Work/Family Interface of Women: Insights from a Collectivistic Society

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Abstract

The current research work aimed at exploring the negative as well as the positive side of work/family interface i.e work/family conflict and work/family enrichment among working women in Pakistan. The sample consisted of 38 working women belonging to diverse professions. The age range of the sample was from 23 to 53 years. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants and data was analysed using thematic analysis. Results showed that time demands from both work and family domains, stress created due to unrealistic demands from work and family and gender-related issues faced at work are the major factors that hinder the performance of women and lead to work/family conflict. Moreover, support from boss, colleagues, family, family friendly policies and financial independence are the major factors that enrich a woman's work/family experiences. These results have implications for working women, organizations as well as policy makers.

Key words: *Work/family conflict, work/family enrichment, women in workplace, gender role, work/family balance.*

Introduction

In the past quarter of the 21st century, vast differences have been observed in the nature of workforce demographics throughout the world. This shift in workforce demographics emerged mainly as a result of increased participation of women especially mothers in the workforce at all hierarchical levels (World employment and social outlook, 2015). These changes were not only observed in the west but also in the East (Pakistan Economic Survey, 2015). In Pakistan the participation of women in the labor force has remained low ever since its independence in 1947 due to patriarchal and non-egalitarian values. These values lead to compartmentalization of gender roles; where men are categorized as breadwinners and women are considered solely responsible for taking care of household demands (Akhtar & Akbar, 2016; Ayesha, 2013; Khalid, 2011; Sarfaraz & Khalid, 2015)

The situation has improved over the past decade due to changes in government policies and increased focus on women empowerment; as a result, female literacy rate in Pakistan increased from 21 % in 1990 to 42.8 % in 2015 and 47% in 2020 (World Bank, 2021) As a result in an increase in the ratio of education more and more women are now entering into the job markets, thus increasing Pakistani women's employment ratio from 16% in 2000 to 20% in 2010 and 21% in 2020 (Trading Economics, 2020).

Moreover, in addition to entering the workforce, women are also opting for non-normative male dominated jobs and are rapidly moving into higher management positions that were earlier not open to them and have more demanding time and role requirements. As a result, the average time spent at work by women has increased, pulling away from the time that was earlier spent on fulfilling household responsibilities and dealing with family matters (Asian Development Bank, 2016; Hutt, 2015; Sarfaraz & Khalid, 2015).

However, sharing financial burden has not exempted women from domestic responsibilities. In Pakistan, women are expected to take care of all the household responsibilities, including childcare and eldercare needs regardless of their work status; thus, adding to their workload. Working women are expected to take care of their husband, children, in-laws and elderly in the family with little or no help from the male members of the family (Akhtar & Akbar, 2016). Moreover, they are compelled to do justice to both their job related demands as well as home-related responsibilities. This increases their overall workload and may subject them to considerable conflict between marital/parental and occupational demands (Davendran, 2008; Sadiq & Ali, 2014; Tripathi & Bhattacharjee, 2012).

Thus, Pakistani women have to juggle with multiple roles that might be more in number than the ones faced by women in individualistic societies. However, with added responsibility also comes additional support as extended family members may lend a hand in completing domestic tasks and offer child care support. They are also more likely to provide financial and emotional support when needed, thus acting as a buffer against conflict and enriching women's work/family experiences. On the basis of this we can say that work/family experiences of Pakistani women may

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differ from women living in individualistic egalitarian societies. Research evidence also shows that cultural beliefs, values, and norms largely determine men and women's work/ family experiences since these beliefs and values shape our behavioral and gender role expectations (Carlson & Kacmar, 2000; Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux, & Brinley, 2005; Lobel, 1991; Yang, Chan, Choi & Zou, 2000).

Therefore, it becomes imperative to gain a thorough understanding of how these two spheres of a Pakistani woman's life (i.e. work and family) co-exist and shape their work/family experiences. Thus, the present research was carried out to gain a thorough understanding of the nature of work/family interface from an indigenous perspective.

Work/family interface is a pertinent issue, however up till now researchers have mostly been occupied with studying the negative side of the work/family interface, as a result work/family conflict has been given a great deal of attention in the past decade (Barnett, 1998; Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). It was not until recently that researchers started exploring the beneficial effects of having multiple roles and how skills and resources gained from both work and family domain may help in fulfilling multiple role responsibilities leading to work/family enrichment (Barnett, Marshall, & Singer, 1992; Carlson, Kacmar, Wayne, & Grzywacz, 2006; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006).

Work/Family conflict occurs when demands from both work and family domain are incompatible so much so that participation in one role makes it difficult to fulfil the demands of the other role (Greenhaus & Buetell, 1985). Initially, work/family conflict was thought of having only one direction i.e. work interfering with family. However, work/family conflict is now recognized as a bi-directional construct incorporating both sides of the conflict i.e work interfering with family and family interfering with work (Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992; Greenhaus & Buetell, 1985; Gutek, Searle, & Klepa, 1991).

In addition to the dual nature of the conflict, researchers believe that work/family conflict is a multi-dimensional construct (Carlson, Kacmar, & Williams, 2000; Netemeyers, Boles & Mcmurrian, 1996; Stephens & Sommers, 1996). This means that work/family conflict has several forms which are classified as (a) time-based (b) strain-based and (c) behavior based. Time-based conflict occurs when time demands made by one role i.e work takes away from the time that can be spent on performing household responsibilities. Strain-based conflict occurs when stress and strain created in one role, such as work, extends and effects performance in the other role, i.e family. Finally, Behavior-based conflict occurs when behavioral demands of one role are incompatible with the behavioral demands of the other role. For example; behavioral skills required to resolve conflict at work may not be effective in resolving family matters.

Work/family enrichment occurs when skills or resources acquired from one domain (work/family) results in improving the quality of life in the receiving domain (work/family) (Greenhaus and Powell, 2006). According to Greenhaus and Powell (2006) quality of life consists of two aspects improved performance and positive affect. Work/family enrichment is also bi-directional in nature encompassing both work to family and family to work enrichment. Work to family enrichment occurs when skills and experiences acquired at work help in improving the quality of life at home and family to work enrichment occur when resources acquired as a result of family interactions help in improving the quality of life at work. In addition, Greenhaus and Powell (2006) identify several resources that can be obtained from both work and family domains such as skills and perspectives, psychological and physical resources, social capital resources, flexibility, and material resources.

Thus, the objective of the current study was to identify and explore both the positive as well as the negative side of the work/family interface i.e work/family conflict and work/family enrichment.

Method

Research Design

Qualitative research methodology was employed to study this phenomenon in which semi-structured interview technique was used to collect data. Semi-structured interview technique was employed to make sure that all participants were asked the same broad questions, however, at the same time allowing participant the flexibility to discuss other relating aspects of the issue. The researchers were interested in the phenomenology of work/family interface in indigenous context.

Participants and Recruitment:

Purposive and snow-ball sampling strategy was used in which maximum variation technique was employed to obtain a diverse sample (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Initially purposive sampling strategy was used to identify sample from the researcher's personal and professional network. Later those participants were asked to identify people within their work group who would be willing to participate in the research and be able to provide rich information concerning the topic under study. The researcher tried to ensure that a diverse sample is obtained in terms of profession, marital status and number of children.

The sample consisted of 38 working women belonging to diverse professions which included doctors, psychologists, teachers, bankers, IT professionals, corporate managers, business executives, customer service officers, and engineers etc. The age range of the sample was from 23 to 53 years (the mean age was 31.9 years), including both unmarried and married (with no children, with young children and with older children). Participants predominantly belonged to middle class (n = 28) or upper middle class (n = 10) socio-economic status.

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria:

Women belonging to all age groups working in the formal employment sector were included in the sample. Women who were suffering from any diagnosed physical/psychological condition or disability were excluded from the sample.

Ethical Considerations:

The study was approved by the Board of Advanced Studies and Research of Beaconhouse National University. The participants were informed that the nature of their participation in research is voluntary and that their responses will solely be used for the purpose of research. The participants were further informed that their identities will be kept confidential, however if anyone wishes to withdraw their data from the research at any point, they have the right to do so. Before the start of the interview, the interviewer spent 10 to 15 minutes developing rapport with the participants so that they feel at ease with the researcher and openly discuss their point of view.

Semi-Structured Interview

After which the interview schedule was developed based on review of existing literature. The purpose of conducting the interview was to identify aspects of participants work life that may positively or negatively interfere with their family life and aspects of participants family life that might positively or negatively interfere with their work life. For example, in-case of work/family conflict the participants were asked "Does your work-life interferes with your family Life? In what way? Specify aspects of your work-life that you believe negatively interfere with your family life? Kindly give example for each aspect identified?" Some prompts were also developed to probe the participants regarding each aspect of work/family conflict (such as time-based, strain-based and behavior-based interferences). In case of work/family enrichment the participants were asked "Think of a time in your life when your experiences in a work or family role enhanced your performance in the other domain. Kindly elaborate with examples?" Some prompts were developed regarding different aspects of work/family enrichment (such as: skills and perspectives, physical and psychological resources, social and capital resources and monetary resources etc). All the interviews were conducted by the researcher.
Procedure

Purposive and snow-ball sampling strategy was used to contact an initial pool of 40 women, however, out of them 35 gave consent and time for interviews the rest excused themselves due to their busy schedule. Five more participants dropped out after scheduling interview time either due to official or family commitments. Therefore, an additional sample of 10 women was contacted via snow-ball sampling strategy and consent was obtained for interviews. On the spot, interviews were conducted with two participants who were available, while six interviews were conducted as per the participant's available schedule. Two participants went on family leave so interview could not be scheduled with them. However, since the researchers had already reached data saturation (as additional interviews were only confirming already developed themes and were not adding anything new) no further interviews were scheduled (Saunders et al., 2017).

The participants were contacted in person at their workplace and permission was sought to conduct interviews. The participants were informed that the present research aims to identify aspects of the positive and negative side of work/family interface i.e. work/family conflict and work/family enrichment. Interview date and time were determined based on the availability of each participants and interviews were conducted at the respondent's workplaces separately for each participant. The interview took almost 40 to 60 minutes to complete in which participants were asked open-ended questions along with follow up questions for clarity of information provided. All the interviews were audio-recorded.

The interviews were conducted in English language, however occasionally participants used their native language while giving examples. All the interviews were transcribed for the purpose of analysis. Excerpts from the interview that were in the native language of the participants were translated in English language with the help of two language experts. These translated excerpts were then shared with the original respondents in order to make sure that the translated version communicates the same meaning that the participant intended. All the interviews were then coded for the purpose of analysis.

Results

The data obtained through the interviews was analyzed using theoretical thematic analysis. Theoretical thematic analysis is based on and driven by previous theoretical work in the area (Riessman, 2008). In the case of this research, the analysis was driven by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) and Gutek et al's (1991) conceptualization of the construct of work/family conflict and Greenhaus and Powell's (2006) conceptualization of the construct of work/family enrichment.

For identification of codes and categories the researchers followed the guidelines given by Braun and Clarke (2006). The first author initially read and re-read all the interviews and developed codes keeping in mind the research questions. These codes were then grouped into initial themes. The initial analysis was then reviewed by the second author and the reliability of analysis was assessed based on similarity of codes generated by each author (Creswell, 2013). The initial themes were then refined and organized into sub-themes and superordinate themes (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Kim & Heras, 2012). The results are presented in the form of figures below.

Work to Family Conflict:

Figure 1 represents themes and sub-themes related to work to family conflict. Similar initial themes were grouped into three sub-themes namely time-based, strain-based, and behavior-based work interference with family. Participants in the sample mentioned several time-based aspects related to their work life which directly or indirectly result in occupying time meant for carrying out family responsibilities resulting in creating work to family conflict. Participants especially the ones working in corporate sector such as banks reported that staying late in the office is considered a norm instead of exception resulting in longer working hours which reduces the time spent with family. Moreover, women who work in the field of medicine especially in case of gynaecology at times had 36 hours consecutive duties, interfering with the time that can be spent on fulfilling home responsibilities.

"The *official work timings are 9 to 5 but by the time we clear all the work at our desks its already 6 or 7 pm, leaving less time to spend with family and perform household chores*." (participant7)

Moreover, another aspect mentioned by the participants which negatively impacts their family life was bringing work home/preparation of job-related work. This was mostly applicable in the case of school and university teachers, who due to administrative load at their workplace and large classes were forced to bring student assignments and paper at home for marking. Thus, utilizing family time for accomplishing their work-related tasks. Moreover, preparing for next day's lecture or lesson plan at home (in case of teachers) and preparing for important work meetings (in case of corporate sector) also interfered with performing family related tasks.

"There are so many tedious tasks at the workplace that we end up bringing assignments and papers home for marking as we are supposed to submit the results on time." (participant5)
Unscheduled office activities such as unplanned meetings or marketing activities over the weekend and phone calls after working hours were also mentioned as an important source of conflict between work and family domains.

"Sometimes my university schedules seminar/university event at the eleventh hour on weekend or after office hours and also makes it mandatory for everyone to attend such events." (Participant 26)

"My patients keep on calling me even when I am not at the hospital, I ignore most of the calls but at times I have to take the calls especially in case of patients who are very near to their delivery time". (participant 2)

Another important aspect reported by majority of working women was inflexible work timings prevailing in majority of workplaces, which comes in the way of fulfilling family related obligations.

"Sometimes when my driver is on leave, I have to go pick up my kids from their school, but I cannot leave my office even for an hour unless I apply for a short leave by filling up the form at the HR department." (Participant 12)

Several strain-based factors were also mentioned by the participants. These factors were categorized as general factors leading to strain and gender-based factors leading to strain. With regards to general factors the participants mentioned excessive workload as one of the major sources of stress leading to conflict.

For example, one of the participants (participant number 38) said that companies in order to cut their cost hire one person to do a two persons' job thus leading to work overload. As a result, workers feel stress and tired even when they are at home. Another participant (participant no 21) reported that, *"when one of my colleagues resigned instead of hiring a new employee in her place, the rest of us were simply given more tasks, adding to our workload."*

In addition, non-cooperative boss/colleagues were another major source of strain that is carried over to family life.

*"My supervisor is very non-cooperative when it comes to taking a short leave from work in order to fulfil family related responsibilities." (*Participant *8)*

Working women also mentioned that at times in their workplace they are made to feel uncomfortable by the male colleagues, especially the ones working in corporate sector or male dominated jobs. For example, according to participant 24, whenever women try to be part of the conversation of their male colleagues, they are told this discussion is not about any topic concerning women. Such issues were also mentioned by other participants.
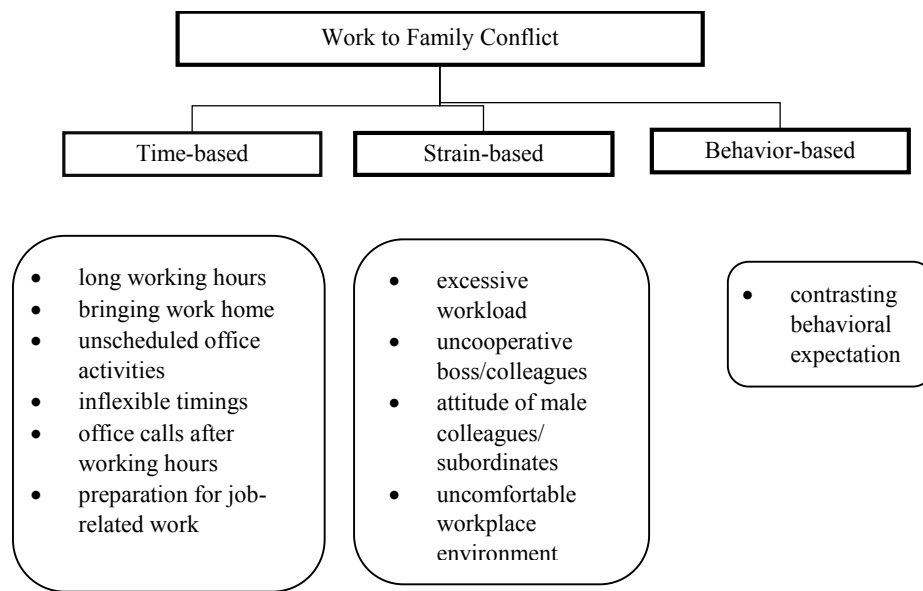

Figure 1. *Showing dimensions related to Work to Family Conflict*

Another important aspect of the workplace leading to stress was attitude of male colleagues/subordinates. Some participants (n = 5) mentioned that their male colleagues tend to challenge and question their authority. Their instructions are at times ignored since male subordinates have the attitude that they can do the female boss's job better than her; as it is their inherent right as the breadwinner (a traditional role assigned to men in Pakistani culture). According to one of the participants (participant 30), *"my male colleagues and subordinates often turn a deaf ear to what I say, as they believe that they know more about the job then me."*

The dimension of behavior-based work to family interference had only one aspect: i.e "contrasting behavioral expectations" which means that different behaviors are expected of women in work and family domains. At the workplace, they are supposed to be assertive, whereas at home they are expected to be submissive and subservient to all, especially in the case of Pakistan, where traditional gender role expectations are prevalent. According to participant 27, *"at my workplace I am required to be assertive, however, whenever I try to assert something at home my husband tells me not to act like a teacher at home."*

Family to Work Conflict:

Figure 2 represents the dimension of the construct of family to work conflict, which also includes aspects related to time-based, strain-based and behavior-based conflict. With regards to time-based factors majority of the women especially the ones who are married (n = 22) said that preparing for breakfast in the morning for all the men, children and elderly in the family takes up time and results in a delay in reaching office on time. The burden increases further when one is living in a joint family system with in-laws. Moreover, assisting husband in getting ready and preparing children for school, takes up further time.

"It takes up so much time in the morning to prepare for breakfast as everyone has different choices and being the eldest and so far, the only daughter in law I'm responsible for preparing breakfast for my father, mother and brother in laws in addition to my husband and kids." (Participant 12)

"No matter what I do I still end up getting late for office due to the tasks I have to perform in the morning such as making breakfasts and getting the kids ready for school." (Participant 27)
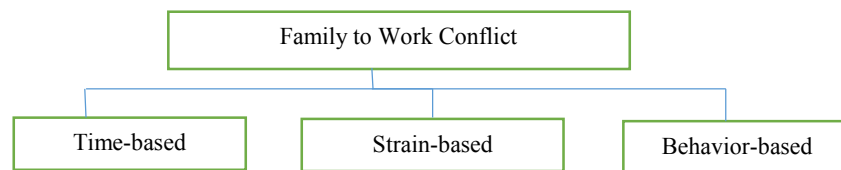
Some participants also mentioned that before leaving house in the morning they have to clear the mess such as washing dishes, making beds, cleaning the house either themselves or with the help of a maid. According to participant 34, *"I have so many tasks to complete before leaving for work such as cleaning the house and putting everything in order, that it takes up all of my morning time and I end my arriving late at my office."*

The analysis also revealed several factors related to family life that lead to stress which resultingly effects performance at work. Several participants (n = 10) mentioned that marital insecurities arising from conflict with husband or in-laws keep them occupied at work. Moreover, expectations to come home early to fulfil household responsibilities (since women are mainly responsible for housework whether they are working or not) and unavailability of help from husband or other members of the family adds to the strain which is carried over to work.

Figure 2. *Showing dimensions related to Family to Work Conflict*

Moreover "family tensions" such as financial issues at home, strained relationship with in-laws, issues at children's school such as their performance, health problems of family members result in stress and strain which is carried over to work and keeps one preoccupied. According to participant 2, *"I have to look after my aging parents in law in addition to other responsibilities and due to their everyday health issues, I feel stressed and preoccupied even while at my workplace."*

Moreover, women are made to feel guilty for leaving young children at day care or in the hands of a house help for performing their work-related tasks or going on an official business trip. According to participant 29*, "my workplace has a fully functioning day-care facility where I take my youngest one along, however I have to face criticism from my in-laws on a daily basis especially if my kid gets sick."*

Family/in-laws "disapproval of job" especially if one works in a non-normative profession or setting causes a lot of stress and strain resulting in lower performance or high turnover rate of female employees. According to participant 15, *"My in-laws do not approve of my job and are always commenting in-front of everyone that a woman's first responsibility is to take care of her husband and household, which stresses me a lot."*

The dimension of behavior-based work to family interference consists of the theme of "contrasting behavioral expectations", which refers to having to exhibit different behaviors in work and family domains.

"As a manager, I am expected to be assertive and bossy but when I go back home, I am the one taking orders from others." (Participant 36).

Work to Family Enrichment

Figure 3 represent the underlying dimensions of the construct of work to family enrichment which include themes such as: skills and perspectives, physical and psychological resources, social capital resources, flexibility and material resources.

Skills and perspectives refer to skills learned as a result of experience gained from work domain which also help in performing task in the family domain. Such as being able to multitask as a result of performing several tasks at work. As participant 6 reported that:

"At work, I am constantly bombarded with one thing after another, such as attending phone calls, walk-in customers, reply to emails and do inter-departmental collaboration all at the same time. This has helped me a lot at home as I can keep doing my work while looking after my children and handle constant interference in my work."

Working in office with colleagues belonging to varying backgrounds and listening to varying opinions helps one gain perspective, enhances their conflict management skills, and the ability to handle difficult people. According to participant 29, *"My experiences at my job has taught me how to resolve conflicts peacefully without being argumentative and this has helped me a lot in resolving issues in my personal relationships."*

Moreover, since at work one has to work with other individuals and doing so equips one with necessary "social skills." This then helps women in dealing with social relationships in their family lives as they learn to respect and effectively handle opposing point

of views. For example, participant 7 reported that *"consistently dealing with customers and colleagues at work has enabled me to acknowledge and except opposing point of views while staying calm and this helps me a lot in handling guests at home or while interacting with people at family get to gathers and events."*

Majority of the participants (n = 30) reported that their work and career give them a sense of accomplishment which enhances their self-worth. Moreover, being financially independent gives them a feeling of empowerment. According to paerticipant 38, *"My work provides me with a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment, which helps me be a positive person in both my personal as well as professional life."*

"I have greater autonomy when it comes to making decisions about my children's future ever since I started contributing financially at home. I did not enjoy such autonomy as a housewife. (participant 29)"

Work also becomes an escape route where one forgets about all the stress and issues at home, as it temporarily distracts one from troubles at home. For example, participant 23 reported that, *"When I come to my workplace, I forgot about all the issues at home which not only refreshes my mind but enables me to better handle issues related to children and family."* Participant 28 also reported that, *"my work provides me refuge from personal problems."*

Work also "grooms one's personality" as it provides one with the opportunity to learn new things and expands ones view point that not only help boosts one's confidence but also improves outlook towards life. For example, according to participant 33, *"Ever since I started working, I get compliments from everyone that I seem more confident."*

According to participants accomplishing multiple tasks at work increase one's stamina, which helps in fulfilling the needs of children and everyone else in the family in addition to handling household chores. According to participant 8, *"The demands of my job have increased my capacity to work for longer hours and this really helps in fulfilling the demands of children and family after work."*

Additionally, at work one comes into contact with people from all walks of life, which results in "building social contacts." Such contacts come in really handy in resolving important family issues, such as getting one's kids in the desired school or getting job referral for self and family members. As participant 21 reported,

"One of my customers at the bank was the Principal of cavalry branch of a local school system; she not only provided guidance but also helped in getting my kids admitted to the branch of that school which was closest to my house,"

Moreover, experienced colleagues at work are better able to provide "useful advice" which greatly helps in resolving personal, work or family related issues. As participant 7 shares that: *"On many occasions, I have received useful advice from my colleagues when I was having issues with my in-laws. If it was not for them, I might have resigned and succumbed to their constant criticism".* Work also provides women with the opportunity to vent about issues in their life, which they are unable to discuss with anyone else.
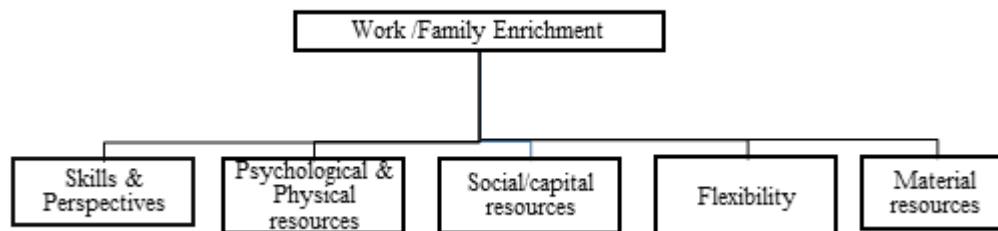

Figure 3. D*epicting themes and categories related to Work to Family Enrichment*

Women (especially married women with children) are generally given more flexibility when their job requires traveling since everyone assumes, they have to take care of the household and children and their absence from the house will have a greater impact as compared to men. Such understanding on the part of the management has a positive impact on working women, thus positively influencing their performance at home. For example, participant 38 reported that *"My job requires travelling to various sites located in different cities however my boss (knowing that I have young kids and cannot travel frequently due to my family commitments) tries to accommodate me by letting me send my subordinate in my place."*

Moreover, a family-friendly workplace generally provides women with more opportunities to work from home as compared to their male counterparts. Especially in the case where women have to stay back to take care of a sick child or elder at home. Moreover, availability of day care at work, or offering a flexible working schedule to women and allowing her to bring children to work goes a long way in hiring and retaining working women with young children. As participant 25 reported:

"When my maternity leave ended, I was very depressed as to how I can leave my young one at home or in the care of someone else, but my boss provided me the opportunity to bring my daughter with me to work (along with a governance to look after her). This schedule continued on for a year and it was such a relief to me that I can keep my young one in front of my eyes or in close proximity. I am extremely grateful to my boss for doing that for me and relieving my stress related to childcare."

Most importantly work provides one with financial independence as a result woman are able to contribute in family expenditure and make spending decisions on their own.

"I have the autonomy to spend my money in any way I want without asking anyone, which is not the case when you are dependent on others.(participant 13)" Participant 4 also reported that, *"I don't have to ask anyone (such as a husband or earning male members in the family) every time when it comes to making purchasing decisions for myself and my kids, which gives me a sense of autonomy and helps me be a more productive member of my family."*

Family to Work Enrichment:

Figure 4 shows the underlying dimensions of the construct of the family to work enrichment. Theses dimensions were also named as skills and perspectives, physical and psychological resources, social and capital resources and flexibility. However, they are somewhat different from the resources gained from work domain. Majority of the women (n = 25) reported that they are solely responsible for the household tasks and for fulfilling the varying demands of the family members be it their husband, kids, in-laws or extended family members living together in a joint family system. Moreover, a little mistake can bring over huge criticism from everybody. Dealing with all this on a regular basis teaches one to be more tolerant and patient, which helps at the workplace. For example, participant 7 reported that:

"My in-laws are very critical of what I do and how I do it. Dealing with their constant criticism and interference in everyday matters has increased my tolerance level which comes in handy at work."

Moreover, women have to juggle with multiple responsibilities at home due to which they become excellent at "multitasking", a skill that comes in handy at work. As participant 29 reported, *"dealing with multiple responsibilities at home such as taking care of children, in-laws and other household responsibilities has helped me in multitasking at my work."*

Furthermore, when one has a family to look after and provide for, they tend to be more conscientious at their work, since losing the job is not an option. For example, participant 20 reported that, *"I am the sole earner of my family and everyone depends on me, as a result I work harder than others and am more focused and committed to my job."*

Participants also mentioned that spending time with family is source of comfort and happiness for them which puts one in a positive mood. *"As soon as I enter my house all my fatigue and stress go away the moment my child runs to me and hugs me with a smile. (participant 2)"*. Moreover, after a tiring or an unsatisfying day family helps "build confidence" by making one feel worthwhile and provides emotional support to handle the challenges of the workplace on a daily basis. As participant 30 reported, *"Whenever I am feeling low my parents word of encouragement and trust in me boost my confidence and I feel that with their prayers I will be able to accomplish anything."*

Support from family in the form of sharing household responsibilities and chores, help women in contributing their time and energy at workplace. For example, participant 34 reported, *"my husband has always been very supportive of my job and whenever I have to travel out of city to attend a conference or present my paper, he very gladly takes care of the kids and household which relieves my tension and I am able to give my 100 percent at my work."*
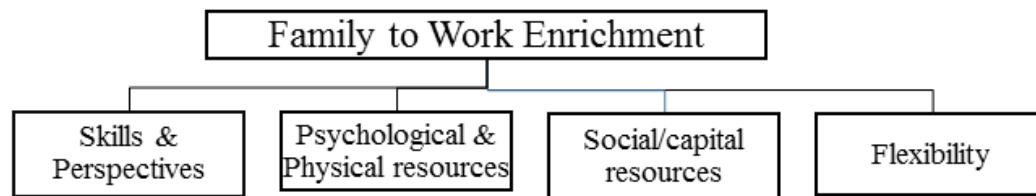

Figure 4. D*epicting themes and categories related to Family to Work Enrichment*

Seven participants reported that parents (especially father) and husband give constructive solutions for handling workplace conflicts more effectively. As participant 37 reported: *"Whenever I am faced with any issue at workplace be it with a colleague or boss, I always seek advice from my father and he provides me with the best possible solution for all my problems"*.

Participants also discussed that availability of help in the form of domestic workers to take care of household chores, gives women the flexibility to devote their times to their family or work. According to participant no 21, *"I have availability of full-time domestic help ever since I had my kids, which is a great relief as it provides me with the time to relax and be more productive."* Family also understands when one has an important work commitment and readjust their plan accordingly giving women greater freedom to pursue their careers, thus leading to improved performance at work.

Discussion

This study was carried out to gain an in-depth understanding of both the positive and the negative sides of the construct of work/family interface (i.e work/family conflict and work/family enrichment) in indigenous context. The analysis of the data using theoretical thematic analysis revealed four superordinate themes i.e work to family conflict, family to work conflict, work to family enrichment and family to work enrichment each having several sub-themes which were developed based on collating initial themes from each interview. The themes of work to family and family to

work conflict had three sub-themes each namely time-based, strain-based and behavior-based interfernces. While the themes of work to family and family to work enrichment had the following common sub-themes namely skills and perspectives, physical and psychological resources, socia-capital resources, and flexibility. One additional sub-theme of monetary benefit was specific to the dimension of work to family enrichment. These results are in line with the conceptualization of the constructs of work/family conflict by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) and Gutek et al. (1991) and the conceptualization of the construct of work/family enrichment by Greenhaus and Powell (2006).

If we look at the initial theme defining each sub-theme, we can see that the dimension of work to family conflict include aspects such as long working hours, bringing work home/preparation for job-related work, unscheduled office activities, office calls after working hours and inflexible timings etc. Although these issues are somewhat similar to the issues experienced by women working in more individualistic western societies, however the gravity of the issue changes as a result of the social structure and cultural norms of Pakistan. Since married women in Pakistan mostly live with their in-laws in addition to their husband and children. Even if they are living in a more nuclear setup, unnecessary demands and interferences from in-laws and extended family members is far more prevalent in Pakistan then in western countries due to collectivistic orientation. As a result, extended work timings, preparation of job-related work at home and office calls after working hours may bring greater criticism from in-laws leading to increase the level of work/family conflict for Pakistani working women. These results are also confirmed by Rehman and Roomi (2012), Sabil and Marican (2011) and Sadiq and Ali (2014).

Additionally, due to the unequal distribution of household and child-care responsibility among spouses in Pakistan, where a woman is almost always responsible for taking care of children and household in addition to her work responsibilities, working married women in Pakistan may feel greater conflict as a result of competing demands of workplace as compared to working women in the west. These results are also confirmed by Akhter and Akbar (2016).

The results of the present study also show that work to family interferences specifically the ones relating to time-based interference were more prevalent in women living in nuclear family system as compared to joint family system. This could be because of the presence of additional support available to women living in joint family system in the form of child-care support and support in managing household chores such as cooking, cleaning, looking after elder members of the family etc. As a result, women living in joint family system may be better able to handle demands of the workplace without having to worry about their household responsibilities. Akhtar and Akbar (2016) also report similar results as their study show that availability of support from joint family system help in reducing work to family conflict.

The second sub-theme of work to family conflict i.e strain-based work to family interference includes aspects such as excessive workload, non-cooperative boss/colleagues, etc. Similar results are also reported by Ahuja, Chudoba, Kacmar, McKnight and George (2007) and Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), who report work overload as a source of conflict for working women. Previous research literature also reports lack of support from work as a major reason for work/family conflict (Janson, Kant, Kristensen &

Nijhuis, 2003; Karateope & Kilic, 2007; Lapierre & Allen, 2006; Moen and Yu, 2000).

In addition, aspects such as uncomfortable workplace environment, and attitude of male colleagues and subordinates are also more prevalent in the case of Pakistan. This is due to prevalence of patriarchal norms in the society where men is almost always the head of the family. Thus men in the workplace feel that it is their inherent right to rule women and any deviation from the norm is not taken positively by them. Such misogynistic behavior of men adds to the stress of working women, which is carried over to their family life. Similar results have been reported by Akhter and Akbar (2016), Islam (2004), Muasya (2016), Rehman and Roomi (2012), and Rukshanda (2005).

The third sub-theme of work to family conflict i.e behavior-based work to family interference had only one underlying initial theme: contrasting behavioral expectations. This theme is also similar to the one reported in western literature by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), Gutek et al. (1991) and Frone, Russell and Cooper (1992) etc. However, the contrast is much more prominent in case of Pakistani women. This is due to the reason that gender specific behaviors expected from Pakistani women are somewhat different from the ones expected from women living in western societies where egalitarian values are prominent. Pakistani women are taught to be subservient to elders and male members of the family and are expected to show more submissive and accommodating behavior as compared to men, which may contrast with the demands of their work role. These results are also supported by Sabil and Marican (2011).

As far as the themes related to family to work interference is concerned the first subtheme i.e time-based family to work interference consists of the following underlying aspects: preparing breakfast, assisting husband and children in getting ready, cleaning up mess, etc. Moreover, the underlying themes related to the second sub-theme of the dimension of family to work conflict include: marital insecurities, unavailability of help, family tensions, induced guilt, conveyance issues, etc. Whereas the underlying theme related to the sub-theme of behavior-based interferences include contrasting behavioral expectation. Although, women living in the west may experience similar demands from their family domain, however, the magnitude of conflict experienced by Pakistani women may be different as they are considered solely responsible for managing all household responsibilities with little or no help from the male members of the family. In addition to managing household, childcare and eldercare responsibilities are also solely managed by women of the house, this unequal distribution of responsibilities adds to their stress leading to greater conflict between family and work domains. The burden may increase further for women living in joint family system due to addition of extra members in the family(such as parents in law, brother or sister in law) as evident from the result of current research, where majority of women (n = 11) living in joint family system reported greater interference from family domain affecting their work-life. However, on the contrary, some women living in joint family system (n = 5) did not report increased interference. This could be due to the reason that additional members may not always add to the burden but having more members in the family may increase the amount of support available to working women as members may share responsibilities among themselves resulting in decreasing the amount of conflict arising as a result of family demands. These results are also confirmed by Abdullah et al (2012), Akhter and

Akbar (2016), Inayat (2014), Syed et al (2016) and Rehman and Roomi (2012).

The themes underlying the dimension of work to family enrichment include skills and perspectives, physical and psychological resources, social capital resource and material resources gained from work domain that enhance performance in the other domain. Such as multi-tasking, handling difficult situations/people, social skills, updated with current trends, sense of accomplishment, feeling of being empowered, personality grooming, supportive workplace, family friendly policies and financial independence etc. All these aspects help in maintaining a positive outlook towards life and provide one with the skills to handle family matters more effectively thus leading to greater enrichment. Moreover, work provides women with financial independence which empowers them and earns them the respect of their family by making them a more productive member of the household. These results are also confirmed by Greenhaus and Powell (2006), Noor (2006) and Sabil and Marican (2011) who report that resources gained from work life positively enhance family life. Moreover, Akhter and Akbar (2016), Fatima and Sahabzada (2012), Gomez et al(2010), Ikram and Anwer (2009), Karim (2013), Nadeem and Abbas (2009), Perveen (2013), Rehman and Roomi (2012) and Saif, Malik and Awan (2011) also report availability of workplace support, friendly policies and flexible working schedule as main factors in enhancing work to family enrichment of working women.

In addition, skills, resources and perspectives obtained from family domain such as increased patience, multi-tasking, being conscientious, and support from family etc help in dealing with demands of workplace such as performing multiple task, dealing with difference of opinion , managing conflict etc. These results are also supported by Blanch and Aluja (2012), Gomez et al (2010), Ikram and Anwer (2009), Malik et al (2010), Michel et al(2011), Nadeem and Abbas (2009), and Saif, Malik and Awan (2011).
Thus, we can say that fulfilling work and family responsibilities not just always create conflict in the lives of women. But resources gained from these two domains i.e. work and family may enhance women's ability to handle everyday responsibilities and challenges in a more effective manner.

Conclusion:

On the basis of the current research we can conclude that the intersection of work and family domains can simultaneously have positive as well as negative impact on the lives of women. The current research identified several factors from work and family domain that may lead to work/family conflict among working women. Moreover, it also tried to identify resources obtained from both work and family domain that may lead to work/family enrichment. Thus, efforts should be made at individual, family, organizational and government level to reduce factors that lead to conflict and enhance aspects that lead to greater enrichment between work and family domains.

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The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

Implications

This research has several implications for working women as well as organizations, since both have to work together in order to reduce work/family conflict and enhance work/family enrichment of working women. On one hand, it requires effort on the part of the employee in terms of effectively managing time and multi-tasking so that dual responsibilities can be fulfilled. On the other hand, it requires effort on the part of the management to provide greater autonomy to the worker in terms of managing their work domains. Family friendly policies such as flexible time, provision of family leaves, work from home opportunity and supportive attitude of supervisors and colleagues can go a long way in terms of hiring, and retaining female employees and helping them in balancing their work and family lives.

Furthermore, at the policy-making level government should make greater effort to approve and implement laws and policies that support working women especially working mothers in balancing the demands of their work and family life such as availability of high quality daycare facility at every workplace, making laws regarding availability of flexible working hours for mothers with young children, ensuring provision of maternity and paternity leave in all public and private sector organizations etc. Government should not only make efforts to make such laws but also develop mechanisms via which these laws can be implanted in letter and spirit.

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