

Exploring the Challenges of Work-Family Balance among Qatari Families: Experiences and Implications

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Layout of Presentation

- Purpose
- Research design and methodology
- Findings
- Policy Implications

Purpose of the paper

To explore the experiences of Qatari working participants and the challenges they face in balancing between work and family.



Why Work-Family Balance

- To know the extent to which individuals are equally engaged in and equally satisfied with work and family role .
- The satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with minimum of role conflict
- Work intensity increased due to combination of new information technologies and pace of communication and production methods, work load and worries about security can lead to stress ad health problems with emotional still on the home (O; Brien 2012, Byron 2005)

Research Design

Qualitative Description design (Sandelowski, 2000) and Creswell 2003:

- The focus is on describing a social phenomenon
- Relies mainly on participants
- Views of the situation being studied and draws attention to its complexity

Theoretical Framework

Spillover theory (Walia 2012) workers carry the emotions, attitudes, skills and behavior at work into their family life and vice versa.

Work family conflict theory Greenhaus and Beutell (1985). Three major sources of work family conflict : time based conflict, strain based conflict and behavior based conflict

Participants

- Interviews conducted with 20 participants (10 males and 10 females) in April-May 2017.
- Age range 25-55 years old.
- All married.
- All working full time.
- All Qatari nationals.
- All from the public sector.

Sample of Findings

Work-Family Balance to the Participants

- Balance between work and family is impossible
- Some jobs hard to balance such as police officers, doctors, nurses and security jobs.
- Work meant duties and responsibilities that one has to perform and get paid for.
- Family for the participants is more important than work.
- Females have more responsibilities to do at home than at work.
- Balance means “ you stay balanced without compromising or failing, compromising one over the other would have a negative effect. It will conflict with work and will have an impact on the family as one will feel stressed, tension and exhaustion”

Impact of Work-Family

Time management

One male participant said: "I work and study at the same time. I work in the morning full time and study for my master degree in the evening. It is very hard for me to see my family as I return home very tired and my children will be sleeping. This was a critical time for me and I could not balance my family life and work. I had to hire a driver for the children, as my wife is also working and difficult to do all things. This was very tiring for me and I feel bad that I am not staying much with my children. I try to compensate this on Fridays and Saturdays."



Impact of Work-Family

Stress

One participant explained that he gets nervous with his family when there is pressure at work as he cannot fulfill all duties and was feeling very bad about his behavior.



Impact of Work-Family

Health issues:

- Some participants emphasized that when there is too much work it impacted their health as some complained of diabetes and high blood pressure.
- Impact on the long run and efficiency at work
- Relationship with family members.
- For example, some said that their health is deteriorating because there is too much work and the working hours are too long for them, when they reach home they feel tired and exhausted wanting to sleep and they have no time to spend with their children.



Impact of Work-Family

Gender roles:

- Females said that they have more responsibilities to do at home than at work.
- Particularly when females have young children, the balance was a problem.
- Children at young age demand more care and support.

One female said "I had to take leave for a month to stay with my disabled child because I had to travel with him. It was hard time for me to balance between my disabled child, husband and his siblings and my work"



Ways to Balance between Work-Family

- Time management
- Assistance from relatives and family members
- Assistance from housemaids
- Vacations/holidays

Challenges of Work-Family Conflict

Challenge at the family level:

- Long working hours and demand at work has an impact on the health
- Becoming more impatient
- Can become depressed
- Parent can feel less competent
- Parents can suffer from reduction in paternal, marital and life satisfaction
- Experience of anxiety

At the work level:

- Job dissatisfaction
- Frustration
- Exhaustion
- Fatigue and low motivation
- Professional burnout

Policy Recommendations

- Flexible working arrangements
- Paid leave for family caregiving
- Extending paid maternity leave
- Paid paternity leave
- Child care facilities at work place
- Flexible arrangement for breastfeeding



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Thank you