

Social Support and work-family conflict: Could the supportive Indian family be a myth?

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CWIL Colloquium
Saint Mary's College
3 May 2006

Structure of the presentation

- An introduction to work-family conflict
- Social and Institutional context in India
- Focus group discussion results
- Survey results
- Conclusions

Literature review on Work-Family Conflict (WFC)

- “Work-family conflict is a form of inter-role conflict that arises when role pressures from the work and family domains become mutually incompatible in some respect.” (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985, p.7)
- Four broad themes in work-family conflict literature:
 - #1: Nature and types of WFC
 - #2: Directionality of WFC
 - #3: Antecedents and outcomes of WFC
 - #4: Gender differences in WFC

Social and Institutional context

- Indian society is characterized by
 - High in-group collectivism
 - High patriarchy and hierarchical relations in society
 - High gender inequality
 - Low tolerance of uncertainty
- Family - basic unit of society, indulgent towards children and the aged, women encouraged to bear (male) children, extended families are common though nuclear families are on the rise.
- Women workers in the organized workforce constitute a very small section of the population.
- India represents a complex reality of competing images of modernity and tradition.

Institutional support for work and family

- LOW institutional support for balancing work and family within the Indian context.
- Institutional support takes the form of governmental policies that are progressive on paper but poorly implemented.
- There is very little explicit research focus on work and family issues.

Research on work and family in India

- Research on work and family in India has followed two separate paths
 - Women's studies
 - Psychosocial research
- Mid 70s – mid 80s: Exploratory studies mainly on working women, preoccupied with changing status and roles of working women and societal perceptions of them.
- Mid 80s – mid 90s: Inclusion of men in samples, results showed greater responsibility for family duties rested with women, women were more stressed.
- Mid 90s –mid 2000: More studies on dual career as opposed to dual worker couples, no significant differences in conflict and stress for men and women, however sources of stress and conflict differed.
- 2000 onwards: Very marginal focus on organizational policies towards women, some concern about how the ITES sector is affecting work-life balance for `all' employees.

Non-institutional support for work and family

- HIGH non-institutional and non-organizational sources of support for balancing work and family in the Indian context.

Based on focus group discussions with 35 married women mainly from middle / upper middle class families in two cities of India – New Delhi and Mumbai; working full-time with public and private sector companies.

Sources of non-institutional support

- Spouse – depends on attitude of spouse (husband), nature of job, presence of other sources of support such as parents / in-laws and maid.
- Extended family – mainly in-laws / parents - depends on their availability, health, relationship with daughter-in-law(s) of the house and number of siblings sharing this support
- Paid help / maid – depends on reliability of maid, money that you can afford to pay, specific circumstances in maid's personal and extended family

Sources of non-institutional support (contd.)

- Self – depends on your own attitude, resourcefulness and willingness to deviate from the norms.
- Friends and neighbours – depends on how much you share in common with them and on whether they are located physically close to you.

Characteristics of non-institutional support

- Informal, ad hoc and contingent.
- Bound in a web of reciprocal relationships of dependence and counter-dependence
- Long-drawn and multi-directional linkages between sources of support and their impact on work-family conflict of the individual, suggestive of additive and interactive models.

Survey based study

- Part of a larger 10-country study that is looking at the role of cultural variables in work-family conflict.
 - (Korabik Karen, Lero Donna S. and Ayman, Roya, 2003, A multi-level approach to cross cultural work-family research – A micro and macro perspective, International Journal of Cross-Cultural Management, Vol. 3(3) 289-303)
- All scales were in English coupled with a regional language questionnaire for assistance.
- Administered to married working men and women in Mumbai and Bangalore by a data collection agency during March 2005 – on-going.

Sample

- Sample size

| Count | | Sector | | | | | Total |
|--------|--------|-----------|---------------|--------|---------|-------|-------|
| | | Education | Manufacturing | Health | Finance | Other | |
| Gender | Female | 41 | 54 | 49 | 47 | 4 | 195 |
| | Male | 53 | 51 | 47 | 53 | 3 | 207 |
| Total | | 94 | 105 | 96 | 100 | 7 | 402 |

- Characteristics of the sample

- Mean age = 35.04 years ($\sigma = 7.41$)
- Mean number of children = 1.52 ($\sigma = 0.67$)
- Mean years of formal education = 17.15 ($\sigma = 4.09$)
- 77% came from the middle and upper-middle income groups
- 90% worked in full-time jobs
- 36% held managerial jobs, 64% held non-managerial jobs
- 86% had a spouse working in a full-time job
- 44% lived in nuclear families, 56% lived in extended families

Variables

- Social support
 - Ayman, R. (Being validated at Illinois Institute of Technology)
 - Emotional and instrumental support for work and family issues
 - From three providers at home (Spouse, parents / in-laws, paid help)
 - Likert-type 1-5 scale measure – Very dissatisfied to Very satisfied
 - Reliable alpha values ($0.57 < \alpha < 0.89$)
- Work-family conflict
 - Carlson, Kacmar and Williams, 2000
 - Time-based and Strain-based WIF and FIW conflict
 - Reliable alpha values ($0.63 < \alpha < 0.73$)

Model of social support and work-family conflict

SUPPORT FOR WORK ISSUES

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

- Spouse / Partner
- Parents / in-laws
- Paid help

INSTRUMENTAL SUPPORT

- Spouse / Partner
- Parents / in-laws
- Paid help

SUPPORT FOR FAMILY ISSUES

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

- Spouse / Partner
- Parents / in-laws
- Paid help

INSTRUMENTAL SUPPORT

- Spouse / Partner
- Parents / in-laws
- Paid help

WIF

TIME-BASED

STRAIN-BASED

FIW

TIME-BASED

STRAIN-BASED

1

2

3

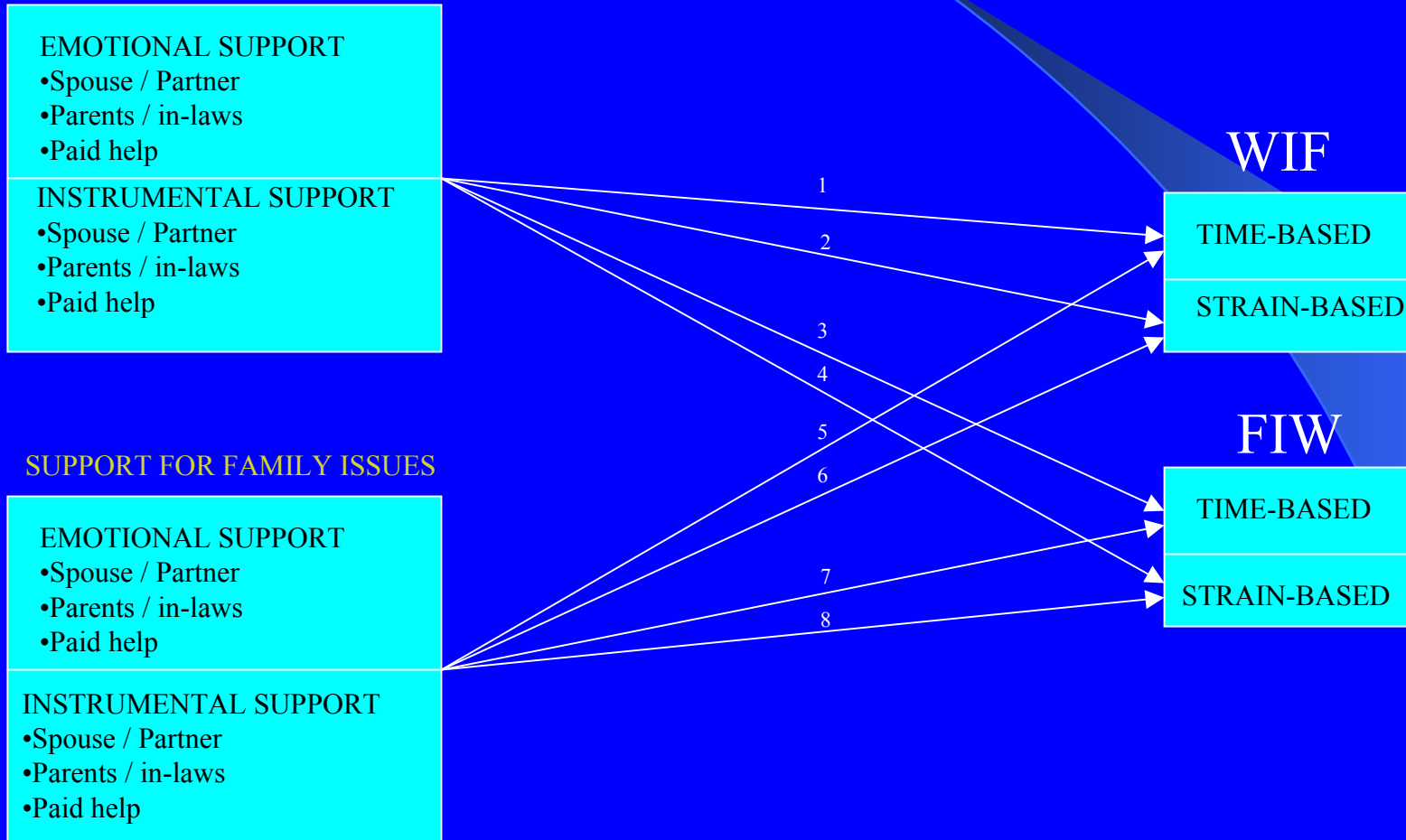
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Analysis

- Hierarchical regression analysis
- Control variables in step 1.
- Gender in step 2.
- Non-institutional sources of support - Spouse, Parents and Paid help in step 3.
- Two-way interactions between sources of support in step 4.
- Three-way interactions between sources of support in step 5.

(For detailed results, contact author at urajadhy@saintmarys.edu)

Results

Control variables

- Full-time job status of spouse increases S_WIF.
- Low strength of religious values increases S_WIF.
- With an increase in income, all forms of conflict except T_WIF reduce.
- Having a mother-in-law who requires eldercare increases S_WIF.
- Having a father-in-law who requires eldercare increases S_FIW.
- More traditional is gender role ideology, greater is T_WIF.

Main effects

- Gender - Women experience all forms of conflict except T_WIF to a greater extent than men.
- No main effects of emotional and instrumental support for family issues from spouse, parents or paid help.
- Only main effect – IW_Spouse increases rather than reduces time-based conflict (both WIF and FIW).

Results (contd.)

Two-way interactions

- No significant two-way interactions except for IW_Spouse x IW_Paid help on T_FIW.
- However ΔR^2 was greatest for the block of instrumental and emotional support for work issues on conflict.

Three-way interactions

- IF_Spouse x IF_Parents x IF_Paid help \rightarrow T_FIW & S_FIW
- EF_Spouse x EF_Parents x EF_Paid help \rightarrow T_WIF

Conclusions

- Social support in the Indian context - not an additive model but more likely a complex interactive model.
- Supports the qualitative study results that social support from the Indian family is informal, ad hoc and contingent in nature.
- Lack of institutional support and conditional non-institutional support together create conditions for potentially high levels of work-family conflict for the working person in India.

Future plan of research

- Graphical slope analysis of interaction effects
- Explore the hypothesis:
 - Social support from the spouse, parents/in-laws and paid help will interact to affect work-family conflict such that individuals who have low conflict will experience high support from the spouse and low rather than high support from parents/in-laws and paid help.