Effect of work-family conflict management model in life satisfaction of male employees

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Abstract

Today, work-family issues have gained special importance to employees, families, and organizations. Work–family conflict is an inter–role conflict in which work and family demands are mutually incompatible and creates stress and numerous problems. So, the aim of this study was to examine the effect of work–family conflict management model in life satisfaction of male employees. The statistical population included all male employees of the bank in Tehran. In this study 30 male employees were selected and randomly divided into the experimental group (n=15) and control group (n=15). The experimental group underwent six–sessions of work–family conflict management program and the control group did not receive any intervention. It is noteworthy that after two months from pretest applying, participants from both groups underwent the pretest. The results showed a significance difference in life satisfaction between the experimental and control groups after the intervention. So, the results of this study could be explained by the fact that work-life conflict management practices are skills that are designed to reduce work-life conflict and enable employees to be more effective in their roles of work and life. Also, program practices enhance employees' autonomy and increase their capacity to perform well in work–family situation.

Keywords: Conflict, Family, Life, Satisfaction, Work

Introduction

Nowadays, to maintain high performance, people are more burdened to keep balance between personal and professional lives [1]. Work–family conflicts are on the rise in today's world and are not restricted to one organization [2]. Work and family are two of the most important life domains for adults [3,4]. Although early researchers might have assumed that the worlds of work and home are separate [5,6], countless empirical studies and several review articles examining the work-home interface have documented that the two domains influence on, and are influenced by, each other [7-11]. In the contemporary world, work-family issues have gained special importance to

employees, families, and organizations; as little time for family responsibilities and obligations raises stress on the home-work interface [12]. These changes in societies around the globe have led to an increase in the perception of work-family conflict [13]. The most studied construct in work-family literature, arises when an individual is faced conflicts and simultaneous demands that stem from either his work or family role [9,14]. Many prominent researchers have linked work–family conflict with numerous problems: domestic violence [15], poor physical activity [16], poor eating habits [17], poor emotional health [18], excessive drinking [16], substance abuse [19], decreased marital satisfaction [20], decreased emotional wellbeing [21], and neuroticism [22]. As mentioned earlier, work–family conflict, as an inter–role conflict in which work and family demands are mutually incompatible [13], can create stress, which is basically a form of unpleasant emotion [23]. The stress has a potential to decrease employee's level of life satisfaction. Perrone and Civiletto defined life satisfaction as "a global feeling of contentment, fulfillment, or happiness with life in general" [24]. There is a wide variety of work–family studies suggesting that in the presence of work-life conflict, employees' life dissatisfaction increases [25,26]. Organizations should introduce work–life conflict management policies that help employees balance their work and private lives [27]; because, work–life conflict management policies help in reducing stress [14], and also, there is a strong relationship between work-life balance policies and employee's satisfaction [26]. In this line, work–life balance policies and family supportive cultures have been observed in France and Japan [28,29]. There is a wide variety of work-life balance initiatives for employees being incorporated by organizations, including flexible work hours, job sharing, parental leave, on-site child care facility, and telecommuting [30]. Studies suggest that in the absence of work-life balance, employees' dissatisfaction increases. In this context, a study was conducted by Maren,

Pitarelli, & Cangiano to analyze work–life balance and life–job satisfaction among teachers exposed to a negative relationship between work-life conflicts and job–life satisfaction [31]. The study suggested that if organizations offer facilities to reduce work-life conflicts, it will lead to the improvement of employees' job and life satisfaction [31]. Also, many researches in Iran have linked work–family conflict management with numerous important issues in work and life domains: high marital satisfaction [32], mental health [33], quality of work life [34], and marital happiness [35]. So, based on these studies, when employees are satisfied with their life and job, they become loyal and committed to the organization [36]. In summary, despite strong research literature regarding antecedent and consequences of work–life conflict, this phenomenon in the field of interference and management suffers serious shortcomings and the findings cannot guide professionals and researchers in this area. On the other hand, in Tehran, the banking sector has evolved drastically; commercial banks are very competitive that has resulted in coming up with measures geared towards attracting new customers and retaining the existing ones in order to have a larger market share. Banks in Iran are now bringing in more profits by being customer focused. In order to attain this goal the banks have increased their opening hours, introduced more products, opened up more branches, and have adopted the latest IT infrastructures. This has led to their employees working longer hours, having a greater and more complex workload, being moved from one branch to another and therefore, experiencing a lot of work pressure and creating a culture of poor work life balance. The final consequence is employees becoming highly dissatisfied with their lives. Banks are now experiencing high labor turnover and absentees and at the same time they are incurring huge losses due to employee's negligence. Thus, regarding the stated issues, the aim of this research was to investigate the effect of work–family conflict

management model in life satisfaction among bank male employees.

Method

This quasi–experimental study was administered by pretest-posttest design with a control group. The study population included all male employees of the Bank in Tehran. Due to organizational constraints for selecting participants, in coordination with the Department of Education, announcement to participate in the training program was offered via intranet. After the call for 10 days on the basis of the inclusion criteria for the study, which included having at least a bachelor's degree, aged between 25 to 45, being married (for at least 2 years), work experience more than 5 years, and having children, a sample of 30 employees declared their readiness to participate in the study. Due to the limited number of volunteers, all of them were selected as the sample group. According to Gal & Burg, the appropriate sample size for each experimental group is at least 15 [37]. So, according to the research design, the applicants randomly were divided into the experimental group (n=15) and control group (n=15). It should be noted that the criteria for exclusion from the study included lack of commitment to the group's rules and the use of any other

psychological services and counseling. After selection and randomly assigning the participants to the experimental and control groups, the experimental group underwent work–life conflict management program while the control group did not receive any treatment program. At the end of applying the interference on the experimental group, employees from both groups underwent the post-test in the variables of life satisfaction.

In order to measure life satisfaction among employees the below scale was used:

Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS): it was developed by Diener in 1985 to be a multi-item measure of "life satisfaction as a cognitive-judgmental process". This scale consists of a five–item global assessment of life satisfaction [38].The SWLS focuses on subjective well–being (SWB). According to Pavot and Diener, the SWLS allows respondents to evaluate their overall satisfaction based on the measures that they deem to be of value, as opposed to the measures that the researcher deems of value [39]. The SWLS consists of five statements and responses are given on a seven–point Liker scale with "1" indicating "strongly disagree" and "7" indicating "strongly agree". The SWLS results are reported as an overall score as shown in the following (Table 1):

Table 1 *Overall scores of Satisfaction with life scale*

Highly Satisfied	30-35
Satisfied	25-29
Average score	20-24
Below Average	15-19
Dissatisfied	10-14
Extremely Dissatisfied	5-9

Diener, Emmons, Laresen, and Griffin compared the SWLS to other instruments to determine evidence of validity [38]. Specifically, they used two samples (Sample 1, n = 176; Sample 2, n= 167) and administered 13 external measures in addition to the SWLS. Outcomes indicated moderately strong correlations between the SWLS and the other instruments (excluding Affect Intensity Measure), with outcomes ranging from 0.50 to 0.75 for the various measures and samples [38]. In the present study, the Persian

translation of the SWLS has demonstrated good internal consistency, high test–retest reliability. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient has been reported as 0.86. Work–family conflict management model included six 90–min sessions–which applied on the experimental group. The educational content given in Table 2.

It is noteworthy that after two months from pre-test applying, participants from both experimental and control groups underwent the pretest in the variable of life satisfaction.

The obtained scores of the pretest and posttest were analyzed by using SPSS-18 software. In order to analyze the collected data, the researcher mainly used descriptive statistics (including: mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (including: analysis of covariance for dependent variable of: life satisfaction at the significance level of $p<0.01$). But, at first major assumptions that underlie the use of ANCOVA were examined. These assumptions include:

Linear relationship between the dependent variable and the covariate, homogeneity of regression coefficients, independence of dependent variable's scores, homogeneity of variance, and normal distribution of dependent variable in the population (normality). The examination of ANCOVA underlying assumption indicated that due to the establishment of these assumptions, using this statistical method is permitted.

Table 2 *The educational content of work–family conflict management model*

Session 1	The first session focused on eliciting the issues and concerns of each employee and learning needs. The goal was to create a relaxing atmosphere that will foster therapeutic group factors of cohesiveness and universality. Self-awareness techniques were described and discussed.
Session 2	The second session introduced the concept of equity in dual-career relationships, and equity is distinguished from equality. Problem-solving skills oriented toward equitable alternatives to the demands facing employees were described and discussed. Problem- solving skills were described and discussed.
Session 3	The third session centered in children. Usually in this session skills were taught for implementing weekly family meetings in which equitable rules and decisions are arrived at by a process of consensus. This forum provided an opportunity for families to change and grow as the needs of the family group and individuals change.
Session 4	The fourth session focused on time issues. Time-management concepts and skills were presented, including "time borrowing" whereby someone outside the family is hired to perform time-consuming tasks. Empathy training exercises in dyads and triads also occurred in this session.
Session 5	The fifth session focused on styles and methods of conflict resolution. Role playing with prompt cards was also used to address typical conflict issues. Also, contracting helped employees overcome resentments caused by unmet needs.
Session 6	The final step of the protocol was stress management. Even though realistic goals; priorities; and effective time management, communication, and conflict-resolution skills can greatly reduce stressors for the employees, additional stress reduction skills are needed.

Results

The demographic characteristics of participants, showed that the age of employees was averagely 34.88 (SD=6.91) which varied in the range of 26-41 years mean work experience was 9.05 years (SD=3.1); and the mean marriage duration was 9.14 years (SD=4.22).

Table 3 shows the mean and standard deviation of scores of life satisfaction in the experimental and control groups in the stages of pretest and posttest.

Table 3 *Mean and standard deviation (SD) of SWLS scores of experimental and control groups in pretest and posttest*

	Pretest			Posttest			p-value
Group	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	
Experimental	15	14.91	4.17	15	23.67	4.93	0.001
Control	15	15.47	4.71	15	15.20	4.40	

Table 4 shows the analysis of covariance on the posttest scores with controlling the pretest scores of dependent variable. However, the major assumptions that underlie the use of ANCOVA were initially examined. These assumptions include: linear relationship between dependent variable and covariate, homogeneity of regression coefficients, independence of dependent variable's scores, homogeneity of variance, and normal distribution of dependent variable in the study population (normality). The examination of ANCOVA underlying the assumptions indicated that due to the establishment of these assumptions, using this statistical method is permitted. The results of analysis of covariance are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 *Summary of covariance analysis (ANCOVA) on the total score of satisfaction with life scale (SWLS)*

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig.	Effect size
Pretest	124.68	1	124.68	7.90	0.007	0.20
Group	784.2	1	784.2	47.44	0.0001	0.87
Error	426.8	27	15.77			
Total	184.8	30				

As shown in Table 3 and 4, it is revealed that work–life conflict management model caused positive changes in the experimental group. A comparison between the groups indicates that the scores of experimental group in the post–test increased compared to the scores of control group. The obtained results support the effect of work-life conflict management model in increasing the individuals' level of life satisfaction. Moreover, the results of covariance analysis in Table 4 revealed that work–life conflict management model has a positive effect on promoting life satisfaction (F=47.44, p<0.01).

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of work–family conflict management model in life satisfaction among employees of the bank in Tehran. The research findings showed that work–life conflict management has a positive impact on employees' life satisfaction. This finding is consistent with the results of researches by Yasbek [14]; Mauno & nnunen [20]; Perrone & Civiletto [24]; Auko [25]; Kossek & Ozeki [26]; Sakthivel, Kamal & Selvarania [30]; Maren, Pitarelli & Cangiano [31]; Malekiha [32]; Sheikhshabani & Arshadi [33]; Saadi & Bavi [35]. The results of this study could be explained by the fact that work-life conflict management practices are skills that are designed to reduce work-life conflict and enable employees to be more effective in their roles of work and life. Changing demographics are behind the move to embrace work–life programs. The decline of traditional family relations, increase of dual-career couples, and a rise in the number of single parents mean that employees are juggling more responsibilities outside work [29].

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize that everyone benefits from good practice in work-life conflict management practices. For instance, business, through easier recruitment, improved retention, and easier service delivery; the economy, as the labor market, by growing more skilled and experienced people available to work; parents and careers, by spending quality time at home as well as providing financial support through work; people with disabilities, through improved access to work; and the workforce generally through better ability to balance their work with other aspects of their lives. The more control employees feel they have over their lives, the more able they are to balance work and family. An overall conclusion of much of the research is that work-life conflict management practice is more effective when they enhance employees' autonomy and increase their capacity to perform well in work–family situation. In summary, a successful convergence between work and life aspects can get a win–win situation for employees and employers alike. The ability to achieve satisfying experiences in all life domains enhances the quality of personal relationships and a range of organizational outcomes. Availability and use of work-life conflict management practices, when provided in the context of supervisor and organizational support, can reduce work–life conflict and increase positive appraisals of life satisfaction. These effects are often associated with improving employees' attitude such as increased job satisfaction and enhanced control over their work schedule.

Conclusion

The results showed that the intervention caused a significant difference in life satisfaction between the experimental and control groups. The acquired results revealed that work–life conflict management model was effective in increasing life satisfaction. However, the current study faced some limitations that

should be pointed out. The present research was implemented on male employees; therefore; the results are not generalizable to female employees. Also, the present study relied on a self–reporting measure. There are inherent limitations regarding the use of self– reporting tools. Social desirability can influence an individual's self-report of such variables as life satisfaction and, thus, may affect the accuracy of life satisfaction ratings. Finally, another limitation of this study was the sample size and sampling method which limits the generalization of the results.

Contribution
Study design: SZ, ME, HSB, KF
Data collection and analysis: SZ, ME
Manuscript preparation: SZ

Conflict of Interest
"The authors declare that they have no competing interests".

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