

Impact of Work-Life Conflict on Employee Performance: A Study of Kabul Afghanistan

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ABSTRACT

In today's developing world, the matter of work-life conflict and its impact on employee performance was the focal point of organizational behavioral researchers for decades. Each individual engaged in a struggle to uphold their rights and aimed to attain a reputable position to enhance their living standards for a more comfortable life. The efforts exerted by employees to earn a livelihood were not solely for personal success but also for the betterment of their family life and safety.

This study investigated the work-life conflict and its impact on employee performance in the cultural context of Afghanistan. Open-ended questionnaires were used as a technique for data collection from survey respondents who lived and worked in non-government organizations in Kabul, Afghanistan. Kabul was chosen as the survey location due to its status as the capital and largest population city in Afghanistan. The aim was to explore the work-life matters of Kabul's inhabitants and understand their impact on the workforce in various non-government organizations in the city.

A qualitative research method was employed, utilizing both primary and secondary approaches for data and information collection. Primary data was collected through the use of questionnaires. The research provided sufficient information about work-life conflicts and their impact on employee performance, contributing to changes in skills and attitudes. Non-government organizations in Afghanistan actively sought to enhance flexibility and openness for all individuals, including stakeholders, managers, subordinates, and clients. Both non-government and private organizations in Afghanistan focused on furthering improvements and progress for their employees.

Keywords- Work-life Conflicts, Employee Performance, Kabul, Afghanistan.

I. INTRODUCTION

The analysis of the research revealed a strong positive correlation between employee satisfaction and employee performance (Lalzai, F. (2023). Notably, the variables most closely associated with employee satisfaction, and subsequently, with a significant impact on employee performance, were employee creativity and reduced absenteeism (Lalzai, F. (2023). Among the

various factors influencing employee performance, one that gained prominence in recent times was the conflict between personal and work life for employees. The challenge lies in maintaining a balance between work and life responsibilities, with any disparity and imbalance in these activities termed as work-life conflict, which exerts severe effects on work performance (Kinnunen, Feldt, Geruts & Pulkkinen, 2006; Fritz & Sonnentag, 2006). Work-family conflict,

identified by Greenhaus & Beutell (1985), represents an inter-role conflict characterized by incompatibility between work and life domains. Frone (2000) further highlighted the bidirectional relationship between family life and work-life within the context defined by Greenhaus & Beutell, resulting in two types of conflicts: work-family conflict (work affecting family life) and family-work conflict (family affecting work) (Frone, Russel & Cooper, 1992; Frone, Yardley & Markel, 1997).

Amidst that dynamic business landscape, effective management played a crucial role as the linchpin for steering enterprises toward triumph. The art of managing a business entailed astute decision-making and a perpetual adaptation to the ever-shifting tides of circumstance. (Lalzai, F., & Nasir, A. (2023). The landscape of women in the workforce in Afghanistan witnessed substantial growth in 2001, accentuating the need for work-life balance between family and job responsibilities. Researchers raised concerns about time, energy, and relationships as women juggled responsibilities such as managing their spouses, household chores, childcare, and work. Companies responded to these challenges by implementing initiatives to create family-friendly environments, including programs like summer camps, flexible working hours, job sharing, on-site childcare, part-time job opportunities, and special leaves (Jackson, 1983). Failure to address these issues properly could have catastrophic consequences for women, who are compelled to maintain a delicate balance across various roles.

A survey revealed that 95.1% of women expressed concerns about their balance, as their work-life consumed most of their time, leaving them with limited hours to attend to family matters. Many women, in their pursuit of position and livelihood, found themselves sacrificing their household responsibilities. Additionally, research indicated that 40.4% of spouses were dual-earners (Rapoport, 2002).

1.1. Purpose of the Research

This research the impact of work-life conflict on employee performance was aimed to investigate the conflicts that people are being faced with living in Kabul during their work-life and the effect it has on their performance. The researcher has covered whole Kabul in which various employees of various non-government organizations were taken into consideration. This research was limited only to Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan and its residents.

1.2. Objectives of the Research

1. Evaluate factors contributing to work-life conflict and its influence on job performance among employees in non-government organizations based in Kabul.
2. Propose solutions for resolving work-life conflict to enhance staff performance.
3. Establish the significance of work-life conflict in its

impact on employee performance.

4. Systematize the identification and organization of issues related to work-life conflicts among employees in various non-government organizations.

1.3. Problem Statement

With the passage of time due to security threats and political instability, the economy of Afghanistan fluctuates with the burgeoning percentage of unemployment. The average per annum unemployment rate of Afghanistan is 11.5% (Statista, Afghanistan Unemployment rate 2020). The unemployment rate and employee turnover rate have increased in many organizations across the globe particularly in Kabul Afghanistan due to an increase in work-life conflict. Work-life conflict causes enormous psychological pressure and exacerbates work environment for employees in Kabul that results in rapid decline of employees' job performance. The stated problems employees' turnover rates and low job performance need a serious consideration to manage and control.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Work-life Conflict

The impact of work-life conflict on employee performance is a crucial and extensively studied subject in organizational research (Aryee, 1992). Work-life conflict, characterized by reciprocal incompatibility between work and family demands, results in conflict between work responsibilities and family obligations, commonly known as work-family conflict (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

Numerous studies conducted across various countries consistently demonstrate a negative relationship between personal life and job performance. Frone et al. (1997) utilized a self-reported scale to measure job performance and found a significant relationship when examining the impact of work-life conflict. Blackhurst, Brandt, and Kalinowski (1998) reported a negative relationship between organizational commitment and family life, resulting in lower performance and higher work-life conflict. Work-life conflict diminishes employee commitment, influencing overall performance and well-being (Aryee, 1992; Frone, 2000; Frone, Thomas & Ganster, 1995).

Gender differences play a role in work-life conflict, with females often experiencing greater conflict due to increased responsibilities, both at home and at work (Santos, G.G. and C.C. Cardoso, 2008). Women bear additional mental and physical health responsibilities and are more involved with childcare than men (Emslie, C. Hunt, K. and Macintyre, S. 2004). Working hours of both spouses impact life quality outcomes, with better quality of life observed when both partners work long hours (39-45) (Moen, P. and Y. Yu, 2000).

Work-life conflict poses challenges for both employees and organizations, negatively affecting performance. It hinders effective execution of assigned duties and responsibilities, creating conflicts between work and family roles (Hammer, L.B., T.N. Bauer, and A.A. Grandey, 2003). Resolving work-life conflict involves fostering a friendly environment within households and communicating conflicts and problems to supervisors (Frye, N.K. and J.A. Breauh, 2004).

Mitigating work-life conflict can be achieved through cultivating positive relationships between employees and employers, implementing flexible organizational policies, and promoting flexibility in the workplace (Rotondo, D.M., D.S. Carlson, and J.F. Kincaid, 2003). Managers and human resource experts can play a significant role in reducing work-life conflict through workplace flexibility, ultimately enhancing organizational outcomes (Rotondo, D.M. and J.F. Kincaid, 2008).

2.2. Employee Performance

Employee performance is commonly defined as the measurable actions, behaviors, and outcomes that employees undertake or contribute to, aligning with and supporting organizational goals (Viswesvaran and Ones, 2000, p. 216). It encapsulates how employees conduct themselves in the workplace and the effectiveness with which they fulfill assigned job duties (Ashley Donohoe, 2019). The performance of employees plays a pivotal role in determining organizational performance, as a positive correlation exists between employees' performance and the overall productivity of an organization (Armstrong and Baron, 1998).

Investment in human resources is a key factor in enhancing employee performance. Organizations grappling with high workloads and conflicts may subject their employees to increased physical stress. Nevertheless, these employees often demonstrate exceptional performance, driven by the motivation to secure a fair income (Dyne, L. V. Jehn, K. A. and Cummings, A, 2002).

2.3. Influence on Employee Performance

Sharlyn Lauby (2018), described six factors that influence employees' performance. Employees' performance is influenced by both the employee and the work environment that in some cases they are beyond their control. These work areas are both internal and external. External factors that influence employees' performance are organizational processes, physical resources and data information on the other side internal factors that influence employees' performance are individual abilities, motivation and job knowledge.

Najafbeygi (2007), performance management system influences staff in various organizations. The success of an organization towards goal attainment is influenced by an organization staff's insight about incentives and performance.

2.4. Work Stress

Work stress is conceptualized as work role conflict, work role overload and work role ambiguity (Cooke RA, Rousseau DM, 1984). The more conflict among work roles, the greater the chance that stress will spill over and cause negative behaviors that interfere with fulfilling family roles (Greenhaus JH, Bedian AG, Mossholder KW, 1987). Role overload is the result of having too many things to do in a given time period (Bachrach SB, Bamberger P, Conley S, 1991). Work role ambiguity happens when employees are not sure of what is expected of them in a work role.

2.5. Shift Work

Shift work refers to various operational time arrangements that contains all operational hours exterior from the normal daytime (Knutsoon, 2004). Shift systems can be organized in various ways, contingent on several constituents containing shift length, rest breaks and consecutive shifts (Folkard et al, 2007), which lead to various effects on the performance of workforce. Researches show that employees can be impacted both physically and mentally (Aryee, 1992).

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

For work-life conflict various models are recommended. Most adapted theory is role theory (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964). Work-life conflict arises when the expectations of one role interfere or conflict with those of another role (Greenhaus & Beutell 1985). A large number of researchers perceive the work-life conflict and share various perspectives about the theories particularly about the rational view structure (Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1986).

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research emanates from a comprehensive analysis of existing literature and takes the form of a qualitative study.

Sources of data:

Both primary and secondary; primary data is derived from questionnaires, aiming to assess work-life conflict and its impact on employee performance within non-government organizations based in Kabul.

Employing a qualitative approach, the study integrates insights from various literature reviews. Questionnaires were distributed to respondents, incorporating findings from these reviews to explore work-life conflict and its effects on employee performance.

Sample size:

The research participants were selected from non-government organizations located in Kabul, namely ESSO, VOR, ARDO, PESO, and EEDO. A total of 45 questionnaires were distributed, with 41 retrieved and 4

deemed incomplete. Consequently, 37 valid questionnaires were considered for analysis.

Analysis tools:

The data has been analyzed by SPSS descriptive statistics (Frequency and percentage) (Jamali, A. et al (2023))

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Kabul is the capital and the largest resident city located in the eastern section of Afghanistan. The population of Kabul is estimated to be 4.5 million and includes all the major ethnic groups of the country. Kabul serves as the political, economic and cultural center of Afghanistan and the research is conducted in this place. The national and official languages spoken are Pashto and Dari and the religion is Islam.

The participants held at least a bachelor's degree in diverse disciplines, aged between 25 and 50, and occupied various positions within the mentioned

organizations. Out of the 37 respondents, 23 were male, and 14 were female. The selection criteria encompassed individual characteristics such as age (25-50), educational attainment (bachelor and master), and professional experience and performance evaluations within the organizations.

The level of labor force partaking differs in Afghanistan based on sex and location. In 2016, the Survey of Afghanistan Living Condition indicates that the labor force consists of 15.9 million people of whom 7.4 million were inactive. 8.5 million people were employed or actively seeking jobs and 2.0 million were unemployed. The survey finds that men's participation in the labor force is greater than women. Male participation in Afghanistan's labor force is 80.6% nationwide, 75.9% in urban areas, 81.5% in rural areas and 93.2% midst Kuchi. On the other hand, females participation in the labor force is 20.5% in urban areas, 27.6% in rural areas and 50.5% midst Kuchi and 26.8% countrywide.

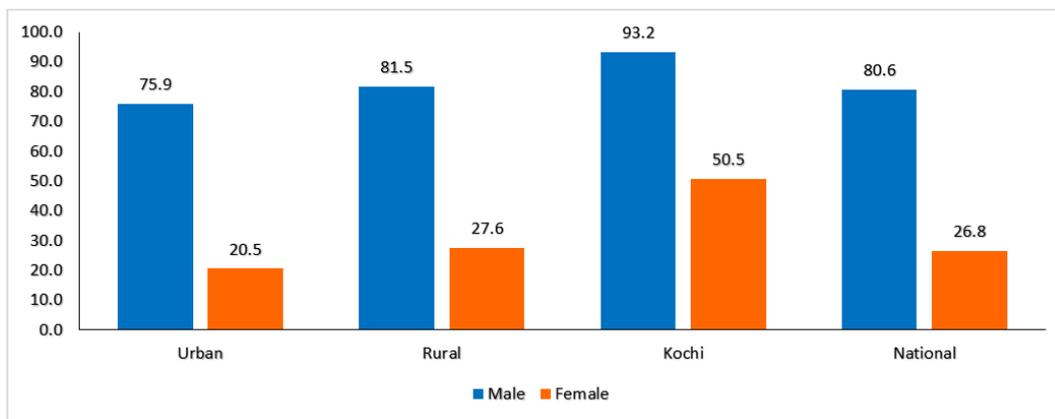


Figure 1: Labor Force Participation by Sex and Location

Source: Afghanistan Living Condition Survey 2016

The analysis of this research justify that work-life conflict often affect employees' performance in non-government organizations. According to respondents they encounter lots of complications in finding jobs. Mostly recruitment of employees in organizations isn't merit based and employees with reference are preferred and prioritized. When employees get the job, they struggle to maintain their effective performance to retain their jobs. Employees earning salaries are most likely to support their families and dependents financially. In joint family system in Kabul the work-life conflict does not that much affect performance of employees as it does in separate family system. To some extent joint family system erases work-life conflict in different ways. For instance, if a person is not giving and sparing time to his family (wife and children) owing to official work accountabilities then this conflict is diminished by other members of household. Either maternal or paternal relatives of husband provide them recreational and entertaining activities thus, the work-life conflict diminishes. The

main effort and focus of Kabul based employees is to satisfy the necessities and desires of their households and provide them financial support.

Afghanistan comprises of predominantly joint family system and men dominated working environments. In separate family system the level of work-life conflict among Kabul based employees is too high in contrast to employees of joint family system. Mostly female workers encounter problems of managing chores and job related responsibilities. Besides managing to perform official job related responsibilities, married females are also held accountable to take care of their children and do their household tasks, rather than wife there is no other person in the family to cooperate handle this matter which greatly intervenes in their role.

This research shows that employees in Kabul consider that the relevant management and leadership of their organizations' cooperation and support help them boost their performance and progress. It is also found that some employees mostly females are likely to quit

their jobs due to work-life conflict. These females claim that family pressure make them quit their jobs and prefer to handle home related responsibilities. Most employees feel motivated and perceive team spirit, incentive, motivation and leadership of the organization as the main factors contributing them in diminishing work-life conflict and performance improvement.

According to the findings of this research the following work-life conflicts are available in employees of Kabul based chosen organizations.

- i. **Role Overload:** This form of conflict arises from work and one's personal life; mostly it exists when one accomplishes multiple roles at the same time and depletes the resources to perform them.
- ii. **Interference of work with family members:** This type of conflict ascends when employment demands and tasks make it complicated to fulfill family related responsibilities and give time to family members (e.g. Staying long hours in work avoids availability at family's recreational events).
- iii. **Interference of family in job practices:** This form of conflict occurs when family demands and accountabilities make it problematic to perform and accomplish official job related responsibilities (e.g. absence at job due to illness of a child or any other family member).
- iv. **Caregiver Stress:** It is defined as burdens in caregivers' day to day lives attributed to provide care to someone who needs it.

5.1. Causes of Work-life Conflict

The foremost responses of the participants in this research that propose the major causes of work-life conflict in Kabul are; overload of roles at the office and families which makes it difficult for employees to fulfill the role demands of both workplace and family, high work demand, unexpected overtime in non-government organizations, job pressure, excessive work, personal problems, augmented desire of employees taking a lot of job related duties seeking to achieve promotions and monetary benefits, intervention of family demands in an employee's workplace, it frequently occurs in separate family systems who have a large number of responsibilities to their children such that it leads to employee's late arrival to work or thinking further about their families while at work. Besides, clashes between employees in the organizations, lack of accepting each other and complications in socializing with the organizational culture are also the major causes of work-life conflicts in Kabul.

VI. CONCLUSION

Resolution of conflicts is vital for boosting organization's programs and achieving its objectives.

Thus, this paper has addressed several parts of work-life conflicts in Kabul that organizations can use to overcome. As discussed, work-life conflicts in Kabul frequently impact employee's productivity and performance. This conflict incurs due to several factors including workloads, interference of work with family members, interference of family in work and caregiver stress. All these conflicts impact the physical and mental capacities of employees in handling their work and family related responsibilities. In order to prevent and resolve these concerns, organizations need to take some initiatives and assume different mechanisms to ensure that there is a work-life balance among workers and employers should also make sure that their employees are not overworked. To satisfy the needs of the employees, organizations need to develop proper strategies and policies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the study of work-life conflict and its impact on employee performance in Kabul based non-government organizations indicate that work-life conflict induces depression, absenteeism, lowers creativity, innovation and risk taking capacity of employees. Participants suggested the following measures to avoid work-life conflict.

- **Shared Support of Spouses:** Mutual support for a husband and wife is essential when they are in workplace that is each partner should provide support and as well as receive support.
- **Establishing Child Care Centers:** Participants recommend the establishment of child care centers and kindergartens near to workplace. Respondents argue that establishment of kindergartens and child care centers are applicable mostly for separate family system in which both husbands and wives are working and no other family member exists at home to take care of their children.
- **Flexible Work Schedule:** Work scheduling flex time and practice that allows employees to choose starting and quitting office time within certain limits. It usually follows a core time during which all employees must be present. Employees should be given freedom in deciding when to start and finish work and autonomy to take leaves for attending family matters. Flexibility at work is perceived by respondents as care and support from management of the organization.
- **Job Sharing:** To diminish work-life conflict among employees, organizations need to predispose employees the opportunity in which they can perform the same job at different working hours and days. Employees voluntarily share the responsibilities of a full time job and receive salaries and benefits on pro-rata basis.
- **Employee Motivation:** To resolve conflicts and achieve growth, organizations must persuade their

employees. They must know their employees' abilities and know how to motivate and resolve conflicts between them. Organizations must consider the following measures for motivating their employees:

- Provide personnel rewards and praises: If the employee performs effectively and meets the organization's expectations, they have to be awarded and recognized in front of the entire personnel that will motivate them further to aggrandize their performance.
- Provide personnel bonuses and incentives: Continuous provision of rewards and incentives boost work quality and enhances overall organization's performance.
- Capacity Building Programs: Conducting training and development programs to enhance employees' skills and abilities.
- **Ensuring Work-Life Balance:** The management plays a key role in boosting the lives of the employees so that the outcomes of the organizations get improved too.
- **Social Support:** Employees may create social support programs that assist colleagues to direct, support and coach each other.

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