

A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW ON THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF PERCEIVED STRESS AND EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION ON THE RELATIONSHIP OF WORK FAMILY CONFLICT AND WELL-BEING OF FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS.



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Abstract

This review has made focus on the mediating effect of perceived stress and emotional exhaustion on the well-being of employees at workplace. This systematic review intended to explore the relationship between work-family conflict and employee well-being and determines whether the relationship between these core variables is direct or is better explained with the mediating effect of perceived stress and emotional exhaustion. We reviewed 100 articles, written in English that examined the relationship between WFC, Employees well-being with the mediating effect of perceived stress and emotional exhaustion. Eighteen articles were included in the final analysis. It is critical to note that emotional exhaustion and perceived stress both explained the negative association between the variables of WFC and MW significantly among female entrepreneurs. This review inferred that there is a strong mediating role of emotional exhaustion and perceived stress in the link between WFC and MW. This review could be useful for guiding leaders to improve employee wellbeing by focusing on teaching employee's emotional regulation and stress management skills.

Keywords: *Perceived stress, Emotional exhaustion, Work family conflict, Well-being, Female entrepreneurs*

Introduction

Work holism can be defined as the intense self-driven inclination towards work that often results in risking one's health. Managing prolonged work-stress is considered an essential capability among employees looking to excel in this highly competitive business environment. The presence of workaholic traits is more ubiquitous among entrepreneurs than employees committed to full-time jobs. There are a number of studies that support a strong link between strong employee commitment and work holism. Work holism trait defines a person who is extremely devoted to their work and works hard for long hours. Work holistic traits are common among hard-working, self-motivated employees and strongly committed entrepreneurs. It is however, essential to know that work holism is not the same as hard working. It is different in a manner from hard working and work addition as the person works continuously for long hours without any interval or devoting time to their leisure activity, hence compromising on pursuing other aspects of their life. Such a person is known as a workaholic. According to research, entrepreneurs who scored high on workaholic trait scale were among those who were highly devoted to their work and associated high-level of enjoyment with

prolonged hours of work activity. Such workaholics had three components known as perfectionism, low delegation of authority and high job stress. In the context of this study, it is essential to examine how workaholic traits, which is an essential aspect of successful entrepreneurship is associated with work-family conflict and how the variable of emotional exhaustion mediates the link between the WFC and employee well-being (McDowell et.al, 2018).

Work holism according to some authors, is similar to work addition as workaholic employees may commit themselves to doing long hours of work and may find themselves under pressure of increased workload. They may also have a lack of leisure. Work holism is also linked with various forms of stress, social anxiety, work-related disorder and others. According to Clarke et.al, (2010), there are a number of personality factors that are associated with work-centric behavior such as positive effect, negative effect, narcissism, and perfectionism. It is imperative to highlight that negative affect is strongly correlated with emotional exhaustion. Highly enthusiastic workaholics, and strong committed entrepreneurs and high performing employees consider workaholic traits as part of their identity and devote more effort than what is actually required at the job. The presence of workaholic traits in

employees and entrepreneurs has both negative and positive outcomes; positives include improved professionalism, better career opportunities, whereas negatives include burn out, emotional exhaustion, stress and deteriorating mental and physical health, and more importantly impoverished social ties and family relationships, triggered with work-family conflicts (Poggesi, Mari, & De Vita, 2018)..

It is of interest to note that although a number of researchers have examined the positive effects of strong entrepreneurial commitment and workaholic behavior, it is essential to know that most studies on workaholic entrepreneurship have explored its detrimental impacts on the well-being of the individual. A health-related outcome that is ubiquitous among workaholics is job burnout and emotional exhaustion which directly impacts the well-being of the worker. Job burnout is the consequence of prolonged chronic emotional stress and deteriorating social life. The burnout is explained with three dimensions of depersonalization, lack of accomplishment or failure to accomplish and emotional exhaustion (Choi, Cundiff, Kim, & Akhatib, 2018).

The purpose of the review was to discover and synthesize recent studies to determine the mediating effect of perceived stress and emotional exhaustion on the relationship

between work-family conflict and female entrepreneurs' well-being, as well as to make suggestions to the relevant stakeholders.

The following research questions led this review:

Can work-family conflict have a negative impact on the well-being of female entrepreneurs?

What is the relationship between work-family conflict and female entrepreneurs' well-being?

Is there a role for perceived stress and emotional exhaustion in mediating the relationship between work-family conflict and female entrepreneurs' well-being?

Work-Family Conflict

According to Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), work-family conflict takes place when there is an inter-role conflict, meaning the demands between work and family collide with each other. This kind of inter-role conflict has two directions; work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict. Work-to-family conflict takes place when work demands come in between family time and create disturbance for family life, whereas family-to-work conflict takes place when family needs interfere with work time. Work-family conflict has significant negative effects for working women in the society.

People confronted with work-family conflict face serious depression, marital issues, problems of poor mental and physical well-being, low life satisfaction and a disturbed family life (Babolola, Oladipo, & Chovwen, 2015)..

It is pertinent to know that a high prevalence of work-family conflict is found to be linked with physiological and psychological issues. Increasing work-family conflict is found to have detrimental effects on the mental well-being of a person as work-family conflict disturbs family life resulting in compromising on responsibilities of the family and not performing expected roles. Such failure to perform expected roles triggers emotional exhaustion which in turn, impacts the well-being of the individual. In addition to this, it is also of interest to note that the prevalence of work-family conflict is different across genders. Conflicts are also greatly influenced by gender. This paper incorporates findings from a study that examined the mediating effect of perceived stress and emotional exhaustion in the relationship between mental well-being and work-family conflict. The outcomes of work-family conflict have been classified into three types including physiological, psychological and behavioral responses to the challenging environment. The responses may range from

health issues, poor well-being and depression (Babolola, Oladipo, & Chovwen, 2015).

There are a number of researchers that have applied the conservation of resources model for work-family studies. According to the model, individuals naturally seek out resources and work hard to acquire them. However, if resources are found to be threatened or scarce, individuals may experience decreased well-being. Individuals may experience increase in perceived stress if they find a lack of resources, which leads them to exhaustion and consequently may lead to work-family conflict as individuals may fail to fulfill their responsibilities. Moreover, when the work-family balance is greatly disturbed, individuals may witness decreasing well-being and poor mental health. It is essential to know that according to studies, this link between work-family conflict and well-being is mediated with emotional exhaustion. Therefore, it is hypothesized that work-family conflict is negatively correlated with mental well-being (Allen, French, Dumani, & Shockley, 2018).

WFC and employee well being

The literature shows that WFC has a negative impact on people's well-being. (Babolola, Oladipo, & Chovwen, 2015). According to Allen, French, Dumani, & Shockley, (2018) higher levels of WFC are a long-term

predictor of lower levels of positive wellbeing. Similarly, Choi, Cundiff, Kim, & Akhatib, (2018) found that WFC is inversely associated with wellbeing, particularly life satisfaction.

It has been established that WFC conflict have significant and negative implications for employees health and happiness several research, for example, have found that both types of conflict are linked to health issues such as psychological strain (De Simone, & Priola, 2015), sadness and anxiety (Shantz et al. 2016), or poor sleep quality (Bakar, & Salleh, 2015). Employees have also been negatively associated with WFC and FCW. Satisfaction in a variety of areas, including overall life satisfaction (Shantz et al. 2016).

The Mediating Effect of Perceived Stress and Emotional Exhaustion

As discussed above that there is exists a strong direct link between work-family conflict and mental well-being, this paper assumes a mediating effect of perceived stress and emotional exhaustion. Stress is being used in workplace literature since its inception in 1930s. Stress has been defined as an "acute or chronic physical or psychological condition that brings about unhealthy transitions in the body". According to a number of authors, the conflict between work duties and family responsibilities

extends with stress. As per the COR model, stress is defined as a response to an environment where resources are found to be at risk or where an actual loss takes place. Moreover, less than expected gain in capital was also attributed to causes of stress. Hence, we could also assume similar relationship between entrepreneurial commitment and employee well-being since entrepreneurs are usually confronted with uncertainty of resources (Allen, French, Dumani, & Shockley, 2018).

In addition to this, people who experience loss of resources or find their resources at risk of depletion, may experience serious stress. According to the COR model, stressful situations for people suffering from inter-role conflict can lead to decreased job and life satisfaction. Therefore, it is essential to emphasize that work-family conflict is indirectly related to mental well-being as the relationship between the two is mediated with the level of stress a person experiences. There is enough literature that backs the indirect link between work-family conflict and mental well-being through stress. It is worth knowing that when a person's resources from either role are exhausted they may not be able to fulfill obligations of any of the roles resulting in a negative state for both roles. Based on the discussion, we can infer that level of perceived stress mediates

the relationship between work-family conflict, entrepreneurial commitment and mental well-being (De Simone, & Priola, 2015).

Besides, according to the numerous studies, particular events at work, especially workplace bullying can trigger unwanted emotional reactions, which lead to poor work attitudes and behaviors. It is essential to highlight that differences in attitudes and behaviors give rise to the need of studying emotions. It is imperative to note that individuals' family needs have a prolonged impact on the emotional state of individuals. It is on this perspective that this paper assumes if more work-family conflicts took place in the lives of working women, they would certainly experience more negative emotions and such negative emotions would influence their work behavior resulting in poor performance and decreased well-being. Negative emotions such as tension, anxiety, depression and others are directly linked to work-family conflict (De Simone, & Priola, 2015).

In another study conducted on workplace bullying and emotional exhaustion, it was found out that the occurrence of any negative event in the workplace could result in depletion of emotional resources. When individuals who are overburdened with excessive work load find themselves in a

position of lack of resources to accomplish tasks, they will in turn, exhaust emotional resources, which directly impacts their mental health and overall well-being. Exhaustion of emotional resources will result in deteriorated interpersonal links (Hsu, Wiklund, Anderson, & Coffey, 2016).

There are a number of studies Carr, & Hmieleski, (2015), Teoh, Chong, Chong, & Ismail, (2016), have shown a positive link between emotional exhaustion and a variety of negative work-related behaviors including poor job performance, low job satisfaction, declining work motivation, quitting behavior and lack of effort. In addition, it has also been established that alienated work members are unable to improve their mental capacity and physical strength. Moreover, these workers become exhausted both physically and mentally.

Moreover, entrepreneurs in their everyday matters have to deal with people with patience and may not always express their true. The self-regulation of emotion consumes their emotional resources and can have a drastic impact on the well-being in the longer-run. In the context of the study, it has also been assumed that when entrepreneurs experience emotional exhaustion on a particular working day, their well-being on the next day will be affected. Therefore, people experiencing high emotional demands

tend to have lower well-being (mediated with emotional exhaustion) than those who experience lower emotional demands at workplace (De Simone, & Priola, 2015).

Methods

Design.

A comprehensive literature review with narrative synthesis was conducted, because the methodology of the incorporated studies was insufficient for a statistical analysis of the research, Whitemore and Knalf (2005) proposed an integrative technique that was implemented. This strategy enables the merging of numerous methodologies in order to better understand the diverse points of view on a certain phenomenon or condition (Whitemore & Knalf 2005).

Discussion

The study uncovered the mediating effect of perceived stress and emotional exhaustion on mental well-being of employees experiencing work-family conflict. The results of the study support the idea that perceived stress and emotional exhaustion function as mediators in the relationship between WFC and mental well-being. In addition, the results of the study were in congruence with the COR model, according to which employees behaviors and attitudes are greatly influenced by the daily events and experiences at workplace. It is essential to

note that negative emotions, which are triggered with emotional exhaustion would have a serious negative impact on the attitudes and behaviors. People experiencing WFC tend to be stressed and may impact their perception of well-being. Moreover, if employees feel stressed while working, they might realize that they cannot be happy and may experience emotional exhaustion. This is also the reason why most of the studies on workplace stress management consider emotional exhaustion an immediately triggered effect with high level of work stress. According to Sharma et.al, (2016), WFC could lead to stress among nursing staff, which in turn impacts their psychological well-being. In addition to this, the WFC or FWC could decrease mental well-being with the mediating effect of perceived stress and emotional exhaustion. The direct effects of WFC on mental well-being were not found to be significant, reflecting that the mediating variables explained the relationships better (Zhou, Da, Guo, & Zhang, 2018).

Practical Implications

Following are the practical implications of the study;

From a practical stand point, the findings of this study have great value for organization's resource management domain. This study

provides a direction for management to develop interventions to keep a healthy balance between work and family lives of their employees so that their work demands do not collide with their family obligations and employees are kept away from going through a burnout which would have adverse consequences for their mental well-being. A useful intervention could be to help to cope with stressful conditions or reduce workload so that they do not feel overburdened and avoid a burnout. Therefore, it is essential that to avoid the WFC and its impact on the mental well-being, it could be fruitful to learn self-regulation of negative emotions and stress management. From an organizational standpoint, leaders and human resource managers and specialists can consider providing essential training of emotional regulation to their employees. This would certainly help them to identify the issue of lack of resources early and avoid WFC from extending to a high level. This would also help them to increase their level of happiness. Lastly, for individuals, the findings of the study suggest that it is appropriate to be aware of the emergence of negative emotions within and make every possible endeavor to cope up with stress and learn the skills to minimize negative emotions for better well-being (Dartey-Baah, 2015).

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study inferred that there is a strong mediating role of emotional exhaustion and perceived stress in the link between WFC and MW. The study suggests that in order to improve work-family conflict and sustain the high level of commitment it is essential that organizations focus on teaching employees emotional regulation and stress management skills.

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