

The Impact of Work-Family Conflict on Continuance Commitment under the Mediation of Emotional Exhaustion and the Role of Social Support as Moderator: Among Academic Staff

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Abstract

This study proposes and tested a model that inspect whether the social support as a moderator and emotional exhaustion as a mediator effect's the relationship between work-family conflict and continuance commitment. The relationship of these variables were tested by using Spss. Data is collected from the employees of 4 institutions in Islamabad. Total 152 sample size is used in this study. Results of this study suggest that Emotional exhaustion act as a mediator and the moderator which is social support has a strong negative impact on Continuance commitment which is weakening the effect of emotional exhaustion among the academic staff. Implications of the results are discussed and avenues for future research are offered.

Keywords: Work-family conflict, Emotional exhaustion, social support and Continuance commitment.

Introduction

Work and family life of academic staff is an important area of study. In a perfect scenario work and family both exist without any kind of conflict but in reality some problems can create conflict in one of the domains. Ahmed (2010) reported that role overload is the reason of loss of energy and time, so that one cannot complete the role properly which results emotional exhaustion. Because of the lost resources the outcome becomes work-family conflicts. Employees who have greater conflict between family and work responsibilities can cause high job related exhaustion. This is a point of worry because exhaustion can cause a negative approach towards the place of work (Zhao, Mattila & Ngan, 2014). Health and work-family conflict indicates the resources and demands on job that forms quality of life and mental health of the employees (Moen et. al., 2015). The resources in several domains of life are rare, and individuals struggle to balance their several roles. The main objective of the research was to inspect whether the social support in work or family can minimize the conflict that arises in the other domains (Selvarajan, Cloninger & Singh, 2013). Kalliath, Kalliath & chan (2014) reported the evidence that colleague support, supervisor support and family support do not have major impact on the relationship of work-family conflict, family-work conflict and psychological strain.

The employees who are emotionally exhausted show discomfort towards their organization and are not much focused in their jobs (Karatepe, 2013). A lot of stress and continuous stress can reduce the employee participation in the job, which result in decreased organization commitment (Nager, 2012). Haudebert, Mulki & Fournier (2013) reveals that different level of burnout play a key role in decreasing organization commitment. The relationship of different kinds of organizational commitment with many types of work-family conflict shows the traditional problem of strain and stress (Lambert, Hogan, Kelley, Kim & Garland, 2014). Some studies have been done to explore the components of organizational commitment i.e. continuance Commitment & Affective commitment (Payne & Huffman, 2005). Overall Affective commitment and Continuance commitment seems to take place as a little sets of intuitively meaningful configuration which are linked with the differences amongst employee's performance (Sinclair, Tucker & Cullen, 2005).

Karatepe (2013) tested work overload and work-family conflict on job performance and job embeddedness having a mediator of emotional exhaustion. Considering how to stop emotional exhaustion and how to hold employees is an important and vital topic in the industry (Wang, 2014). In this study work-family conflict act as an independent variable while continuance commitment act as a dependent variable, having emotional exhaustion as a mediator and social support as a moderator. This study seeks to raise knowledge and awareness about the support that an employee get from the environment (social support) is extremely important to get maximum output from the employee. This study is intended to explore a new moderating mechanism of how social support effects the continuance commitment in a collectivist culture of Pakistan and focus would be the academic staff of different educational institutions.

This study is based on the conservation of resource theory. This theory states that everybody look to preserve resources like objects and energy. Stress happen when the resources losses, which leads to job dissatisfaction and one consider quitting a job (Hobfoll, 1989).

Literature review:

Relationship between Work-Family conflict and continuance commitment

Work-family conflict is generally define as "A form of inter role conflict in which the role pressure from the work

and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect” (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985, p-77). Many researchers confirmed that work-family conflict has two dimensions first is that conflict arise when work roles get in a way with family roles and the second dimension is that family roles get in way with work related roles called family-work conflict (Kossek & Ozeki, 1999). But this research focuses only on work-family conflict. Different researches established that work-family conflict and family-work conflict has different kinds of antecedents and cost (Hammer, Bauer & Grandey, 2003). The antecedents of work-family conflict are lack of supervision, work role stress and long hours (Boyar, Maertz, Pearson & Keough, 2003). Work-Family conflict is repeatedly known as a potential cause of stress which has a negative effect on the behavior and well being of a human (Geurts, Kompier, Roxburgh & Houtman, 2003).

The majority of the researchers see organizational commitment as a behavioral perspective or as attitudinal perspective. According to the attitudinal perspective organizational commitment is defined as a “Relative strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in a particular organization, which is characterized by belief in and acceptance of organizational goals and values willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization and a desire to maintain membership in the organization” (Modway & Steer, 1979). Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) describe commitment “a force that binds an individual to a course of action of relevance to one or more targets” (p. 301). There are three types of organization commitment Affective, continuance and normative commitment. Affective commitment is the extent of a person emotional connection towards an organization (Namasivayam & Zhao, 2007). In continuance commitment people wanted to leave the organization but could not. According to (Sinclair, Tucker & Cullen, 2005) Continuance commitment is defined as the perception that leaving an organization is more costly than remain in an organization. This study focuses on continuance commitment.

Relationship between work-family conflict, family work-conflict and commitment depends on which type of commitment is measured (Meyer & Allen, 1991). This study is focused on continuance organization commitment. Due to the extra work load and inflexible office timing the employees could not handle the work pressure and not able to maintain balance between work and family, results in job dissatisfaction (Karatape & Tekinkus, 2006). Job dissatisfaction is due to the emotional exhaustion, lack of energy and the feeling of not having enough emotional resources (Thompson, Kirk & Brown, 2005). This is the point where employees start imagining of continuance commitment because the employee is thinking of leaving the job.

H1: Work-Family conflict is positively and significantly related to continuance commitment.

Emotional exhaustion

Emotional exhaustion is an important part of burnout and results in long term stress among the employees (Jennett, Harris & Mesibov, 2003). Work overload is one of the reasons of emotional exhaustion. Too much workload happens when employee thinks that he/she has a lot of task to do in given span (Greenglass, Burke & Moor 2003). A person who feels stress over some period of time causes a loss of energy, which results in emotional exhaustion that is the feeling of overextended and tired of an individual physical and emotional resources (Richter, Schraml & Leineweber, 2014). Burnout causes the decrease value of service providing to the other people and also the low job performance (Garner, Knight, & Simpson, 2007). Emotional exhaustion is defined as the feeling of an individual is emotionally drained, overextended, used up with the job and fatigued (Griffin, Hogan, Lambart, Tucker-Gail & Baker, 2009).

Emotional exhaustion is one of the outcomes of work-family conflict (Burke & Greenglass, 2001). Studies have shown that increased burnout of job is a major result work-family conflict (Sweeney & Summers, 2002). Longitudinal study about the individuals from eight different occupational groups which includes physician as well shows that increased level of work-family conflict can cause burnout including emotional exhaustion (Bergman, Ahmad & Stewart, 2008). Due to the emotional exhaustion employee show turnover intention and at that point employee starts thinking of continuance commitment.

H2: Emotional exhaustion will mediate the relationship between work-family conflict and continuance commitment.

Social support

At last the final variable of the research is exploration of the social support role from colleagues and management team. Social support is the observation and reality that a person is cared for, has support available from the other people, and that a person is part of a supportive social network. The literature of stress and strain gives an idea that social support can be helpful in number of functions like stress buffering effect; however the evidence shows that stress buffering properties is not pretty definite (Cooper, Dewe, & O’Driscoll, 2001). Previous researches in the work-family conflict clearly show that four types of social support in the domain of work can reduce work-family conflict (Seager & Wiese, 2009). (Direnzo, Greenhaus & Weer, 2011) reported that there is a weak relation between social support and work-family conflict. Studies of work-family conflict suggest that even supervisors are not the family but it can play a vital role in reducing the effect of work-family conflict (Luke & Shaffer, 2005). Cohen

and Hoberman (1982), Nucholls, Callell and Kaplin (1972) introduced a theory called Buffer effect of social support. This theory tells that “People who feel supported by others feel less stress. If you know your friends will support you and there is someone with whom you can talk things through, somehow stressful situations are more tolerable.” According to this theory we can say that due to the effect of social support from the colleagues and managers to the employee, emotional exhaustion will decrease which results in lower continuance commitment.

H₃: Social support will moderate the relationship between work-family conflict and continuance commitment so that it weakens the relationship.

Theoretical framework:



Methodology

In this study cluster sampling is used and the data is collected from the faculty staff, which includes (teachers, admin, accounts etc) of four institutions like MAJU, UOL Islamabad, Gov college Sihala and Dar-e-Arqam school Wah cantt. The data is collected by using the questionnaire and the questionnaire was distributed and collected back personally. A total 300 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 180 were recovered but useable questionnaires were 152 and which made the response rate as 50.6% and it seemed sufficient sample size according to academic practices for analysis of results. Participation in this study was completely voluntary and Respondents were assured that their provided information will remain confidential. The respondents have been classified into four categories in context to gender, age, qualification and experience. The respondents in the gender group were 40.8% was male and 59.2% was female. The respondents in the age group were 38.2% was between 18-25, 43.4% was between 26-33, 11.8% was between 34-41 and 6% was between 42-49. The respondents in the experience group were 63.2% was 5 and less, 26.3% was between 6-11, 6.6% was between 14-21 and 3.9% was between 22-29. The respondents in the qualification group were 6.6% of the staff was Fsc, 19.7% of staff was bachelor, 47.4% of the staff was master, 23.7% of the staff was MS/M.Phil and 2.6% of the staff was PhD. After collecting the questionnaires, these questionnaires were punched into SPSS sheet for further correlation, regression analysis and also to determine the reliability of data.

Measures

The measurement of the variables was done by use of “five-point Likert scale from 1 to 5” rating from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree. 1 is for strongly disagree, 2 is for disagree, 3 is for not sure, 4 is for agree and 5 is for strongly agree.

Work-family conflict is measured by using Burke et al. (1979) scales. Total ten items are used. Example items are “My work prevents me spending sufficient quality time with my family”; “My family misses out because of my work commitments.” value of the Cronbach’s alpha is 0.791.

Emotional exhaustion is measured by using Maslach and Jackson, (1981). Total seven items are used. Example items are “I feel emotionally drained from my work”; “I feel used up at the end of the workday”. Value of the Cronbach’s alpha is 0.791.

Social support is measured by using Cousins et al. (2004). Total eight items are used. Example items are “If work gets difficult, my colleagues will help me”; “I get help and support I need from colleagues”. Value of the Cronbach’s alpha is 0.791.

Continuance commitment is measured by using Meyer and Allen (1997), Total six items are used. Example items are “I worry about the loss of investments I have made in this organization”; “I often feel anxious about what I have to lose with this organization”. Value of the Cronbach’s alpha is 0.791.

Results

TABLE 1
Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations

Variables	M	S.D	1	2	3	4
1. WFC	3.28	0.82	1			
2. EE	3.32	0.77	.497**	1		
3. SS	3.66	0.65	.004*	-.172*	1	
4. CC	2.96	0.75	.025*	.108**	-.154*	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 presents correlation among the model variables. Work-family conflict was positively and significantly associated with Continuance commitment ($r = .025$). Work-family conflict was positively and highly significant with Emotional Exhaustion ($r = .497$). Work-family conflict was positively and significantly associated with Social support ($r = .004$). Emotional Exhaustion was negatively, and significantly associated with Social support ($r = -.172$). Emotional Exhaustion was positively, and significantly highly associated with Continuance Commitment ($r = .108$). Social support was negatively and significantly associated with Continuance Commitment ($r = -.154$).

Table 2
Results of Regression Analysis for mediation

Predictor	Continuance commitment		
	β	R ²	ΔR^2
Step 1			
Control variables		.114	
Gender			
Age			
Qualification			
Experience			
Step 2			
Emotional Exhaustion	.093**	.123	.009**
Step 3			
Work-family conflict	.085*	.128	.005*

** $p < .01$ (two tailed); * $p < .05$ (two tailed).

Hypothesis 1 predicted that work-family conflict is positively and partially significant with Continuance commitment. We used regression analysis to test this hypothesis. In step 1 we controlled the demographic variables in the model which are Gender, Age, Qualification and Experience. In the second step we controlled the mediator which is Emotional Exhaustion. In step 3 we entered our dependent variable which is work-family conflict. Table 2 shows the results of regression analysis of p-value. Value of slope coefficient ($\beta = .093$). The coefficient of determination R² ($R^2 = 0.123$) indicates that control variables and Emotional exhaustion when combined explain 12.3% of variation in Continuance commitment. Whereas change in coefficient of determination ($\Delta R^2 = .009$) indicates that Emotional Exhaustion alone accounts for .9% variation in Continuance commitment. Thus H1 and H2 supported statistically.

Table 3
Results of Moderated Regression Analysis

Predictor	Continuance commitment		
	β	R ²	ΔR^2
Moderator analysis			
Step 1			
Control variables		.114	
Gender			
Age			
Qualification			
Experience			
Step 2			
Emotional exhaustion	.168**		
Social support	.194*	.153	.039*
Step 3			
EE X SS	-.109*	.158	.005

** $p < .01$ (two tailed); * $p < .05$ (two tailed).

Hypothesis 3 predicted that Social support will weak the relationship between work-family conflict and continuance commitment. We used moderated regression analysis to test this. In first step, we controlled the demographic variables to the model. In second step, we controlled both independent variable and moderator i.e. emotional exhaustion and social support. In the third step, we introduced the interaction term of emotional exhaustion \times social support. Value of slope coefficient ($\beta = -.109$) indicates that a unit change in interaction shall yield a $-.109$ units change in continuance commitment in opposite direction which means that social support is weakening the effect between work-family conflict and continuance commitment. The coefficient of determination R^2 ($R^2 = .158$) indicates that control variables and interaction term when combined explain 15.8% of variation in continuance commitment. Whereas change in coefficient of determination ($\Delta R^2 = 0.05$) indicates that interaction term alone accounts for 0.5% variation in continuance commitment. Thus H3 supported statistically.

Discussion

The findings of this study show that the work-family conflict is positively linked to continuance commitment, which confirms the past findings that when the work-family conflict increases, continuance also increases. As the level of conflict rises the organization demand from employees to produce extra effort to remain in an organization so the employees has fewer options and become continuance committed (Iverson & Buttgieg, 2008). Continuance commitment defines as what an employee has to give up if he/she leaves the organization. (Meyer et al., 2003) reported that if the employee is continuance committed then he/she will remain in the organization because they think leaving organization would be costly for them. Work-Family conflict is repeatedly known as a potential cause of stress which has a negative effect on the behavior and well being of a human (Geurts, Kompier, Roxburgh & Houtman, 2003). So because of work family conflict employee of the four institutions from where the data is collected feels stress due to extra burden of managing work and family simultaneously, mostly employees do not able to manage it and as a result they start thinking of leaving the job. As a result employee become continuance committed towards their organization.

As a result shows that the second hypothesis of the study which is Emotional exhaustion will mediate the relationship between work-family conflict and continuance commitment is accepted which is similar to the past studies. Karatape & Tekinkus (2006) find that due to the extra work load and inflexible office timing the employees could not handle the work pressure and not able to maintain balance between work and family, results in job dissatisfaction and emotional exhaustion. Work overload is one of the reasons of emotional exhaustion. Too much workload happens when employee thinks that he/she has a lot of task to do in given span (Greenglass, Burke & Moor 2003). Emotional exhaustion is defined as the feeling of an individual is emotionally drained, overextended, used up with the job and fatigued (Griffin, Hogan, Lambart, Tucker-Gail & Baker, 2009).

According to the results our third hypotheses which is Social support will moderate the relationship between work-family conflict and continuance commitment so that it weakens the relationship is accepted. Which means that social support is weakening the effect of WFC and CC which is supported by the theory of Buffer effect of social support presented by Cohen and Hoberman (1982), Nucholls, Callell and Kaplin (1972) describes that "People who feel supported by others feel less stress. If you know your friends will support you and there is someone with whom you can talk things through, somehow stressful situations are more tolerable." Studies of work-family conflict suggest that even supervisors are not the family but it can play a vital role in reducing the effect of work-family conflict (Luke & Shaffer, 2005). Social support in the form of help from colleagues in four institutions on which the study is conducted is extremely help full because for the employees who is suffering a conflict need some support to remain in the organization.

Limitations and Future Research:

Data was collected from two universities (Maju and UOL), one College (Gov college Sihala) and one School called Dar-e-Arqam of Islamabad, I faced some difficulties because the questionnaire was too long so that the respondent didn't properly filled the questionnaire and the sample was likely too small to obtain more relevant data that may generate a lack of accuracy. The potential for key common bias may still exist. Thus, for future research there should be more number of respondent's designs or direct investigator observation would be useful to confirm results and other method can be use for collecting data is by interviewing the people. Researchers can do in future that they can go for a more diverse sample by collecting data from institution of different cities. Another thing is that in this study continuance commitment is the only component of organizational commitment is used as an dependent variable in future the researchers can use Affective and normative commitment as an dependent variable.

Implication:

This study shows that faculty staff experiences Emotional exhaustion due to the work-family conflict and therefore due to emotional exhaustion continuance commitment increases, social support weakening the effect of emotional exhaustion. So high level hierarchy in the different institution in Pakistan need to give better social support to their

staff and make sure that the other employees give support to their peers so that the staff does not suffer from emotional exhaustion and their job performance will appraise.

Conclusion

This study investigated that how the social support as a moderator between work-family conflict and continuance commitment with the mediator of emotional exhaustion lower the negative effect of work-family conflict and emotional exhaustion. The findings that we have found provide the proof that social support helps the academic staff to lower the effect of emotional exhaustion which they experienced after work-family conflict. The findings of this paper also confirms the previous studies that work-family conflict triggers emotional exhaustion and due to emotional exhaustion employees start thinking of leaving the job this is the reason when continuance commitment become common among employees. This study also confirms the practical implication of the theory called “Buffer effect of social support” introduced by Cohen and Hoberman (1982), Nucholls, Callell and Kaplin (1972).

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