

SEGMENTATION OF THE ROLE CONFLICT: WOMEN EMPLOYEES IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SECTOR

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Abstract

The traditional nuclear family where the husband works outside and the wife cares for the home and children is the system which no longer applies to the majority of the families since the past few decades. There has been an accelerated influx of women into paid employment roles that have taken place in the recent past. The study deals with grouping of respondents and its relationship with each other. A sample size of 598 was administered for the study. Statistical tools were employed for obtaining the results and their implication was studied and recorded.

Key words: work life conflict, women employees, information technology sector

Introduction

The growth rate for women entering the workforce is expected to be greater than that for men. During the 80's women emerged as a powerful part of the workforce in the world economy. Women became liberated and fought for equal pay and equal status with men in the workplace. A majority of women wanted everything that men have traditionally desired success, power, status, money, as well as committed relationship, love, children and happiness. An important challenge our society is facing since the recent

past is both the changing work and family roles of the Indian women. Since many women occupy both work and family roles, their experiences both at work and in the family have come to represent primary social contexts in examining women's lives (McBride, 1990).

Women today function at multiple roles simultaneously operating in both work and family domains as a mother, spouse, housekeeper, and as well as maintaining a full-time job outside the home (Zedeck, 1992).

The relationship between these dual roles have thus become a topic of interest among organizational researchers. In most of the studies conducted, researchers have found that carrying out these dual roles often leads to family conflict among both men and women. The profound demographic trends have elevated the need to understand and manage the interface between work and the family (Fraser., 2001).

The Indian Information technology and Business Processing Outsourcing (IT-BPO) Industry has emerged as the largest private sector employer in the country, with direct employment of 2.23 million professionals and indirect employment of over eight million people in different industry sectors.

The IT-BPO industry has remained fairly gender neutral from the onset providing equal opportunities for both men and women and the participation of women in the workforce is seen as a critical enabling factor for continued growth of the industry.

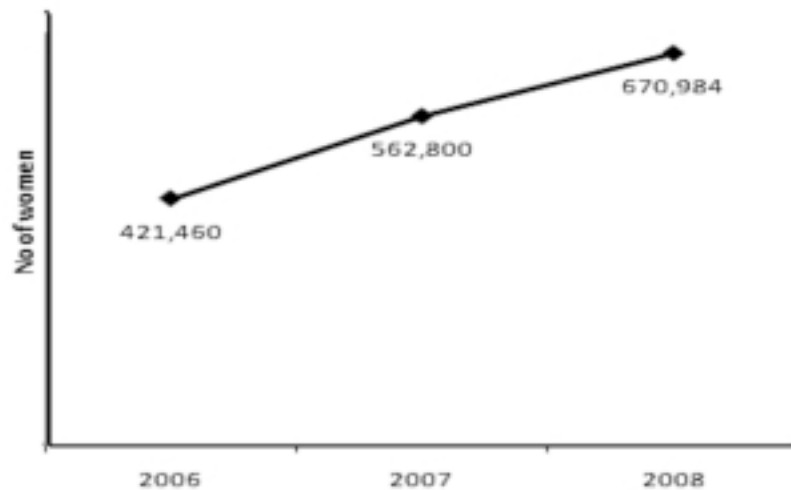
India has more working women than does any other country in the world. Out of the entire workforce of 400 million, 30-35 per cent are females and of them only 20 per cent work in urban India. This figure can largely be attributed to the growth of the IT-BPO industry which is one of the largest recruiters of a qualified workforce in the recent times.

This trend has a direct impact on the positions held by women in IT as the number of women employed in the Indian IT industry has increased. This is the consequence of various factors that include the following:

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- The number of women graduating from engineering colleges has been on the rise.
- The idea of a working spouse is more widely accepted.
- The IT-BPO industry is generally perceived to offer a safe friendly work environment.

Figure 1
Women in IT workforce



Source: Mercer-NASSCOM Gender inclusivity building empowered organisations study 2008

The design applied in the study is descriptive research design. It is appropriate to use this method as this research describes the relationship among different variables. It tries to understand the outcome of the different variables contributing to the role conflict.

Both primary and secondary data are used in the study to fulfill the objective. First hand data for the study was collected from respondents regarding demographic variables including age gender, number and age of children, educational level, marital status, employment experience, positions and salary.

A set of suitable questions were framed to satisfy the objective of the study with the help of the previous studies and literature review for the selected variables. Suitable statements have been identified and drafted in order to match the variables included in the research work. The statements were tested for reliability and validity.

A structured questionnaire has been used for gathering data from respondents for the study, which was further re-drafted based on the results of the pilot study with 50 respondents and tested for reliability. Questionnaire consists of both qualitative and quantitative items. Besides, multiple choice questions, different types of scales are used to measure the respective variables.

As the population size is very large (0.21 million), sampling technique has been applied to conduct this study. In this study, population refers to women employees in IT and ITES firms located in Chennai city.

Sample unit of this study consists of married and unmarried employed women in IT industry in Chennai city. Therefore, convenience sample technique is adopted for selecting the sample units. A Thousand questionnaires have been distributed among respondents but only 735 have been received after continuous follow-up. Among the collected questionnaires, only 598 of the filled questionnaires were taken into account for the research.

Cluster analysis has been used to segment the respondents based on work family conflict. Correspondent analysis has been used to associate the various conflict groups with the independent variables. Discriminant analysis has been used for identifying the discriminating variable among the various conflict segments.

Greenhaus and Beutall (1985) define work and family conflict as a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect. Work and family are two central domains in most of the adult's lives.

In the recent decades, social and demographic changes have led to an increase in the number of women in the workforce and thus led to an increase in dual earner families, in turn these changes have stimulated research interest in work family issues particularly, work family conflict (Allen et al., 2000).

Role theory proposes that responsibilities from different separate domains compete for limited amounts of time, physical energy and psychological resources resulting in inter-role conflict (Greenhaus and Beutall, 1985; Small and Riley, 1990). When expectations stemming from the two domains are incompatible, a person's well being will suffer.

Researchers in this area have distinguished between two types of work family conflict, work interfering with family, and family interfering with work. The 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 et al., 1994). 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 one's performance in another role. The last type is behaviour based conflict which refers to incompatibility between the behavioural patterns that are desirable in the both the domains.

Some of the more prevalent antecedents and outcomes of work life conflict identified in the literature include role commitment, role salience

and satisfaction (Barch and Barnett, 1986) parenting (Rousseau, 1978), marriage and spousal support (Barnette and Marshall, 1991) and supervisory and company support (Bowen, 1988).

Grandey and Cropanzano (1999) and others have discovered relationship between work family conflict and overall physical health. Many researchers (Netemeyer et al., 1996, Thomas and Ganster, 1995) have concluded that increased work family conflict is related to increased depression and other psychological issues.

Good et al. (1996) found an indirect relationship between work family conflict and organizational commitment. Carlson et al. (2000) also discovered that work involvement significantly correlate with work to family conflict. Aryee and Luk (1996) found that work overload is strongly related to both work to family and family to work conflict. He also found that work social support is related to work to family conflict.

Thompson and Ganster (1995) found that supervisor support reduced work family conflict. Anderson et al. (2002) found that managerial support was negatively and significantly correlated with work to family conflict and family to work conflict while Frone et al. (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. High levels of family involvement (Duxbury and Higgins, 1991) spouse support (Aryee, 1992) and family satisfaction (Stoner et al., 1990) have been related to low levels of work family conflict. Multiple roles have a negative effect when it is imposed on women's health and well-being. This may be manifested in the form of chronic fatigue and exhaustion and in some women more extreme psychological stress and depression (Greenglass et al., 1988).

Rewards such as self-esteem, recognition, prestige and financial remuneration offset costs of work roles thus enhancing their well-being. Intention to withdraw from workforce (Aryee, 1992) is a work outcome which has been found to be related to high levels of work family conflict.

Previous researchers have primarily focused on how experiences in the work domain are transferred to and interfere with the non-work domain for the same individual (Byron, 2005; Lambert, 1990). Judge and Watanabe (1994) state that the spillover hypothesis indicated that one domain “spillover” into the other such that workers who have (dis) satisfying jobs will also have (dis) satisfying lives and vice versa. Higgins and Duxbury (1992) offer definition for both positive and negative spillovers from work to the family. They suggest that positive spillover involves the spread of satisfaction and stimulation at work to high levels of energy and satisfaction at home. Negative spillover refers to how the strains produced by stressful work situations drain and preoccupy the individual making it difficult for them to participate adequately in their family life. It has been discovered that conflicts between works and personal priorities can actually be catalysts for identifying work inefficiencies that might otherwise have remained hidden or intractable (Friedmann et al., 1998).

Final Cluster Centers			
Type of role conflict	Cluster		
	1	2	3
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

Dimensions	Cluster		Error		F	Sig.
	Mean Square	df	Mean Square	df		
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. Table 3 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 behaviour 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 29 percent of the respondents contribute to the nil conflict segment which is next to the moderate conflict segment but is higher than the high conflict segment which contributes to 19.06 percent.

Results and Discussion

Segmentation of the respondents based on work family conflict

- The respondents are grouped into clusters with significant differences on a set of variables and called as high conflict group, moderate conflict group and no conflict group.
- High conflict, moderate conflict and no conflict clusters have the combination of all the different dimensions of work life conflict namely time, strain and behaviour.

Work conflict time, strain and behaviour are found to have the highest influence in the high conflict group followed by the moderate conflict segment and the least influenced is the no conflict segment.

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