df**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**	**Mean Difference**	**Std. Error Difference**	**95% Confidence Interval of the Difference**	
								Lower	**Upper**
Equal variances assumed	0.211	0.647	-1.239	88	0.219	-6.11479	4.934	-15.921	3.691
Equal variances not assumed			-1.241	87.7	0.218	-6.11479	4.92574	-15.904	3.67442

Table 6 & 7
Independent t-test Male vs Female

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
WFC Score	**Male**	51	63.0588	24.64663	3.45122
	Female	39	57.9487	21.76906	3.48584

WFC Score	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.806	.372	1.025	88	.308	5.11	4.98768	-4.80186	15.02
Equal variances not assumed			1.042	86.1	.300	5.11	4.90530	-4.64112	14.86

Table 8 & 9
Independent t-test Married vs Unmarried

	Marital Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
WFC Score	**Married**	63	56.3175	22.15985	2.79188
	Unmarried	27	71.4074	23.37694	4.49889

WFC Score	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.017	.896	-2.912	88	.005	-15.089	5.18154	-25.387	-4.792
Equal variances not assumed			-2.850	46.961	.006	-15.089	5.29477	-25.741	-4.438

Table 10 & 11
Independent t-test Aged 35 and less vs 35 above

	Age group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
WFC Score	**35 and less**	49	66.5306	23.09049	3.29864
	More than 35	41	54.0488	22.29793	3.48235

WFC Score	**Levene's Test for Equality of Variances**		**t-test for Equality of Means**						
	F	**Sig.**	**t**	**df**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**	**Mean Diff**	**Std. Error Difference**	**95% Confidence Interval of the Difference**	
								Lower	**Upper**
Equal variances assumed	.000	.996	2.594	88	.011	12.481	4.811	2.919	22.044
Equal variances not assumed			2.602	86.172	.011	12.481	4.796	2.946	22.016

Table 12 & 13
Independent t-test with vs without children

	Parenthood	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
WFC Score	**Children**	33	66.1515	24.77035	4.31196
	No Children	57	57.7719	22.30312	2.95412

WFC Score	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.148	.702	1.649	88	.103	8.379	5.081	-1.718	18.477
Equal variances not assumed			1.603	61.364	.114	8.379	5.226	-2.070	18.830

Table 14 & 15
One-way ANOVA for the different categories of years of experience and WFC

Experience	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% conf Interval for mean		Min	Max
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
0-3 years	24	69.6667	22.45898	4.58442	60.1831	79.1503	23.00	113.00
3-7years	28	63.3571	24.11733	4.55775	54.0054	72.7089	18.00	104.00
7-12 years	12	58.4167	17.97705	5.18953	46.9946	69.8387	28.00	86.00
>12 years	26	51.1154	23.25567	4.56081	41.7222	60.5086	18.00	96.00
Total	90	60.8444	23.45395	2.47226	55.9321	65.7568	18.00	113.00

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4576.49	3	1525.497	2.956	0.037
Within Groups	44381.332	86	516.062		
Total	48957.822	89			

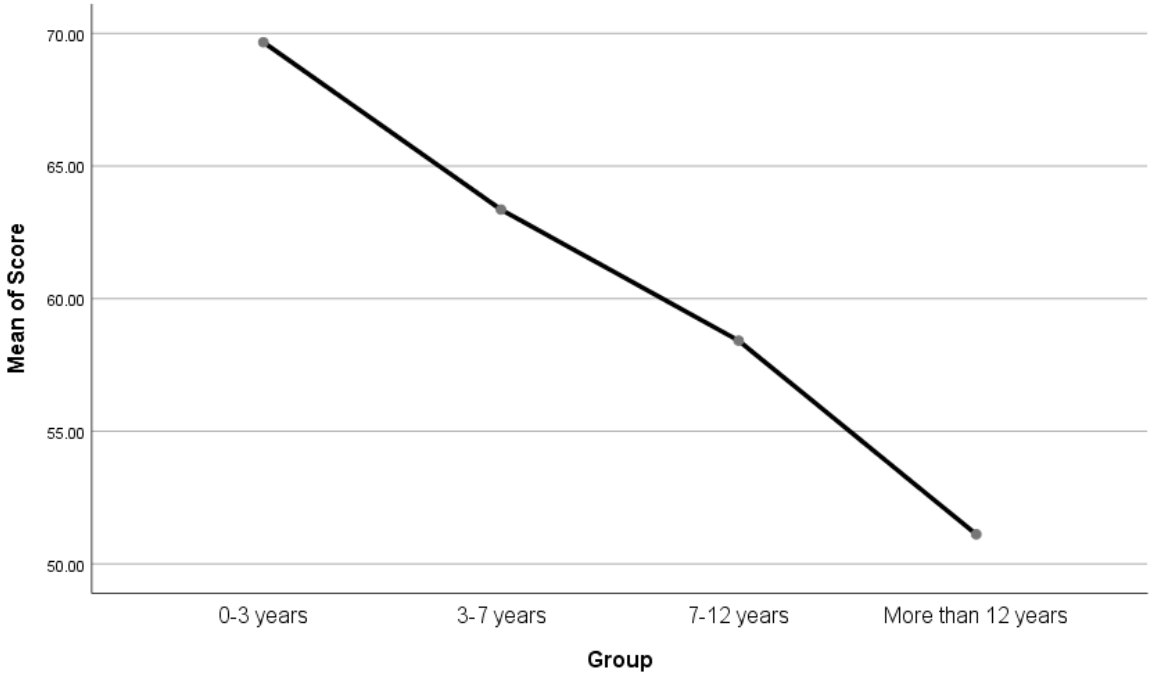

Figure 2
Scores of WFC with respect to experience

Table 16
Post-hoc ANOVA using Scheffe's test

Sheffe's Comparison						
(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
0-3 years	3-7 years	6.3095	6.31929	0.802	-11.7109	24.33
	7-12 years	11.25	8.03167	0.583	-11.6536	34.1536
	More than12 years	18.5513*	6.43048	**0.046**	0.2138	36.8888
3-7 years	0-3 years	-6.3095	6.31929	0.802	-24.33	11.7109
	7-12 years	4.9405	7.83811	0.941	17.4111	27.2921
	More than12 years	12.2418	6.18703	0.278	-5.4015	29.885
7-12 years	0-3 years	-11.25	8.03167	0.538	-34.1536	11.6536
	3-7 years	-4.9405	7.83811	0.941	-27.2921	17.4111
	More than12 years	7.3013	7.92803	0.838	-15.3067	29.9093
More than 12 years	0-3 years	-18.5513	6.43048	**0.046**	-36.8888	-0.2138
	3-7 years	-12.2418	6.18703	0.278	-29.885	5.4015
	7-12 years	-7.3013	7.92803	0.838	29.9093	15.3067