The Relationship between Work-Life Conflict and Employee Performance: A Study of National Database and Registration Authority Workers in Pakistan

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Most professionals face work-life conflicts as they move through their profession's hierarch and progressively advanced stages. This study explores the impact of work-life conflicts on employee performance. A sample of 130 respondents was selected from the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA). There appears to be a positive and significant relationship between work-life conflicts and performance of employees. Statistical analysis was used to see the impact of gender and marital status on the work-life conflicts and performance of employees. The results indicate that gender had no significant effect on performance and work-life conflicts whereas marital status of the respondents' had a significant impact on the work-life conflicts.

Keywords: Work-life conflicts, work-life balance, employee performance, functional conflict, dysfunctional conflict.

Introduction

Conflict is a reality of life in today's competitive workplace. Mujtaba and McCartney (2010) claim that conflict in the workplace can be functional (forces creativity or positive output) or dysfunctional (negative and stressful). An optimum level of conflict, or functional conflict, can be healthy in the organization as it encourages everyone to search for better ways to do their

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jobs and it eliminates groupthink. Dysfunctional conflicts can cause much undue stress and headache for employees in the organization (Mujtaba, 2008). Since many families now have both spouses working, having a balance between their personal and professional lives become very important. Unfortunately, many modern organizations are putting too much pressure on their employees to be competitive at any cost. Pakistani organizations are becoming globallycompetitive and employees are seeing an increased level of stress and conflict between their personal and professional roles just like any other person around the globe. If an organization hastoo much negative work-life conflicts between employees and management, it is very dangerous for its long-term performance (Beauregard & Henry, 2009). Prolonged association with conflict and stress can have a negative impact onthe workers and their organizational performance (Giga and Hoel, 2003). Work-life conflict is one type of stress facing employees in the modern workplace (Mujtaba, 2008). If work-life conflicts decrease then it can help to increase the overall productivity and performance of the organization (Naithani, 2010). Work-life conflicts have significant negative impact on the workers' health, psychological and physical needs, and job productivity (Felstead, Jewson, Phizackleaand Walters 2002). When the worker's needs and desires are not fulfilled withinthe organization, then work-life conflicts tend to begin and this is dangerous for both workers and the company (Higgins, Duxburyand Lyons, 2007). The productivity/ performance of the organization is related with the individual's satisfaction and satisfaction come when excessive work-life conflicts do not exist and this reduces stress in the department (Sikander, Mujtaba and Afza, 2012).

According to Babin and Boles (1998), the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) is working as National Database Organization (NDO) and has been governed by the Interior Ministry of Pakistan since 1998. After 10 March, 2000, it became an independent institution and providesenhanced facilities and resources to the public. NADRA has more than 11,000 technical and management personnel, who registered 96 million citizens and issued 95 million Computerized National Identity Cards (NADRA, 2010). With the mandate of developing a system for re-registering 150 million citizens, NADRA launched the Multi-Biometric National Identity Card project developed in conformance with international security documentation issuance practices in the year 2000. For the achievement of this huge registration, NADRA developed 365 Multi-biometric registration centers with 189 mobile centers for remote areas. During this short span of time, NADRA

has gained significant international recognition. ID World ranked NADRA as one of the Globe's top 50 suppliers of e-passport technology. This system replaces the paper based system that had been used since 1971 in Pakistan.

Understanding the effect of work-life conflict on performance is crucial to enhance employee performance and to ultimately achieve organizational success. Stress for Pakistani employees is as much of an issue as it is for others in the western world (Afza, Mujtaba and Habib, 2011). Many researchers have worked on the work-life conflicts such as Hill, Hawkins, Ferris, and Weitzman (2001); Wayne andCordeiro(2003); BattandValcour(2003); Eaton (2003); Baines andGelder(2003); KonradandMangel(2000); and Perry-Smith and Blum (2000). Researchers studying performance are Bashir andRamay(2010); Anderson (2003); Rose (2003); and Beehr, Jex, Stacy and Murray (2000). Despite these studies, there is a need to explore these topics with workers in a developing country like Pakistan. So, we initiatedthis study on getting more information about the relationship between work-life conflict and employees' performance with workers at NADRA, Pakistan.

Work conflicts

Work conflict is a form of inter-related conflict in expectation between both work and family life roles (Higgins, Duxbury and Lyons, 2007). It is obvious that every organization wants to enhance the capability/ productivity of output (goods/services), consequently high level performance from each employee is very important for an organization. On the contrary, studies suggest that work-life conflicts create stress on the employee and cause low performance for the organization. It is important for an organization to gain an optimal level of performance from an employee but work-life conflicts put limitations on such achievements. There tends to be a reverse relationship between employee performance and work-life conflict. Some authors conclude that males adversely respond to these conflicts as compared to female employees (Kazmi, Amjad, & Khan, 2007); perhaps this is due to the fact that males have been in the workplace much longer than women. Furthermore, males have been brought up with a culture of conflict with their peers during their socialization years as young children, whereas young girls are usually encouraged to get along and work with others as effective team members.

When employees fail to fulfill their family requirements from a job,

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work-life conflicts begin to exist (Netemeyer, Brashear-Alejandro, & Boles 2004); however, two factors especially help to accelerate work-life conflicts. First, strain-based and second, time-based conflicts. Time-based conflict occurs when an individual dedicates most of the time to work and fails to encounter the family obligations. Strain-based conflict occurs when immense workload effects one mentally or puts pressure corporeally (Quick et al., 2004). The relationship between turnover intention and work-life conflict is positive. When the employee intends to leave the organization it is evident that he/she is not satisfied and does not want to remain with the company. There are distinctive methods of actions and policies to reduce these conflicts (Higgins, Duxbury, & Lyons, 2007).

Work-life balance (WLB) is the opposite term to work-life conflicts (WLC). Work-life balance is the equilibrium state in which a person's professional and family life is equally balanced (Lockwood, 2003). Balance in work-life and family life enhances the performance of an employee and productivity is positively correlated with performance and increases satisfaction levels. High performance often reflects employee commitment to the organization. This commitment and loyalty toward the organization is increased by the favorable polices adopted by the firm. These policies not only accelerate performance but they also decrease the turnover intention of an employee (Eaton, 2001). Turnover of employees do not only reflect low commitment toward the organization but it also addsan indirect cost of losing a trained employee at a risk of appointing an incumbent who may or may not be suitable for the job (Korabik at el. 2008).

Various factors are responsible for this increase of stress and conflictssuch as changes in people's social attitude, equal employment opportunity initiatives, and increased levels of education and knowledge among women and other minority groups which increase diversity in the workplace are some elements which can increase interpersonal disagreements. Researchers investigate work-life conflict on the basis of gender but the results are mixed. Results show that workplace conflictsimpact males and females with equal levels of intensity and in similar manners (Mujtaba and McCartney, 2010). Work-life conflicts of an individual are generally linked with the productivity and performance of the organization (Dorio, Bryant & Allen, 2008). According to some researchers, males perform better than females in managing their conflicts in a productive manner (Nkereuwem, 1996). However, other researchers have found that conflicts have no effect on

work-life of an employee on the basis of gender (Lyness&Kropf 2005; Biggs &Brough, 2005).

Based on the literature following hypotheses were developed.

H1: *Work-life conflicts (WLC) and employees' performance are inversely correlated (having negative relations).*

H2:*Work-life conflicts (WLC)and employee performance are directly correlated (having positive relations).*

H3: *Work-life conflicts impactmales and females differently.*

H4: *Married and un-married employees deal with conflicts differently.*

Methodology

Employees that are working at different positions in NADRA are our sample population for this study. The questionnaire was checked for reliability through Cronbach's Alpha and was found to be reliable. Pearson's correlation was used to find out the relationship between work-life conflicts and employee's performance. Unrestricted random sampling technique was used to collect data from the respondents. A total of 130 questionnaires were distributed among employees of NADRA in District Okara and RenalaKhurd and Pattokifor gathering information about the relationship of work-life conflict and employee's performance. Despite their heavy workload, the sample population has given us a healthy responserate and returned 100 completely filled questionnaires. The actual response rate was 77%.

The questionnaire is commonly used as a measure for data collection on relationship of work-life conflict (Independent) and employee performance (dependent). This study, questions are asked about work-life conflict (5 items). Performance (10 items) regarding their job is scaled on Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". Strongly disagree was assigned with 1 and strongly agree was assigned 5 for coding. SPSS was used to analyze the results of the respondents.

Findings and discussion

The results are generated by using descriptive and inferential statistics. Table 1 shows reliability of the instrument checked by using

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Cronbach's Alpha and it was found to be 0.702 which is considered to be reliable.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
.702	15

Table 2 shows the frequencies of Gender, Age, Incomelevel,and Marital Status of the respondents. In the case of Gender, 62% of the respondents are Male whereas 38% of the respondents are female. Furthermore, 6% of the respondents are below 18 years of age, 66% of the respondents are 18-25 years and remaining 7% of the respondents'age is above 35 years. In the case of income, 13% of the respondents' salary is below 15,000, 52% of the respondents' incomeis 15,000-25,000 and the remaining 35% of the respondents' incomeis above 25,000 rupees.Data shows that26% of the respondents are married and the remaining 74% of therespondents are single.

Table 2: Demographics

Variables		Frequencies	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender	Males	62	62.0	62.0	62.0
	Females	38	38.0	38.0	100.0
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Age	Below 18	6	6.0	6.0	6.0
	18-25	66	66.0	66.0	72.0
	25-35	21	21.0	21.0	93.0
	Above 35	7	7.0	7.0	100.0
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Income	Below 15,000	13	13.0	13.0	13.0
	15,000-25,000	52	52.0	52.0	65.0
	Above 25,000	35	35.0	35.0	100.0
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	

Marital Status	Married	26	26.0	26.0	26.0
	Single	74	74.0	74.0	100.0
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 shows the correlation relationship between the work-life conflicts and employee performance. There is a positive correlation between work-life conflict and employee performance and its value is 0.283. The P-value is 0.004 which is less than 0.05. So there is significant correlation. According to Interactionist View, conflictis a positive force and it is a necessity to perform effectively. Functional view about conflicts is that conflict supports the goal and increases performance. Interactionist researchers consider that conflicts create the motivation force to an employee's performance. In other words, conflict is a driving force for the employee. The employees of NADRA consider conflict as a part of life and considered it a positive thing for output (Robbins, 2007).

Table 3: Correlations

		Work-life conflict
Employee's Performance	Pearson Correlation	.283
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.004
	N	100

Table 4 shows the existence of an insignificant relationship between gender and work-life conflict. The significance level for work-life conflicts is 0.115 which is greater than 0.05. Employee performance on the basis of gender is 0.141 which is not significant.

Table 4: Independent T-Test

Gender		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T- Value	Significance Level
Work-life conflict	Male	62	17.2903	4.26341	.54145	-1.589	0.115
	Female	38	18.6053	3.57574	.58006		
Performance	Male	62	33.1774	4.51418	.57330	-1.484	0.141
	Female	38	34.5789	4.69981	.76241		

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Table 5 shows the relationship between married and single employees. Work-life conflicts and marital status relationship is significant because the value is 0.019. Work-life conflict and employee performance is insignificant.

Table 5: Independent T-Test

	Marital Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T-value	Significance Level
Work-life conflict	Married	26	19.3846	3.57857	.70182	2.390	0.019
	Un-married	74	17.2297	4.07649	.47388		
Performance	Married	26	33.0000	4.05956	.79614	-.912	0.364
	Un-married	74	33.9595	4.79280	.55715		

Summary

On the basis of the responses gathered, we reach a conclusion that work-life conflicts and employee performance have a positive relationship unlike some previous studies conducted in this field. In some modern theories, conflicts are seen as a positive force which enhances the performance of employees. Interactionist and functional views endorse the results of our study. According to the results of our research, gender had no significant effect on both performance and work-life conflicts whereas marital status of the respondents' did have an impact on the work-life conflicts. It is notable here that conflicts that are typical with gender do not have much impact on the performance of employees. Analysis of responses shows that employee performance does not vary on the basis of marital status.

Results of our research suggest that conflicts have a positive impact on employee performance at NADRA. Work-life conflicts should remain at a functional level and should not exceed a particular threshold level otherwise these conflicts might have a negative impact on employee performance. Manager should attempt to provide a healthy balance between their employees' professional roles and personal roles in the family and community. When it comes to conflicts and productively settling differences in the department, managers should also have specific rules for conflict management in order to provide clarity, consistency and continuity of discussing one's ideas without

feeling fearful from the reactions of one's colleagues or superiors. Researcher should continue to replicate this study with larger populations and new samples throughout the country in Pakistan and compare the results with similar professionals in other economies.

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