

Balancing Ambitions and Responsibilities: Investigating Job Satisfaction and Work-Family Conflict among Female Academics

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the factors influencing job satisfaction (JS) and work-family conflict (WFC) among female employees, specifically focusing on 207 female teachers working in various Universities in Peshawar. The researchers utilized three scales, namely WFC, Emotional Intelligence (EI), and JS, to collect relevant data.

The results indicated that JS was adversely affected when work-related responsibilities intruded into family life. However, family demands influencing work did not have a significant impact on JS. Moreover, the study discovered a positive correlation between EI and age concerning job satisfaction. On the other hand, work experience showed a negative association with WFC.

Keywords: *Job satisfaction, work-family conflict, emotional intelligence*

Introduction

The participation of women in the workforce is steadily increasing (Avais, Wassan, & Shah, 2014). However, in Pakistan, gender roles often assign the primary responsibility for household chores to women, leading to a higher experience of work-family conflict (Umer & Zia-Ur-Rehman, 2013). In the context of their professional lives, women find themselves juggling multiple roles simultaneously. Besides their job responsibilities, they are expected to fulfill essential roles as parents, spouses, and daughters within their families. The accumulation of these various roles places a significant number of responsibilities on women, making it challenging for them to strike a balance between their work and family duties. As a result, they often face dilemmas in prioritizing and allocating time and effort effectively, which can lead to increased stress and a sense of conflict between their work and family spheres.

Work-family conflict (WFC) is defined as a situation where there is a conflict between the demands of the work role and the family role. The more involved a person is in their work, the harder it becomes to fulfill their family responsibilities, and vice versa. WFC can have a two-way influence, where work can impede family responsibilities, or family requirements can hinder job performance, both of which pose a threat to the job satisfaction of working women. The rise in dual-earner families and increased work demands contribute to the growing prevalence of WFC (Zhang & Liu, 2011). Employees are facing changing and more demanding work requirements, leading to concerns about how to balance work and family relationships (Vallone, 2011). Working mothers, in particular, find it difficult to balance family health and responsibilities with their jobs (Wyn, Ojeda, Ranji, and Salganicoff, 2003). Moreover, marriage and childbearing are also linked to WFC (Nie, Wentworth, & Sturkie, 2014). WFC can give upsurge to different types of conflicts among employees (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Time-based conflict occurs when the duration time allocated to one character limits the duration time available for another competing character. Strain-based conflict ascends when pressure from one role spills over into another role, causing reduced efficiency. Behavior-based conflict

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involves the improper application of behaviors suitable in one setting being carried over to a different setting (Greenhaus, Allen, & Spector, 2006).

Research literature suggests that WFC has adverse effects on employees' actions, feelings, and physical well-being (Mauno & Kinnunen, 1998). One of the bad impacts of WFC is on JS and organizational commitment (Ahmad, 2008; Haar, 2008). Job Satisfaction (JS) is defined as a positive emotional state resulting from an entity's assessment of their job, comparing desired outcomes with actual outcomes (Medina, 2012). It can be seen as an overall expression of workers' positive attitudes towards their jobs (Mucahit, 2011).

Job satisfaction holds paramount importance in the development of an organization and contributes significantly to a person's psychological well-being. Kinicki and Kreithner (2007) conducted a study and established a favorable correlation between JS and motivation, job involvement, and organizational citizenship behavior. On the contrary, they found negative correlations between job satisfaction and absenteeism, withdrawal cognitions, turnover, and perceived stress. Similarly, Hussain (2017) reported a negative association between job stress and work performance in the banking sector. Additionally, WFC was also found to be negatively related to JS (Hanif & Naqvi, 2014).

Dodanwala and Shrestha (2021) explored WFC and JS among construction experts, concentrating on the mediating part of emotional enervation. They discovered that advanced levels of WFC directly led to increased emotional exhaustion, which subsequently reduced the JS of project employees. Similarly, Purwanto (2020) investigated female WFC, JS, and job performance in Indonesian female workers, concluding that WFC significantly and negatively influenced JS. In another study by Viegas and Henriques (2021) on police officials, it was found that job stress had a highly significant negative correlation with job satisfaction, while the correlation between job satisfaction and work-family conflict was weakly negative.

Studies consistently show that WFC reduces JS, on the other hand, emotional intelligence (EI) has been shown to enhance job satisfaction. EI refers to the ability to recognize, manage, and integrate emotions, including both positive and negative emotions, into one's life (Matthews, Zeidner, & Roberts, 2004). An emotionally intelligent individual is better equipped to resolve conflicts, leading to greater job satisfaction. Moreover, the literature suggests that EI may help in reducing stress, thereby mitigating the impact of WFC on JS (Patricia, 2010; Gao et al, 2013). Several studies, such as those conducted by Gopinath and Chitra (2020), Gong et al. (2020), and Suleman et al. (2020), have demonstrated substantial positive associations between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction in various settings.

In addition to work-family conflict, demographic characteristics such as age, work experience, and marital status may also present unique challenges in the workplace, affecting job satisfaction. There are mixed findings regarding the relationship between age and job satisfaction, with some studies showing a positive correlation, while others show no association or suggest that the elderly are the least satisfied (Matagi, Baguma, & Baluku, 2022; Topino, Fabio, Palazzeschi, & Gori, 2021). Age is considered an important variable for job satisfaction, as individuals with growing age may view job prospects differently and gain insights into their strengths and limitations, allowing them to adapt to job demands better. Similarly, work experience may enable individuals to effectively cope with work-family conflict, although this area remains relatively unexplored and requires further investigation. The present study aims to be a pioneering work in exploring the association between job experience and work-family conflict.

The Rationale of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to examine the prevalence of WFC among female university teachers and explore how their age, work experience, and EI impact their JS. Working as a university-level teacher is known to be demanding, with long hours and a heavy

workload. Lecturers, in particular, often face challenges as they belong to the lowest cadre among the university's teaching faculty. This means they are assigned more credit hours and many of them are simultaneously pursuing higher education, adding further responsibilities. Juggling university duties alongside family demands creates a difficult situation for these female teachers, potentially leading to WFC and subsequent job dissatisfaction. It is noteworthy that university-related tasks often extend beyond campus hours, with teachers having to complete various responsibilities at home, such as preparing lectures, grading tests and assignments, and developing exam papers. Considering the cultural context in Pakistan, it is crucial to understand the impact of WFC on academia and whether factors like age and EI play a role in maintaining the teachers' morale and JS. The primary goal of this study is to illuminate these critical aspects to gain insights into the challenges faced by female university teachers and their overall well-being in their professional roles.

Research Methodology

Nature and Design of Study

This study falls within the realm of quantitative research, aiming to empirically investigate the factors influencing job satisfaction (JS) and work-family conflict (WFC) among female employees. It's a mix of correlational and causal-comparative research design. The study is focused on a specific group of participants: 207 female teachers employed in various universities in Peshawar, Pakistan. The primary objective is to uncover the relationships between key variables, including work-family conflict, emotional intelligence (EI), job satisfaction, age, and work experience. The study adopts a structured and systematic approach to gather numerical data that can be analyzed statistically.

Objectives

1. To investigate the role of WFC in Job satisfaction in university teachers of Peshawar.
2. To inspect the connection between age, EI, and JS.
3. To see the association between work experience and work-family conflict.

Hypotheses

1. WFC(work family conflict) will have a negative impact on Job satisfaction
2. Age and emotional intelligence will have a positive correlation with Job Satisfaction.
3. Work experience will have a negative correlation with WFC.

The population of Study

The population of this study encompassed 852 teaching faculty members from various universities in Peshawar. Specifically, it consisted of female teaching faculty members who met the following criteria:

- All 852 teaching faculty members from different universities of Peshawar as listed in the HEC document titled "University Full-time Faculty" (<https://www.hec.gov.pk/english/services/students/PCD/Documents/UniversityFulltimeFaculty.pdf>).
- Each participant had a minimum of one year of job experience in their teaching roles.

Sample of the Study

From this extensive population, a carefully selected sample of 207 female teaching faculty members participated in the study. The sample was drawn from several universities in Peshawar, including but not limited to Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University, Islamia University, Agricultural University, Sarhad University, Institute of Management and Sciences, Iqra University, and City University. Among the participants, 99 (48.5%) were married, and

105 (51.5%) were unmarried. Initially, 290 questionnaires were distributed to potential participants, and the study achieved a response rate of 215. However, it's worth noting that some respondents did not meet the inclusion criteria and were consequently excluded from the study.

Instruments

Work-Family Conflict (WFC) Scale

The WFC instrument, created by Carlson, Kacmar, and Williams (2000), contains 18 items, rated on a 5-point Likert scale, aimed to assess six extents of work-family conflict (WFC). However, for this particular study, only 12 items relevant to Time-Based and Strain-Based family interference with work and work interference with family were used. The Behavior-Based items were excluded from the study as they did not align with its focus. The WFC scale showed an internal consistency coefficient of 0.85, indicating good reliability.

Generic Job Satisfaction Scale

The scale utilized in this study consisted of 10 items, which were originally developed by Macdonald and MacIntyre (1997). Respondents have to rate their responses on a 5-point scale, starting from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" (1 to 5). The reliability of the scale was found to be $\alpha = 0.77$, indicating good internal consistency.

Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence (EI)

In this study, the researchers employed the Wong and Law EI Scale (Wong & Law, 2002), consisting of 16 statements with response options extending from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" (1 to 5). Higher scores on this scale indicate elevated levels of EI. The scale exhibited excellent reliability, with a reported coefficient alpha of .94 (Adil & Kamal, 2012).

Procedure

The self-administered scales for WFC, JS, and EI were distributed among female faculty members teaching in different universities in Peshawar. A convenience sampling technique was employed to access the sample. The researchers themselves visited different universities, and in some cases, questionnaires were distributed with the help of teachers and colleagues working at those institutions. Each distributed form was accompanied by a consent letter, and participants were assured that their data would only be used for research purposes and would be kept completely confidential. Out of the 270 distributed forms, 215 were returned. However, some of these forms did not meet the inclusion criteria, specifically, having less than one year of work experience, leading to their exclusion from the data analysis.

Results

Table 1

Descriptive statistics of the study variables

Scales	No. of				
	Items	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α
WFC	12	206	32.51	8.25	.87
JS	10	207	36.04	6.31	.83
EI	16	205	62.39	8.1	.88

Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics, and it reveals that all three scales exhibit high reliability, as indicated by their alpha coefficients.

Table 2*Multiple Regression Analysis between WIF, FIW and JS*

Models	B	R ²	ΔR^2	F	95% C.I	
					LL	UL
Constant	40.562				36.89	44.23
WIF	-0.25**	0.185	0.034	3.566**	-0.45	-0.05
FIW	0.01				-0.18	0.19

Note: WIF= Work Interference Family, FIW= Family Interference Work, EI= Emotional Intelligence, JS= Job Satisfaction. **p < 0.01

The results of the multiple regression analysis reveal that the B estimate value for Work Interference Family is -0.25 (p = 0.014), indicating a significant impact on Job Satisfaction and explaining 18.5% of the variance in the outcome variable. However, the B value for Family-Interference Work is 0.01 (p = 0.934), suggesting that this variable does not have a significant effect on Job Satisfaction. The overall Model is found to be significant, as indicated by F = 3.566 (p = 0.03).

Table 3*Inter-scale Correlation between age, emotional intelligence and job satisfaction (n=207)*

Measures	1	2	3
EI	1		
JS	.360**	1	
Age	-.086	.192*	1

Note. **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed); *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

Table 3 presents the results, revealing that the correlation between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Job Satisfaction (JS) is $r = 0.360^{**}$, signifying significance at the 0.01 level (1-tailed). This finding points to a moderate positive association between EI and JS. In simpler terms, individuals with higher emotional intelligence tend to report greater job satisfaction. Additionally, the correlation between Age and Job Satisfaction (JS) is $r = 0.192^{*}$, signifying significance at the 0.05 level (1-tailed). It indicates a weak positive connection between Age and JS, suggesting that, to some degree, older individuals tend to report slightly higher job satisfaction. Moreover, the correlation between Age and Emotional Intelligence (EI) is $r = -0.086$, with no statistical significance at the 0.05 level. It implies that there is no notable relationship between Age and EI. In other words, age does not seem to relate to emotional intelligence in this sample.

Table 4*Interscale Correlation of job experience and Work-family conflict (n=207)*

Scales	1	2
Job Exp	----	
WFC	-.14*	----

Note. WFC= Work Family Conflict Scale; Job Exp= job experience; * = p < .05

The results from Table 4 indicate that there is a statistically significant negative correlation between Job Experience (Job Exp) and Work-Family Conflict (WFC), with a correlation coefficient of $r = -0.14^*$ at the $p < .05$ level. This finding implies that as job experience increases, there is a slight decrease in work-family conflict. In more straightforward terms, individuals with more job experience appear to have a somewhat easier time balancing their work and family responsibilities in comparison to those with less experience.

Discussion

Despite the comforts brought about by the 21st century, it has also given rise to various challenges due to the diffusion of gender-specific roles. Modern women entering the workforce face tremendous pressure as they are not exempted from household responsibilities despite the added workload. Delina and Raya (2013) have highlighted the challenges faced by working women in balancing work and family life. The objective of the current study was to explore variables that may play a role in the job satisfaction of working women. WFC, EI, age, and work experience were identified as potential factors influencing JS.

To begin with, descriptive statistics of the scales were calculated to assess their suitability for parametric tests. Table 1 displays that all the scales were normally distributed with high alpha coefficients, making them suitable for analysis. The first research hypothesis focused on the negative impact of WFC on JS. As work-family conflict comprised two subscales, namely work interference with family (WIF) and family interference with work (FIW), multiple regression analysis showed a significant impact of WIF on JS, but not on FIW. This finding can be explained by referring to the Boundary theory (as cited in Lineley, Harrington, & Garcea, 2010), which suggests that people adjust the boundaries between work and private life. It is more challenging for an individual to carry a family role into a work setting compared to carrying a work role at home. An ineffective boundary between these roles may lead to job dissatisfaction. Additionally, Segmentation theory, which refers to boundary management style (Kossek & Lawtsch, 2012), proposes that family and work are independent domains that can be separated in terms of location, time, behavior, attitudes, and emotions. On the other hand, Compensation theory hypothesizes an opposite association between work and family, where work and non-work practices tend to be conflicting. People may compensate for deficiencies in one domain with increased investment in the other, such as spending more time at work to compensate for dissatisfaction in personal life (Xu, 2009). This could potentially result in individuals taking incomplete work tasks home, creating a negative impact of WIF on JS, as they perceive their jobs as responsible for family conflicts. In a recent study by Valor-Segura, Navarro-Carrillo, Extremera, Lozano, García-Guiu, Roldán-Bravo, and Ruiz-Moreno (2020) on Spanish military cadets, job satisfaction was found to be increased through effective teamwork communication via emotional intelligence.

To explain our findings, we can also take help from *Role enhancement theory* (Marks & MacDermid, 1996) which states that people use positive or negative role balance to carry on different roles. Positive role balance manifests the tendency to engage in different roles with equally high valor, devotion, and caution. As compared to negative role balance which is engaging in roles with the least energy, mistrust, and lack of concentration. The positive role balance helps in role enhancement and the negative role balance gives rise to role conflict. As in our study, the sample consisted of female teachers, they need to take work home, consequently, they might not be able to focus on their at-home tasks and relations effectively which gives rise to job dissatisfaction. Spillover theory also assumes that a person's experiences in one aspect of life are influenced by experiences in the other domain (Hart, 1999), A worker in a bad state of mind during the office may carry the same mood at home, so the workplace experience is spilled over to the person's life at home.

The literature review provides support for the negative impact of WFC on JS. For instance, Terry and Woo (2021) concluded that WFC and work interfering with one's time negatively related to JS whereas, positively related to perceived stress and burnout. Similarly, Vickovic and Morrow (2020) found that strain-based conflict significantly predicted job stress and JS, while time-based conflict only predicted JS. However, neither measure of WFC showed a significant relationship with organizational commitment. In another study by Hong, Liu, and Zhang (2021) on female preschool teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic, it was found that the teachers reported increased work overload and parenting stress. Work overload was negatively associated with job satisfaction through its positive link with work-to-family conflict. Similarly, parenting stress negatively impacted JS through both family-to-work conflict and work-to-family conflict. These findings collectively highlight the adverse effects of WFC on JS and underscore the importance of addressing and managing WFC to promote overall JS and well-being among employees.

The second research hypothesis stated a positive correlation between EI, age, and JS. Table 3 shows the inter-scale coefficient of correlation among age, EI, and JS. There is a significant positive correlation between JS and EI ($r = 0.360$), age, and JS ($r = 0.192$) but no significant relationship between Age and EI ($r = -0.086$). The results confirmed the hypothesis as there was a significant positive correlation between EI and job satisfaction (.39) at the .01 level and .19 ($p < .05$) between age and JS. Agu (as cited in Odia, & Dania, 2016) has also studied the impact of gender and emotional intelligence on job satisfaction. To explain the above findings the work of Davies and his colleagues (1998) can be referred to which proposed 4 dimensions of EI. The dimensions of *Appraisal and expression of emotion* in oneself helps people to sense their emotion better than others. Likewise, the dimension of *Appraisal and recognition* sensitizes people towards others' emotions and predicts how others will emotionally react. The third dimension of *Regulation of emotion* helps people in controlling or adjusting their emotions, thus making a quick recovery possible from psychological setbacks. The last dimension *Use of emotion* facilitates performance (Law, Wong, & Song, 2004) by channeling one's emotions in the direction of productive work and personal achievements (Law, Wong, & Song, 2004). Accordingly, one major reason for getting dissatisfied with one's job is negative emotions, so proper channelization of emotions can bring a positive change in JS. Understanding and valuing the emotions of an employee or colleague as well as properly giving an outlet to one's emotions can keep a person from negative encounters on the job and hence increase JS

Numerous studies have revealed the same findings, like Gopinath, and Chitra (2020) found a significant positive association between EI on JS. Urquijo, Extremera, and Azanza, (2019) investigated the contribution of emotional intelligence to career success and found that emotional intelligence was a strong predictor of emotional intelligence even when personality traits and proactive personality were controlled. Likewise, Prentice (2019) examined the impact of emotional intelligence on job satisfaction, turnover intention, and customer response. The results revealed that emotional intelligence significantly impacted JS and turnover intention, and that job satisfaction fully mediates the link between EI and turnover intention.

In our data, age was found to have a significant positive correlation with JS. This could be attributed to various factors. One possible reason is the increase in the trait of gratefulness, which leads individuals to be content with what they have and learn appropriate ways of fulfilling job demands. Another reason may be that as individuals grow older, their children also grow, which could result in reduced parental responsibilities, allowing them to focus more on their work and leading to increased JS. However, studies in this area have produced mixed findings. For instance, Matagi, Baguma, and Baluku (2022) found non-significant relationships between age and JS, while Topino, Fabio, Palazzeschi, and Gori found no age-moderated interaction between the other Big Five personality traits and job satisfaction. On the other hand,

Carrillo-García (2013) reported the highest satisfaction levels among professionals over 61 years of age than middle-aged professionals, whereas, professionals between 41 to 50 years of age showed the highest dissatisfaction. These varied results highlight the complexity of the relationship between age and JS and indicate the need for further research to fully understand this relationship.

Contrary to the study cited above, our findings showed a positive correlation between age and job satisfaction. One possible explanation for this phenomenon is that older employees may experience higher job satisfaction because of the perks and privileges associated with long careers, such as raises in salaries, more facilities, and promotions. On the other hand, younger employees may experience higher job dissatisfaction due to unrealistic expectations from the job, a need for a more involving work environment, or quick action-oriented work settings. They feel dissatisfied when they find that most companies do not welcome change. As well as, young employees might get frustrated with mediocre co-workers (Burks, 2023).

The third research assumption proposed a negative correlation between work experience and work-family conflict. Table 4 shows a correlation between WFC with Job Experience, which is a significant negative correlation between Job Experience and WFC ($r = -0.14$) hence proving our results. Our result is consistent with the previous findings. For instance, Shockley, Shen, and DeNunzio (2017) discovered in their study a negative correlation between work experience and work-family conflict among male employees. However, when it came to female employees, the relationship was not significant, suggesting that other factors might have a more substantial influence on work-family conflict for women. Tharindu and Pooja (2021) concluded that work experience influences work performance, while job characteristics do not have any impact on work performance. Based on these findings, it can be inferred that work experience positively affects work performance, as with time, individuals learn to better manage the balance between work and family, leading to a decrease in family interference with work.

Conclusion

The research findings of the current study can be attributed to the fulfillment theory of job satisfaction, which suggests that employees will be satisfied if their demands, including personal needs such as friendship, love, and free time, are adequately met in addition to work-related factors (Mucahit, 2011). Emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in reducing unnecessary complaints and fostering better relationships, thereby enhancing job satisfaction. Moreover, as individuals grow older and gain more work experience, their job satisfaction may also increase, while work-family conflict is likely to decrease.

Limitations and Suggestions

The present study's scope is limited to female teachers, which restricts the generalizability of its findings to males. Since the sample is exclusively from the teaching profession, the opportunity to compare findings across different professions is not available. For future researchers, it is recommended to adopt a more diverse approach when selecting the sample. Including both genders would provide a broader understanding of the relationship between work-family conflict (WFC) and job satisfaction (JS) across various groups. Additionally, considering individuals from different professions and varying demographics, such as marital status and position in an organization, would allow for a comprehensive exploration of the factors that may influence WFC and JS. By expanding the sample to include a more diverse range of participants, future studies can enhance the generalizability of their findings and gain valuable insights into how WFC and JS may vary across different groups, leading to more comprehensive and applicable conclusions.

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