

**THE ROLE OF JOINT FAMILY IN THE FACILITATION OF WORKING WOMEN
TO ATTAIN A BALANCE IN WORK AND FAMILY LIFE**

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ABSTRACT

The present qualitative phenomenological research aims to explore the role of joint family to facilitate married working women to attain work and family balance. The study is based on understanding of working women's life while living with in-laws, and different roles which can be played by the in-laws. This study was conducted in Rawalpindi and Islamabad cities of Pakistan. Twenty semi-structured interviews from married working women living with their in-laws were done. Non-participant observations were also done. Spillover theory is used as a theoretical framework to get an in-depth understanding of married working women's lived experiences. The research findings present that in-laws of married working women play different (negative and positive) roles in facilitating women to attain a balance. Furthermore, it is suggested that organizations need to make such policies that could facilitate married working women in a better way to cope their double roles. Flexplace and flextime policies regarding work and timing could also be introduced for married working women.

Keywords: In-laws, working married women, spillover theory, women friendly policies, Flexplace and flextime

INTRODUCTION

Family is an important part of one's life. Edwards and Rothbard (2000) explain that family includes people who are related by biological ties, social custom and marriage or through adoption. However, different kinds of family structures were not focused in their research. Family structures such as joint and external family exist in cultural context of Asian countries i.e. Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, etc. Faiz (2015) argues that Pakistani cultural context is unique from the rest of the world due to relationship between class, gender, religion and its family structures. Living within the joint family structure is one of the important arrangements as far as Pakistani society is concerned. Ruggles (2010) defines the term joint family as when more than one child lives with his parental household after marriage. Chadda and Deb (2011) further explain joint family as a group of individuals who live together during important stages of their life and bound by biological, social and emotional relationship to each other in Asian and Indian family context. It is further explained that Indian and Asian societies focus on collectivism as opposite to Western societies where nuclear family and individualism predominates.

Moreover, Mishra (2015) argues that joint families share a strong emotional bond and help in building interpersonal relationships. The study argues about the division of roles assigned to family members and their family functioning. Less attention has been paid, however, to another important aspect on the role of joint families' facilitation to married working women on attaining a balance between work and family life.

The role of joint families on married working women's job performance was explored by Erdamar and Demirel (2014). It is found that work life gets affected by the family and family gets affected by work life. The negative results such as job dissatisfaction, poor performance, high absenteeism and coming late at work can be observed, if there is no/less support from the families. In the same manner, Carlson, Kacmar, Zivnuska, Ferguson, and Whitten (2011) argue that work and family roles are interconnected as far as attitudes and behavioral outcomes are concerned. For example, moods in one role can spillover to another role and affect the performance at workplace and household levels. It is also argued by various researchers that women considered families their main and important priority than the work due to cultural factors (Valk & Sirivinasan, 2011; Erdamar & Demirel, 2014).

STUDY STATEMENT

In the existing literature, less research is done on the role of joint families on married working women's efforts in creating a balance between work and family in Pakistan. Researchers like Bhutto, Mahesar, and Abro (2017) and Akhtar, Kashif, Arif and Khan (2012) highlight that family support is an essential element for effective performance of Pakistani working women, however, hardly anyone has directly studied the role of joint family on facilitating married working women to create a balance. Taking this gap as an opportunity, we analyze joint families' facilitation to married working women to have a balance between work and family. Thus, the main objective of this research is to explore the socio-economic dynamics of households where married working women live. It is also to investigate the challenges working women face while living in a joint family setup and also to find out different kinds of support (if any) available to working women for smoothing functioning of work and family life.

LITERATURE REVIEW

FAMILY/SOCIAL CIRCLE IMPACTS ON PERSON'S PERSONALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND WORK

Involvement of family in the work has got attention by different scholars who presented contested arguments. On the one hand, indulgence of family can affect the work life in a negative way as argued by Greenhaus & Beutell (1985) and Lapierre, Hammer, Truxillo & Murphy (2012). Researchers believe that families dilute the work focus of the employees and it diverts their attention from their work to their home. Family demands time that could have been spent on the work, resulting drawing away the employees from their work life. Family can put pressure on the work role of an employee and work role can put pressure on family role too (Frone, 2003). Moreover, Rich, LePine & Crawford (2010) and Taris (2006) find that pressure of family can impact negatively on work roles and pressures of work can negatively impact on family roles.

Other side of the picture shows a positive established link of work and family (Grzywacz & Marks, 2000; Wayne, Musisca & Fleeson, 2004). It is argued that family support; pleasurable relationships with members of family, positive attitudes, good communication abilities are

some of the features that impact positively towards family-work facilitation. Furthermore, it is emphasized that when employees receive love and respect from home, then they feel more confident at their workplace due to family to work positive spillover (Akhtar et al., 2012; Allen, Armstrong & Riemenschneider, 2008). When family support helps in enhancing work performance, organizations grow. Thus, it is suggested that organizations need to develop such policies that would help employees including women to further enhance their work performance (Mukarram, Akbar, Jan & Gul, 2012; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006).

EFFECT OF JOINT FAMILY ON JOB PERFORMANCE

It has been observed that living in joint families lead to some perks in performing some responsibilities such as: payment of bills, children's care, and housekeeping (Chadda & Deb, 2011). It is further argued that it is critical to discover more about responsibilities that came along living with their additional members of joint family (Mishra, 2015). Working women living in joint families have to take care of family and perform work roles side by side.

In Pakistan's cultural context, joint family system is taken as a strong authority differentiation across generations, where females have a passive role argued by Taqui, Itrat, Qidwai and Qadri, (2007). The elder male member of family has an authoritative position in the family because all matters of the family is controlled by him. In such scenario the younger generation of the family show respect to elder members of the family as a result of expectation.

In cultural context like Pakistan, working married women living with their in-laws face many challenges including maintaining healthy and happy relationship with in-laws. This includes burdening themselves by overdoing families' obligations. Women strongly believe that if they do not make their in-laws pleased with their work at home, they might not be allowed to work further by their in-laws. Or a balance between work and family domain will get disturbed as argued by Kinman and Jones (2008).

On the contrary, it has been observed that positive spillover between family and work life can build psychological capital of an employee (Mishra, 2015; Luthans, Avolio & Avey,

2007). Psychological capital is not only important for an employee's growth but also for an organization (Avey et. al., 2010). It is observed that psychological capital has a positive influence on job satisfaction, organizational citizenship conduct, job performance(Luthans et al., 2007), battling with stress, cynicism of employees and also decreasing turnover intentions.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: SPILLOVER THEORY

Spillover theory has been the most suited theory which explains that attitudes are carried over from one role to the other role. Spillover is a process by which an employee's experience in one domain affects their experience in another domain. Spillover occurs "where the events of one environment affect the other" (Glowinkowski& Cooper, 1986). Theoretically, spillover is perceived to be one of two types: positive or negative (Lambert, 1990). According to this theory "workers carry the emotions, attitudes, skills and behaviors from their work role into their family life and vice versa" (Lambert, 1990).

Rich et al., (2010) and Taris (2006) suggest spillover model could be depicted as when experience in one domain seeps over in the other and acknowledged in a positive spillover i.e. enjoying a calming weekend with family members followed by a fruitful Monday at work. It could be a negative spillover i.e., having a dispute with workmate and then being intolerant at home and with family members. Inter-role conflict can result in negative spillover effect where family issues like ill-health, lack of partner support can cause family to work spillover. This explains that there is an existence of family to work and work to family positive and negative spill over.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research was carried out in 2018. Qualitative- phenomenological study design has been used in which we explored the human experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this research,20 married working women living with in-laws were requested to describe their lived experiences. Views of key informants were taken through semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interview results were verified through non-participant observations (gesture and nonverbal communication among other things) at workplace of the working women while interviews were conducted. Researcher noted the key points on a notepad and recorded some interviews (after getting consent from the key informants).The time span for the

interview was from 45 minutes to an hour, in which they shared views and their opinions on the studied phenomenon.

An interview guideline was developed for the study. Questions were asked about challenges, time management, work and family related decisions, issues of personal and professional life etc. Purposive and snow ball sampling techniques were used by researchers to generate data from key informants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). All names reported in this article are pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality and anonymity. Primarily, interview transcriptions were generated. After that line by line coding was done of all interviews and every informant's answer line was assigned a number i.e., (01, 02, 03...). Later on important words (codes) were chosen from each line. Then suitable themes were generated with the help of key codes.

Table 1. Key Informants Demographic Profile

S. No	Profession	No. of respondents	Years living within joint family system
1	School teacher (primary and high schools)	5	11-20
2	Professor at university	2	4-6
3	Banker	3	8-10
4	Manager in pharmaceutical companies	2	4-5
5	Hospital (nursing)	3	5-6
6	Accounts officer	2	6-7
7	Lecturer (college)	2	5-10
8	Branch manager (financial institution)	1	5-9
	Total	20	

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**WORK AND FAMILY ROLE MANAGEMENT**

Working women have to deal with work, meeting deadlines, attend late night's events on the jobs, and sit late night in offices. Their work roles demand that women should be professional, follow the work timings, meet deadlines and work efficiently and effectively etc. On the other hands, working women are also members of a family. While living with their families, family roles are divided among members of family, and each member is assigned a role for the functioning of the family i.e. discipline, communication patterns and hierarchy in family, according to their cultural context (Roy, 2003).

In this research, we found that married working women have to perform their family roles such as: serving in-laws, doing household chores, taking care of children, visit relatives of in-laws, serve guests of in-laws, and listen to the harsh behavior of their in-laws, if they are not able to perform above mentioned responsibilities well. Thus, married working women find an obligation towards their in-laws.

Our key informants shared their good and bad experiences depending on their in-laws' support or lack of support for a balanced work and family life. Zuriat (pseudonym) has been living with her in-laws for the past twenty years and share good experiences – positive spillover. She works as a teacher in a secondary school. She expresses that:

My in-laws are my support and appreciate for being all-rounder. Everyone asks me how you're able to manage your time as I've two kids. I wake up as early as 5.a.m. I do all the work in the morning like lunch, washing clothes, and breakfast etc. in two to three hours before going to the school.

Maria, a professor in a university, also reported that her in-laws have quite understanding about her professional duties and do not criticize her for being a professional. She explained that she has been serious towards her family duties too, as a result her work and family life is going smooth. Zuriat and Maria shared a balanced work-family life due to their own efforts and in-laws' support (see for details; Mishra, 2015).

Our data shows other side of the picture as well. Kiran, a Banker, shared that living with in-laws brings more responsibilities. She further elaborated:

In nuclear family, you don't feel pressure. You don't have to attend all the members. But while living with joint families, you have to perform all your family roles and work till late night, after coming back home from office. You have to cater elder ones as well. This affects my work role in different ways such as going late to office, absenteeism etc.

Thus, our research shows that married working women living with their in-laws have to deal with more pressure due to more family members' involvement in their day to day home and work life. It can be concluded that positive and negative spillover can be observed in working women's lives living with their in-laws. However, support can bring positive change in their lives.

FAMILY AND WORK CONFLICT

According to the respondents' shared experiences, working women have to give their full time to their personal and professional life. But there are times when they fail to do so, then conflict can arise between family and work life. In such situations, performance of working women at work is affected, and at homes their relations with their in-laws also faces disruptions. Ten out of twenty key informants also elaborated that terms with wives of their brothers-in-law and married sisters-in-law were disturbed due to their absence from household duties i.e. cleaning dishes, preparing lunches etc. thus, leads to lack of focus and concentration of working women on their work, take leave from work, going late to work etc. (Rich et al., 2010; Taris, 2006)

A similar experience is shared by Amna. Amna works in a hospital as a nurse. She has day duty, long working hours and has three kids. It becomes difficult for her to be present at home all the time. She says that her kids' diet gets disturbed due to her absence from home for long working hours –a form of negative spillover. Her husband also tells her to leave job to take care of kids. Amna shared:

Before having kids, my professional life was quite stable. After kids, my professional life is a kind of unstable. On and off basis, I have to take off or half leaves from work because of sickness of my kids or other family duties.

Roy (2003) argues that female employees who were living with joint families, a traditional type of conflict - on the equal time allocation to work and family- exist as demanded by the in-laws. We also analyzed in our study that twelve out of twenty informants face conflicts

and frictions with their in-laws related to balanced family and work life. They use tactics to deal with in-laws such as: performing more household chores, staying silent, ignoring comments or harsh attitude, trying to convince on their points, giving more time to them, behaved sweetly and attending in-laws' gatherings to overcome frictions (Brough, O'Driscoll & Kalliath, 2007). One of our respondents – Badar - shared:

Many times I have been through certain conflicts especially in the start of my marriage. My in-laws had issue that I don't serve them lunch or when guest arrive at our home and ask about me. They had issue that we came to meet your daughter-in-law and she is not at home. Then I thought that I could not continue my job, at times I also thought that I can't live here, I should go back to my mother's home. But this conflict has overcome as time passed.

According to Hochschild (1983), working women perform disproportionately third shift of emotional work. That means working women attempt to retain harmony in their homes, comfort their children and partners, and try to ensure that their homes deliver a heaven from all outside world difficulties. Thus, emotion is socially constructed, where women are socialized to behave in certain ways as is obvious from our informants' experiences.

To lessen their burden from household responsibilities, married working women have hired maids (domestic helpers) to divide their household tasks like i.e. catering guests, cleaning home, washing dishes etc. and for this they give maids wages from their own salaries. Nine out of twenty of informants reported that they have hired maids for various tasks, so that they can go to work without facing any hurdle.

Thus, it can be concluded that married working women have to perform additional family responsibilities, while living with their in-laws. Married working women have to face conflicts at household levels while working. Some of the key informants were of the opinion that they didn't stand before their in-laws in case of conflicts. And they tried to talk to them, and make them understand their points of view. Whereas, seven out of twenty reported that they used to keep quiet in times of conflicts, frictions and opposing ideas to have a comfortable environment at home and to get continuous support in the future.

WORK AND FAMILY DECISION MAKING MATTERS

A paradoxical situation is analyzed as far as in-law's involvement in decision making is concerned. It has been found in our research that decisions of work-related matters of married working women are influenced by their in-laws. Married working women have to see whether their in-laws are satisfied with their jobs or not (Isran & Isran, 2012).

Our study results reveal that married working women have been facing social stigma of being a woman and following different restrictions on them by parents and then by in-laws (Taqui, Itrat, Qidwai & Qadri, 2007). Eight out of twentykey informants also claimed that their in-laws are conservative and traditional as they imposed restrictions on them. Shehla stated that her in-laws didn't like her to wear modern dresses in her official parties. While another informant shared that her in-laws didn't like her working. They wanted her to leave her job, however due to husband's support; she is able to managed work and family.

However, contrary to above discussed findings, our study also shows that decisions regarding work were mostly taken by women. According to key informants, they better understand what is suitable for them and what is not. Their in-laws didn't take interest and influence on them. Seven out of twenty informants were of the view that their in-laws should take interest in their work-related matters. Because understanding their work life issues, in-laws can motivate them, when they feel down.

It is claimed by few of the respondents that in-laws used to counsel them in times when they faced stress due to office issues, guided them to choose the job, gave their suggestions and opinions, if something bothers them at work. When asked whether in-laws should take interest in work life of married working women? Maria shared, "If they take a little interest, then it would be easy for me to work."In this regard, one of the key informants stated that:

My husband supports me a lot to play my dual (family and work) roles easily. He always asks me that how was my day? He supports me if I had been through any conflict with my in-laws, he says don't be panic. If something goes wrong with in-laws, he manages himself.

It can be concluded that when in-laws of married working women are supportive, and then they are able to focus on their work in a better way and achieve their work goals without getting interrupted and distracted by their family life. Nine out of twenty informants reported that professional life can be spoiled by personal life.

For example, married working women had to give their in-laws time and perform their duties after office hours till late night. The women who used to work from 8-5 in offices had issues after coming back as they are tired from offices, resultantly sacrifice their own time to rest – time based conflict.

All informants have been facing time management issues. It has been found in our research that women want to have smooth relations with their in-laws and their work life. And for that they have to put so much effort even by sacrificing their own time for rest. This finding is similar to an argument, where families of married working women demand time for activities of their family that could have been spent on their work, resulting in drawing working employees away from their work life(see for details Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Lapierre et. al., 2012).

Twelve out of twenty key informants reported that they have to give their own selves second preference, and give their families a priority. Among them, one informant also shared her experience that she was able to take rest for only thirty minutes and for the rest of the time she had to do different tasks of her home and also of her office. She also reported that even after giving this much time to the family, still your personal life gets disturbed. And you need to stay alert and active all the time that all things are done on time.

It can be concluded that if organizations make such policies, that would involve families of married working women and provide them little leverage regarding their work timings that could help and enhance their performance. In-laws should also give special attention towards work commitments of married working women, as they have to deal with pressures of their dual roles i.e., family and work.

CONCLUSION

We concluded that married working women have to perform dual roles i.e. family role and work role, and while doing that they have to maintain a balance. They have to face various challenges, like maintaining time between their work and home, then also deal with additional responsibilities that come up while living with joint family members. To maintain a balance between family and work life, married working women have to sacrifice their own time for rest. When working women are not able to balance their commitments towards their family, it disturbs their work performance as well as their relations. To perform their family roles properly and without disturbing their work roles, married working women had hired maids for it. Working women living with their in-laws have to deal with conflicts and interferences in their work life from their in-laws. They developed different strategies such as: through avoidance and staying silent in conflicting situations, working start doing extra work on the weekends among others. This research also concludes that in-laws' role and organizational policies are important to help to create a balance between families and work, and they can have a positive spillover.

RECOMMENDATIONS

After the analysis, presented above, following are few recommendations to improve married working women's work and family life balance. Appropriate organizational policies need to be made by the organizations for their women employees regarding their work hours and no work should be given to them to be completed at homes. Policies like job sharing and part time jobs should be available to married women. Policies like children-care, dependent care etc. should be provided to married women employees. Flexplace and flextime policies could also be introduced for the studied group.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Like other research, this study was not without limitations. We found that sample size was small and it did not include all married working women of the formal economic sector. So the results cannot be generalized. Overall, research time was limited to include more participants for qualitative interviews.

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