

Antecedents and Consequences of Work-Family Conflict in Qatar

Rima Charbaji El-Kassem

Social and Economic Survey Research Institute (SESRI) Qatar University, Doha, Qatar

Abstract

Purpose This paper examines the effect of causal factors, such as work-life harmony, work-family conflict, co-worker and supervisor support, as well as spouse support, on workload and job stress and employee psychological ill-being (depression/anxiety). **Design/methodology/approach** A large convenience sample of 807 families from Qatar was surveyed. Using SPSS, the researchers used factor analysis to establish construct validity, based on two suitability tests: the Kaisers-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and the Bartlett test of sphericity. The dimensions were found to be reliable and valid. **Findings** Findings from regression analysis show that five independent variables, as well as gender, are significant in predicting staff members' perceived employee psychological ill-being in Qatar. In addition, results of the recursive model reveal that work-life harmony, supervisor's and spouse's support lead to less perceived employee psychological ill-being. However, workload, job stress and work-family conflict lead to more perceived employee psychological ill-being in Qatar. **Practical implications** Findings of this investigation provide strategic insights and practical thinking that have important implications for understanding and overcoming employee psychological ill-being. What's more, this paper contributes to the limited knowledge about the effects of stressful working conditions in combination with low levels of spouse support and co-worker and supervisor support on work-life conflict and higher levels of depression and anxiety. **Originality** This article empirically correlates three fields of management research: Managerial Psychology, Employee Well-Being and Work-Life Balance.

Keywords: Work-life balance; Employee psychological well/Ill-Being; Supervisor and Co-Worker support. Work stress; Path analysis.



CC BY: [Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

1. Introduction

A considerable amount of research has investigated the relationship between employees' well-being and organizational health (Hellgren *et al.*, 1999; Sparks *et al.*, 2001). Across a team in particular or an entire organization in general, if staff well-being is undermined, many crucial managerial performance elements will be undesirably obstructed, resulting in: sickness, presenteeism, absenteeism, reduced productivity, low morale and negative atmosphere and poor quality of work. Nonetheless, employees' well-being is strongly connected with work-related stress. Job demands are a frequently studied form of anxiety and a key determinant of depression (Wallace, 2005). "Additional work hours subtract from home time, while high work intensity or work pressure may result in fatigue, anxiety or other adverse psycho-physiological consequences that can affect the quality of home and family life," (White *et al.*, 2003). According to Grzywacz and Bass (2003), a person's mental health is improved when their family-work balance is high and work-family conflict is low. Wallace (2005), believes that emotional support from coworkers and one's spouse simply improves one's health and well-being, so an individual experiencing extremely challenging job circumstances in combination with a great level of social support will show higher levels of well-being, while an individual with low levels of support in combination with working under extremely challenging job circumstances will show lower levels of well-being. The question arises as to why people have to achieve work-life balance and why they treat their lives as a competition between the monotonous, boring work that they have to do and the parts of their lives that they actually enjoy? Papalexandris and Kramar (1997), believe that, "Flexibility is needed because it can prove very useful harmonizing family life with obligations, provided it takes into consideration family needs, parental obligations and the right of employees to a better quality of life." Qatari organizations need to identify and evaluate the reasons why some of their employees and staff are having work-family conflicts and how this could lead to employees feeling depressed or anxious.

1.1. Literature Review

1.1.1. Research on Work-Life Harmony

Many theories have tried to explain the relationship between job stress and work environment; and the most influential one is the person-environment fit theory. "The basic premise of the person-environment fit theory is that stress arises from a misfit between person and environment—not from the two components separately, but as the factors of each relate to one another. When individuals perceive that their work environments are not good or do not fit well with the needs, wants and desires that they personally would like fulfilled from work, the discrepancies create diverse strains, which are then hypothesized to affect workers' health and well-being," (Bickford, 2005). Individuals will be most successful in companies that share their personalities.

Moore (2007), in her investigation at an Anglo-German automobile factory concluded, “that whether flexible working practices have a positive or negative influence on work-life balance depends on the circumstances of the individual.” In Murphy and Doherty (2011), called for more training and development activities to promote the value of achieving a healthy work-life balance. Arif and Ilyas concluded that the perceived value of work, the work climate, satisfaction with relationships in life and work-life balance were the fundamental factors which influence work attitudes and employee perceptions of overall quality of work-life (Arif and Ilyas, 2013).

1.2. Research on Spouse Support

A large amount of research has emphasized the importance of social support to an employee’s well-being (Bickford, 2005; Wallace, 2005). “Social support refers to the resources (both emotional and practical) that are derived from an individual’s social network of family, friends, co-workers and other social contacts. There is a substantial body of evidence suggesting that lack of social support may lead to ill health, and in fact, has been shown to exert a positive effect on people’s health and well-being in a range of stressful situations” (Bickford, 2005). According to Wallace (2005), there are two important types of spouse support. First, emotional support, which refers to providing individuals with feelings of being cared for and supported through love, empathy and appreciation. Second, support for one’s career. The more a person’s spouse is supportive of their career, the less depressed they are. Similarly, the extent to which the spouse provides emotional support reduces depression.

1.3. Research on Co-Worker and Supervisor Support

Menguc and Boichuk (2012), define co-worker support as “the extent to which one’s co-workers are helpful, can be relied upon in times of need, and are respective to work-related problems.” Charoensukmongkol *et al.* (2016), emphasized the importance of supervisor and co-worker support in helping employees be more confident in their ability to accomplish their work objectives. Supervisor support and co-worker support not only reduce the destructive effects of job physiognomies that employees experience but also improve employees’ psychological well-being and performance (Charoensukmongkol *et al.*, 2016). Sabat *et al.* (2014), explain “how the stressors of formal discrimination, interpersonal discrimination, stigma consciousness, internalized heterosexism, concealment, and social isolation each contribute to workplace stress and ultimately health and workplace outcomes.” Sloan (2012), believes that co-worker support decreases employee stress from experiencing mistreatment by clients, supervisors and other co-workers.

1.4. Research on Workload and Job Stress

Workplaces nowadays are transformed by globalization, which introduced the “burnout” concept. Employees are forced to work faster and harder than before, in such a way that they feel exhausted and are unable to cope due to the prolonged and high level of stress. “Burnout produces feelings of hopelessness, powerlessness, cynicism, resentment and failure as well as stagnation and reduced productivity. These stress reactions then result in depression and unhappiness that can threaten your job, your relationships and your health” (Bickford, 2005). Aziz and Cunningham (2008), argue, “It was found work stress and work-life imbalance correlated with workaholism, regardless of gender. Gender did not moderate the relations between workaholism with work stress and work-life imbalance.”

Quick *et al.* (2003), believe that, “Occupational stress literature has not focused on how executives and organizations can cause positive stress for people at work.”

1.5. Research on Work-Family Conflict (WFC)

Work-family balance is an underdeveloped concept, although there is extensive research about it in work-family literature (Carlson *et al.*, 2009). Work-family conflict occurs when one’s work interferes with the family and causes family issues as family demands go unfulfilled, while family-work conflict (FWC) occurs when family problems spillover into the work area, thus causing family to interfere with work (Carlson and Kacmar, 2000). Fujimoto *et al.* (2014), investigated the impact of work-family conflict on depression and found that experiencing conflict between family and work is to be expected to cause deterioration in the psychological well-being of employed wives and husbands. Furthermore, Emmerik and Peeters (2009), note that, “Team-level WFC and FWC do influence individual-level WFC and FWC, respectively.” Chelarju and Stump (2011), recommend that, “Future research could examine both the deleterious and beneficial effects of role identity spillover and include additional psychological work outcomes beyond turnover intentions.” Sav and Harris (2013), argue that, “Work-to-life conflict is more prevalent than life-to-work conflict in both sexes, and there are no gender differences in the experiences of either direction of conflict. Job demands are a stronger predictor than work hours in both sexes and the findings corroborate existing Western research on the importance of work flexibility in helping both sexes cope with conflict.”

However, the work of Sav and Harris might not apply to Qatari employees because, recently, a dramatic change has occurred in the development of family forms and labor market in Qatar: the traditional male “breadwinner” model is partly changing into to dual-earner couples, “labour force participation rates of Qatari men are low and declining — with men leaving the labour force at a young age... labour force participation of Qatari women has grown sharply in recent years, consistent with their rising education levels and the ready availability of low-cost domestic help. There is considerable scope for participation to rise further, as it still lags well behind that of many high income countries” (Qatar National Development Strategy, 2011).

Fawole and Ogunbowale (2016), argue that FWC exists because of the increased employment of mothers, rising hours of work, and the tendency toward working longer hours. Mansour and Tremblay (2016), call on “employers in the hospitality industry to engage in family-friendly policies that include not only practices such as working time arrangements, family leave and onsite child care services, but also to be committed to create a family-friendly culture and to adopt the best forms of supportive policies at work.” Santos and Cardoso (2008), suggest that “work-family policies are fruitless unless they are supported by a positive work-family culture.”

1.6. Research on Employee Psychological Ill-Being

Workplace stress is a serious indicator of employee ill-being. A lot of studies have proved that a link exists between depression/anxiety and work stress (Bickford, 2005; Karasek Jr, 1979; Wallace, 2005). “Stress is what we feel when we have to respond to a demand on our energy” (Bickford, 2005). Karasek Jr (1979), notes that work demands lead to negative psychological outcomes, such as depression, when they are accompanied by lack of control. “There has been considerable empirical support for the strain hypothesis where working in a demanding job and having little control over one’s job are associated with lower job satisfaction, lower psychological well-being, more job-related distress and greater work-to-family conflict” (Wallace, 2005). Furthermore, Wallace (2005), argues that depression is a consequence of the additive, independent effects of strains and control, meaning that, when employees have control over their work, they are shielded from the negative effects of extreme workload on their health and well-being. However, Wallace (2005), emphasizes the importance of spouse and co-worker and supervisor support on employees’ well-being. That is, an employee who experiences highly stressful working conditions in combination with a high level of support from their spouse, co-workers and supervisor will report higher levels of psychological well-being than an employee who experiences highly stressful working conditions in combination with a low level of support from their spouse, co-workers and supervisor.

2. Statement of the Research Problem

The aim of this paper is to fill a research gap in Qatar by attempting to answer the following research question: What is the effect of work-family conflict, work-life harmony, workload and job stress, co-worker/supervisor support and spouse support on employees’ ill-being in Qatar?

Hypotheses

- H₁. For Qatari employees, work-family conflict is positively correlated with psychological ill-being.
- H₂. For Qatari employees, spouse support is negatively correlated with psychological ill-being.
- H₃. For Qatari employees, there is a negative correlation between psychological ill-being and support from co-workers and supervisor.
- H₄. For Qatari employees, workload and stress are positively correlated with psychological ill-being.
- H₅. For Qatari employees, there is a negative relation between work-life harmony and employee psychological ill-being.
- H₆. There is a significant difference between Qatari men and women in work-family conflict and employee psychological ill-being.

3. Procedures and Methodology

3.1. Sample Selection

After obtaining approval from our institution, data for this study was collected using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) during fall 2017. The sample was selected using stratified random sampling, whereby the target population is first divided into separate strata. Then, samples are selected within each stratum through simple random sampling. The sample included only Qatari working males or females. From the 824 questionnaires that were returned, 807 were completed and valid for advanced multivariate analysis. The high rate of return is due to the highly trained interviewers. Four hundred and seventy-eight (59.2%) of the respondents are males with an average age of 39.29 years and three hundred and twenty-nine (40.8%) are females with an average age of 36.82 years. The respondents’ age is approximately a normally distributed variable with an average of 38.28 years and standard deviation of 11.35 years. Around 71.7% of the respondents are married and around 90% of them have 5 children or less. With respect to income, approximately two thirds of the respondents reported that they earn a total combined monthly income of more than 40,000 QAR and 88.3% of the respondents are either satisfied or very satisfied with their income. With regards to the occupation, one third of the respondents work as managers or professional and 87% of them work in the public sector. When it comes to the education level, almost half of the sample earned Diploma, a university degree and/or a higher education. Only 541 cases were used in path analysis after removing all missing information by SPSS.

3.2. Procedure

Responses were entered manually into Blaise, which is a CAPI system and survey processing tool. The data was then cleaned, coded, weighted and saved in SPSS format for analysis.

3.3. Variables and their Measurement

Based on a review of the literature, the researchers in this study constructed an instrument to explore parents' lived experiences with daily work-family conflict and to identify challenges and coping strategies. For the scale items, every respondent used a 4- point Likert scale: Always (1), Often (2), Seldom (3), and Never (4); or Strongly Agree (1), Somewhat Agree (2), Somewhat Disagree (3), and Strongly Disagree (4). The researchers reversed some items during analysis because they were worded negatively. Factor analysis was utilized as a data reduction technique to demonstrate the construct validity of the questionnaire. The researcher used sixteen scale items in Factor Analysis with factor loading above 0.7. Two statistical tests were used to determine the suitability of the factor analysis. First, the Kaisers-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy, which resulted in a score of 0.766, well above the recommended level of 0.50. Second, the Bartlett test of sphericity result was significant (Chi-Square = 3868.178, $P = 0.00$), indicating that there are adequate inter-correlations between the sixteen statements which permit the use of factor analysis. Oblique rotation was used and six rotated factors were extracted using a criterion of an Eigen value greater than 1 as shown in [Table 1](#). The six-factor solution accounted for 77.847% of the total variance.

Table-1. Structure Matrix

	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Q-relationshipb: Our relationship is strong	.926	-.135	.045	.180	-.185	-.234
Q- relationshippd: I really feel like part of a team with my spouse.	.879	-.082	.078	.240	-.157	-.207
Q- relationshippa: My relationship with my spouse is very stable	.877	-.045	.081	.189	-.186	-.233
Q- relationshippc: My relationship with my spouse makes me happy.	.854	-.107	.023	.173	-.217	-.161
Q-FTIME1c: During the past three months . . . how often have you not had enough time to do things for yourself because of your job?	.085	-.914	.065	.225	-.088	-.281
Q-FTIME1d: During the past three months . . . how often have you not had the energy to do things with your family because of your job?	.099	-.877	.062	.234	-.036	-.317
Q-FTIME1b: During the past three months . . . how often have you not had enough time for your family because of your job?	.096	-.853	.112	.178	-.002	-.204
Q-WLBA: Lack of co-worker support	.068	-.074	.906	.068	-.138	-.170
Q-WLBB: Lack of supervisor support	.044	-.096	.902	.064	-.087	-.171
Q-JOBb: My job fits well with my preferred pace (tempo) of life.	.187	-.267	.052	.866	-.159	-.177
Q-JOBa: My job does not clash with my individual personality	.192	-.146	.066	.864	-.143	-.247
Q-JOBd: My job fits well with my personal aspirations.	.183	-.191	.063	.798	-.111	-.274
Q- WLOAD: I am able to manage the workload of my job	.131	-.044	.025	.141	-.853	-.192
Q-STRESS: The stress level in my workplace is manageable.	.241	-.035	.199	.141	-.825	-.161
Q-depressiona: During the past month, how often have you ... been bothered by feeling down, depressed?	-.212	.279	-.185	-.267	.156	.934
Q-depressionb: During the past month, how often have you ... been bothered by little interest in doing things?	-.242	.289	-.169	-.259	.235	.927

4. Findings

The instrument used in this research has both internal reliability and construct validity. The six factors that were extracted using factor analysis are as follows:

The first factor (Perceived Spouse Support; Cronbach alpha = 0.905) accounts for 26.512% of the total variance and is defined by four items with factor loadings greater than 0.70:

- My relationship with my spouse is very stable.
- Our relationship is strong.
- My relationship with my spouse makes me happy.
- I really feel like part of a team with my spouse.

The items of this factor are identical with that of [Bögenhold et al. \(2016\)](#).

The second factor (Perceived WFC; Cronbach alpha = 0.855) accounts for 15.536% of the total variance and is defined by three items with factor loadings greater than 0.70.

- During the past three months . . . how often have you not had enough time for your family because of your job?
- During the past three months . . . how often have you not had enough time to do things for yourself because of your job?
- During the past three months . . . how often have you not had the energy to do things with your family because of your job?

The items of this factor are identical to the work-family spillover scale ([Texler, 2010](#)).

The third factor (Perceived Co-Worker and Supervisor Support; Cronbach alpha = 0.779) accounts for 10.705% of the total variance and is defined by two items with factor loadings greater than 0.70.

- Lack of co-worker support
- Lack of supervisor support

The items are stimulated from a structural equation model on how co-worker and supervisor support affect job stress (Yang *et al.*, 2015).

The fourth factor (Perceived Work-Life Harmony; Cronbach alpha = 0.785) accounts for 10.273% of the total variance and is defined by three items with factor loadings greater than 0.70.

- My job does not clash with my individual personality.
- My job fits well with my preferred pace (tempo) of life.
- My job fits well with my personal aspirations.

These items are hypothesized from the work-family fit concept (Grzywacz and Bass, 2003; Piftman, 1994).

The fifth factor (Perceived Workload and Job Stress; Cronbach alpha = 0.594) accounts for 7.811% of the total variance and is defined by two items with factor loadings greater than 0.70:

- I am able to manage the workload of my job.
- The stress level in my workplace is manageable.

The items are inspired by the self-scoring workplace stress test (Bickford, 2005).

The sixth factor (Perceived Employee Ill-Being (depression/anxiety); Cronbach alpha = 0.829) accounts for 7.010% of the total variance and is defined by two items with factor loadings greater than 0.70:

- During the past month, how often have you ... been bothered by feeling down, depressed?
- During the past month, how often have you ... been bothered by little interest in doing things?

The items of this factor are identical with those of the (PHQ-9 Depression Screener and UNC Health Care, n.d).

5. Discussion

5.1. Dependent Variable Regression: Perceived Employee Ill-Being

In regressing the dependent variable “Perceived Employee Ill-Being” on the other five explanatory variables, in addition to age and gender, it was found that the regression equation is highly significant ($F = 25.46$, $p = 0.000$) and the R^2 is 0.252. Table 2 shows that the five independent variables in addition to gender are significant in predicting Qatari employees and staff members’ perceived ill-being.

Table-2. Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std . Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.801	.206		3.886	.000
	Perceived Spouse Support	-.090	.040	-.090	-2.254	.025
	Perceived Work-Family-Conflict	.214	.039	.215	5.540	.000
	Perceived Co-Worker and Supervisor Support	-.116	.038	-.116	-3.049	.002
	Perceived Work-Life-Harmony	-.131	.040	-.131	-3.261	.001
	Perceived Workload and Job Stress	.099	.039	.100	2.545	.011
	Age	.000	.004	-.005	-.120	.905
	Gender	-.563	.081	-.275	-6.968	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Perceived Employee Ill-Being (Depression/Anxiety)

5.2. Path Analysis

The researcher in this study utilized the path causal analysis approach which seeks to understand the perception of Work-to-Family Conflict (WFC), Spouse Support, Co-Worker and Supervisor Support, Work - Life – Harmony, Workload and Job Stress and their direct and indirect effects on Perceived Employee Ill-Being (Depression - Anxiety). To put it another way, this investigation aims to bring conceptual and methodological clarification to the way that work life balance affects perception of Employee Ill-Being (Depression -Anxiety) at the Qatari organizations. It proposes breaking down the process into its sequential stages and examining what happens in each stage separately, while at the same time supposing that each stage effects the following. The use of multivariate analysis was a must in this investigation in order for the included intermediate relations not to be confused with spurious relations whereby two variables have no causal relation, but appear to because of an unobserved third variable. The causal findings of this study is different from the regular variable selection using traditional computer software such as Stata, R, SPSS, EViews or any other computer software because it attempts to distinguish intermediary variables on the causal path from other variables. It is unlike ordinary multiple regression model selection approaches which do not consider the causal relationships. This study proposes an approach for selecting a causal mechanism represented by a path diagram with an unobserved variables (factor scores).

Figure 1 shows the results of a path analysis of the structural causal model. Tables 3, 4 and 5 show that the direct effect (path coefficient) is less than the total effect (simple correlation coefficient), implying that the direct effect of each of the five independent variables on perceived employee ill-being is strengthened via the effect of the other variables; the direct effects are all significant. The algebraic signs of the direct effects of path analysis in this

study support the stated hypotheses (H₁, H₂, H₃, H₄ and H₅) and are consistent with previous research. The results reveal that employees who work in high-stress jobs (excessive work demands and workload) experience more work-family conflict and higher levels of psychological ill-being. One notable finding is that work-life harmony leads to lower level of employees' psychological ill-being, while work-family conflict leads to higher levels of perceived employees' psychological ill-being. A predominantly important finding of this study encompasses the moderating effect of social support, Qatari employees who are experiencing stressful working conditions in combination with low levels of spouse support and co-worker and supervisor support reported more work-life conflict and higher levels of depression and anxiety.

Figure-1. Path Analysis

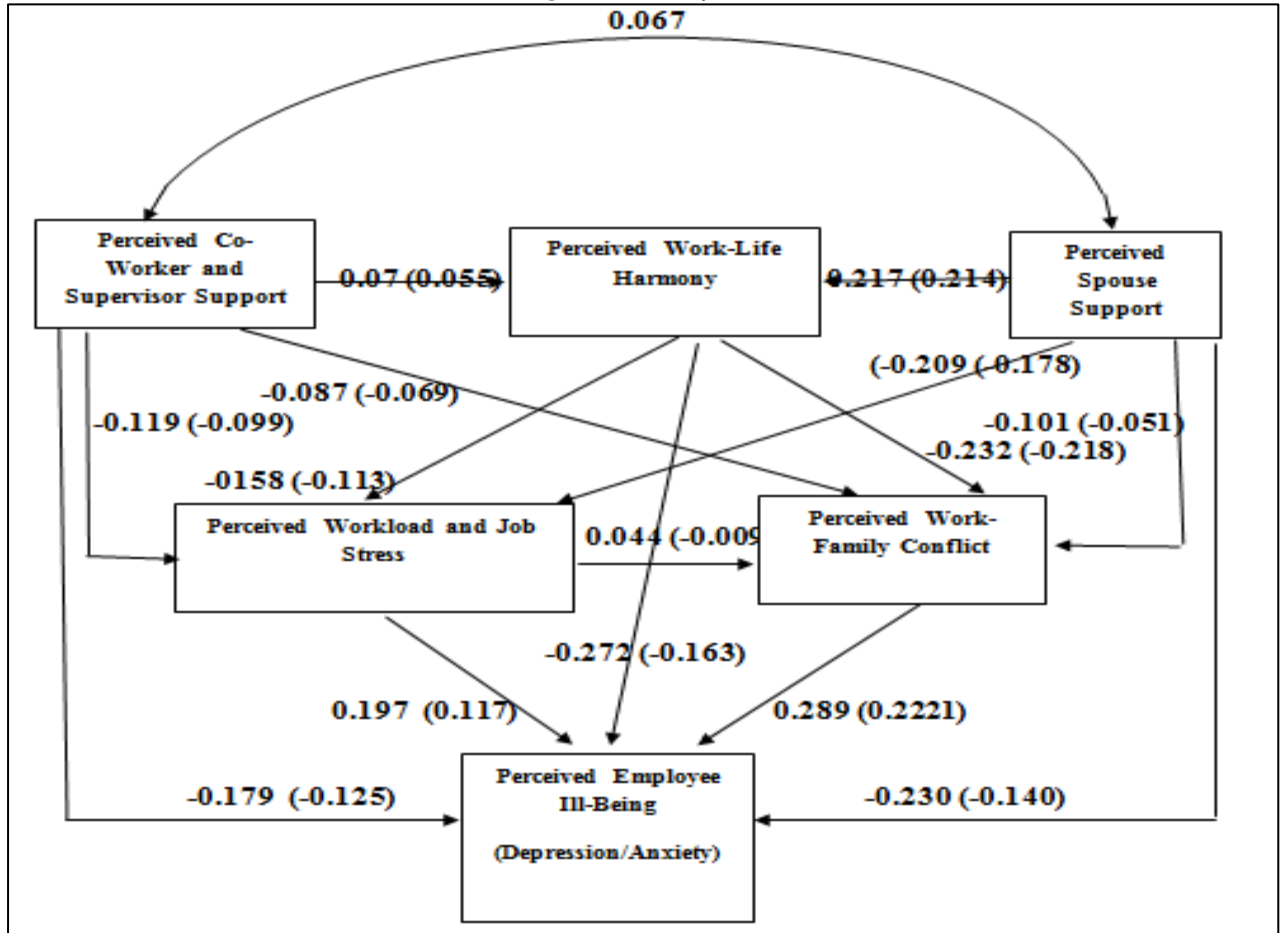


Table-3. Correlation Matrix Between the Six variables

		Employee Psychological ill-Being (PEIB)	Spouse Support (PSS)	Co-orkers and Supervisor support (PCWSS)	Work Life Harmony (PWLH)	Workload and stress (PWJS)	Work Family Conflict (WFC)
Pearson Correlation	(PEIB)	1.000	-.230	-.179	-.272	.197	.289
	(PSS)	-.230	1.000	.067	.217	-.209	-.101
	(PCWSS)	-.179	.067	1.000	.070	-.119	-.087
	(PWLH)	-.272	.217	.070	1.000	-.158	-.232
	(PWJS)	.197	-.209	-.119	-.158	1.000	.044
	(WFC)	.289	-.101	-.087	-.232	.044	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	(PEIB)	.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	(PSS)	.000	.	.061	.000	.000	.009
	(PCWSS)	.000	.061	.	.053	.003	.022
	(PWLH)	.000	.000	.053	.	.000	.000
	(PWJS)	.000	.000	.003	.000	.	.151
	(WFC)	.000	.009	.022	.000	.151	.

N	(PEIB)	541	541	541	541	541	541
	(PSS)	541	541	541	541	541	541
	(PCWSS)	541	541	541	541	541	541
	(PWLH)	541	541	541	541	541	541
	(PWJS)	541	541	541	541	541	541
	(WFC)	541	541	541	541	541	541

Table-4. Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-2.188E-16	.039		.000	1.000
	(PSS)	-.140	.041	-.140	-3.430	.001
	(PCWSS)	-.125	.039	-.125	-3.169	.002
	(PWLH)	-.163	.041	-.163	-3.956	.000
	(PWJS)	.117	.040	.117	2.908	.004
	(WFC)	.221	.040	.221	5.479	.000

a. Dependent Variable: (PEIB)

Table-5.

Variable	Total Effect Direct + Indirect	Direct Effect Path Coefficient	Significance of Path Coefficient
Work-Family Conflict (WFC)	0.289	0.220648	0.000649
Spouse Support (PSS)	-0.230	-0.139663	0.000000
Co-Worker and Supervisor Support (PCWSS)	-0.179	-0.125046	0.001619
Work-Life Harmony (PWLH)	-0.272	-0.163105	0.000087
Workload and Job Stress (PWJS)	0.197	0.117439	0.003787

5.3. Gender Differences

Gender is a categorical (nominal) variable coded as 1 for male and 0 for female. This coded variable is called a dummy variable and can be used as an explanatory variable in multiple regression analysis and in cross tabulation (Chi-Square). Gender was shown to be a significant predictor in regression analysis but, as a categorical variable, it was excluded from path analysis, because path analysis assumes at least interval variable at the level of measurement. Therefore, it became imperative to conduct cross tabulation to test the gender differences. The Chi-Square test showed that the difference between men and women in work-family conflict and co-worker or supervisor support is not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 2.337$, $p = 0.126$; $\chi^2 = 3.194$, $p = 0.074$, respectively). This contradicts the first part of fifth hypothesis (H_6), that there is a significant difference between Qatari men and women in work-life conflict and. A particularly important finding of this study is that more men (71.7%) than women (58.1%) reported having spouse support ($\chi^2 = 10.991$, $p = 0.001$). This result is typical for any Arab country in which women are more supportive of their husbands, as there is a wide perception that men are the main financial supporters and women's jobs are just for an extra income (Amin and Al-Bassusi, 2004). Another notable finding is that more men (76.8%) than women (66%) reported work-life harmony ($\chi^2 = 11.393$, $p = 0.001$). The Chi-Square results also show that more women (80.2%) than men (48.7%) in Qatar experience negative psychological outcomes (depression or anxiety) due to work ($\chi^2 = 81.050$, $p = 0.000$); this is in line with the second part of the fifth hypothesis (H_6), there is a significant difference between Qatari men and women in employee ill-being. This result is supported by a main finding that fewer women (54.4%) than men (63%) are able to manage their workload or job stress ($\chi^2 = 5.996$, $p = 0.014$).

The gender bias among Qatari workers is consistent with previous research. Rehman and Roomi (2012), note that, "Lack of sufficient time, gender bias, social and cultural norms as well as family responsibilities are the most significant challenges women face to achieve balance in a patriarchal Islamic society. Strategic planning, organizing and delegating are the most effective strategies women use to cope with competing roles of work and family." Toth (2005), suggests, "The research reveals that attempts to introduce family-friendly policies still create gendered effects and gendered dilemmas for individual managers." Pocock et al. (2013), note that, "Women workers and mothers – who have been constructed as the work/family problem to be "fixed" – are left even more rushed and pressed for time." Ahmad et al. (2011), report that, "Working women being housewives have to face major problems. They have to trade off between work domain and family life domain, in perspective sector and area chosen."

6. Limitations and Directions for Future Research

In spite of the outcomes that the present research delivers, this study has a limitation that needs to be considered; it only reflects the perceptions of Qatari male and female employees in Qatar. Future studies that expand the sample to include expatriates living in Qatar may provide additional insights as to whether the effect of work-life harmony, work-family conflict, co-worker and supervisor support, as well as spouse support on workload and job stress and on employee psychological ill-being differ among Qataris and non-Qataris.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

“Employee is a blood stream of any business... Employees referred as the rare, non-imitable and valuable resource of the firm and the success or failure of any business mainly relies on its employees’ performance.” (Elnaga and Imran, 2013). When the demands of the workplace are out of the employees’ control, they display symptoms that indicate that they are feeling stressed out (Bickford, 2005). Successful companies realize that investing time and money in identifying employees who are suffering from mental illness and providing them with the help required will guarantee a hundred percent return on their investment. Accordingly, there are a few managerial actions that this study recommends companies to adopt, to create a work atmosphere that supports employees’ psychological well-being:

1. Stress Test: Encouraging employees to complete a stress test is a very easy and cheap method to determine whether or not employees are suffering from stress.
2. Relaxation Techniques: While stress tenses the muscles, relaxation does the opposite. It is becoming popular among companies to offer training on relaxation techniques, such as: deep breathing, progressive relaxation and meditation.
3. Flexible work schedule: Providing employees with some flexibility to meet family needs or obligations reduces their burnout.
4. Policies that foster co-worker support and supervisor support: Companies should run employee assistance programs or team-building activities to train supervisors and employees to provide support to fellow co-workers.
5. Working conditions: Employees who work in a boring workplace setting do not feel motivated to be productive. Thus, improving employees’ working conditions, through simple things such as a comfortable desk or improved lighting, is critical to the overall success of any company.
6. Employee empowerment: Allowing employees to have input and control over their work makes them more loyal, committed, and productive.

In summary, employees’ well-being is an essential tool for increasing any company’s productivity and earnings. “Treating mental health not only benefits employees themselves, but it can also save companies great deal of money” (Bickford, 2005).

Acknowledgement

The researcher would like to acknowledge Dr. Abdullah Badahdah, Director of Research, Doha International Family Institute - Qatar Foundation for making the data available.

Ethical Clearance

The project obtained IRB clearance from the Qatar University Review Board. Research Ethics approval number: QU- IRB 709 /E-16

References

- Ahmad, M. S., Fakhr, Z. and Ahmed, J. (2011). Working women work life conflict. *Business Strategy Series*, 12(6): 289-302. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1108/17515631111185923>
- Amin, S. and Al-Bassusi, N. H. (2004). Education, wage work, and marriage: Perspectives of Egyptian working women. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 66(5): 1287-99.
- Arif, S. and Ilyas, M. (2013). Quality of work-life model for teachers of private universities in Pakistan. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 21(3): 282-98. Available: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/QAE-Feb-2012-0006>
- Aziz, S. and Cunningham, J. (2008). Workaholism, work stress, work life imbalance: exploring gender's role. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 23(8): 553-66. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1108/17542410810912681>
- Bickford, M. (2005). Stress in the workplace: A general overview of the causes, the effects, and the solutions. *Canadian Mental Health Association Newfoundland and Labrador Division*, 8(1): 1-3.
- Bögenhold, D., Dejaridin, M. and De Lema, D. G. (2016). *Contemporary entrepreneurship: Multidisciplinary perspectives on innovation*. ebook, Springer: Switzerland. <https://books.google.com.lb/books?id=jAfNCwAAQBAJ&pg=PA180&lpg=PA180&dq=my+relation+with+my+spouse+is+very+stable&source=bl&ots=jeV8TQY1DM&sig=wSyR05isz8ONYPWvAzrbzuk2jkw&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwj0r8C-h6XYAhXSFuwKHQ6UDXQQ6AEIRTAE>
- Carlson, D. S. and Kacmar, K. M. (2000). Work family conflict in the organization: Do life role values make a difference? *Journal of Management*, 26(5): 1031-54.

- Carlson, D. S., Grzywacz, J. G. and Zivnuska, S. (2009). Is work–family balance more than conflict and enrichment? *Human Relations*, 62(10): 1459-86.
- Charoensukmongkol, P., Moqbel, M. and Gutierrez-Wirsching, S. (2016). The role of co-worker and supervisor support on job burnout and job satisfaction. *Journal of Advances in Management Research*, 13(1): 4-22.
- Chelarju, C. and Stump, R. (2011). A study of work family conflict, family work conflict and the contingent effect of self-efficacy of retail salespeople in a transitional economy. *European Journal of Marketing*, 45(11/12): 1660-79. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1108/03090561111167333>
- Elnaga, A. and Imran, A. (2013). The effect of training on employee performance. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 5(4): 137-47.
- Emmerik, I. J. and Peeters, M. C. W. (2009). Crossover specificity of team-level work-family conflict to individual-level work-family conflict. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 24(3): 254-68. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1108/02683940910939331>
- Fawole, O. A. and Ogunbowale, O. (2016). Influence of work obligations on family commitment among couples in the private sector in kwara state. In g. Ganesini and s. L. Blair (ed.) divorce, separation, and remarriage: The transformation of family. Emerald group publishing limited. *Contemporary Perspectives in Family Research*, 10: 327-46. Available: <https://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/abs/10.1108/S1530-353520160000010013>
- Fujimoto, T., Shinohara, S. K. and Oohira, T. (2014). *Work-family conflict and depression for employed husbands and wives in Japan: Moderating roles of self and spousal role involvement*. In J. H. McCormick, S. L. Blair (ed.) *Family relationships and familial responses to health issues contemporary perspectives in family research*. 135-162 vols. Emerald Group Publishing Limited. 8A.
- Grzywacz, J. G. and Bass, B. L. (2003). Work, family, and mental health: testing different models of work family fit. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 65(1): 248-61.
- Hellgren, J., Sverke, M. and Isaksson, K. (1999). A two-dimensional approach to job insecurity: Consequences for employee attitudes and well-being. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 8(2): 179-95.
- Karasek Jr, R. A. (1979). Job demands, job decision latitude, and mental strain: Implications for job redesign. *Administrative Science Quarterly*: 285-308. Available: https://www.jstor.org/stable/2392498?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents
- Mansour, S. and Tremblay, D.-G. (2016). Workload, generic and work–family specific social supports and job stress: Mediating role of work–family and family–work conflict. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 28(8): 1778-804. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-11-2014-0607>
- Menguc, B. and Boichuk, J. P. (2012). Customer orientation dissimilarity, sales unit identification, and customer-directed extra-role behaviors: Understanding the contingency role of coworker support. *Journal of Business Research*, 65(9): 1357-63.
- Moore, F. (2007). Work-life balance: contrasting managers and workers in an MNC. *Employee Relations*, 29(4): 385-99. Available: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/01425450710759217>
- Murphy, F. and Doherty, L. (2011). The experience of work life balance for Irish senior managers. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 30(4): 252-77. Available: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/02610151111135732>
- Papalexandris, N. and Kramar, R. (1997). Flexible working patterns: towards reconciliation of family and work. *Employee Relations*, 19(6): 581-95. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1108/01425459710193126>
- PHQ-9 Depression Screener and UNC Health Care (n.d). Available: https://www.med.unc.edu/im/files/internal-medicine-clinic-documents/PHQ-9_depression_screener.pdf
- Piftman, J. F. (1994). Work/family fit as a mediator of work factors on marital tension: Evidence from the interface of greedy institutions. *Human Relations*, 47(2): 183-209.
- Pocock, B., Charlesworth, S. and Chapman, J. (2013). Work family and work-life pressures in Australia: advancing gender equality in good times? *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 33(9/10): 594-612. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSSP-11-2012-0100>
- Qatar National Development Strategy (2011). Qatar national development strategy 2011~2016, towards qatar national vision 2030. Available: https://www.mdps.gov.qa/en/knowledge/HomePagePublications/Qatar_NDS_reprint_complete_lowres_16_May.pdf
- Quick, J. C., D., M., Gavin, J. H., Cooper, C. L. and Quick, J. D. (2003). Executives: Engines for positive stress. In p. L. Perrewe, d. C. Ganster (ed.) emotional and physiological processes and positive intervention strategies, emerald group publishing limited. *Research in Occupational Stress and Well-being*, 3: 359-405.
- Rehman, S. and Roomi, M. (2012). Gender and work-life balance: a phenomenological study of women entrepreneurs in Pakistan. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 19(2): 209-28. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1108/14626001211223865>
- Sabat, I., Lindsey, A. and King, E. (2014). Antecedents, outcomes, prevention and coping strategies for lesbian, gay, and bisexual workplace stress. In P. L. Perrewé, C. C. Rosen, J. R. B. Halbesleben (ed.) the role of demographics in occupational stress and well being, emerald group publishing limited. *Research in Occupational Stress and Well-being*, 12: 173-98.

- Santos, G. G. and Cardoso, C.-C. (2008). Work family culture in academia: a gendered view of work-family conflict and coping strategies. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 23(6): 442-57. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1108/17542410810897553>
- Sav, A. and Harris, N. (2013). Work-life conflict in Australian Muslims: is gender important? *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 28(8): 486-504. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1108/GM-01-2013-0013>
- Sloan, M. M. (2012). Unfair treatment in the workplace and worker well-being: The role of coworker support in a service work environment. *Work and Occupations*, 39(1): 3-34.
- Sparks, K., Faragher, B. and Cooper, C. L. (2001). Well-being and occupational health in the 21st century workplace. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 74(4): 489-509.
- Texler, S. M. (2010). *Interactions and intersections of gendered bodies at work, at home, and at play*. Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Toth, H. (2005). Gendered dilemmas of the work-life balance in Hungary. *Women in Management Review*, 20(5): 361-75. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1108/09649420510609195>
- Wallace, J. (2005). Job stress, depression and work-to-family conflict: A test of the strain and buffer hypotheses. *Relations Industrielles/Industrial Relations*, 60(3): 510-39.
- White, M., Hill, S., McGovern, P., Mills, C. and Smeaton, D. (2003). High-performance' management practices, working hours and work-life balance. *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 41(2): 175-95.
- Yang, T., Shen, Y. M., Zhu, M., Liu, Y., Deng, J., Chen, Q. and See, L. C. (2015). Effects of co-worker and supervisor support on job stress and presenteeism in an aging workforce: a structural equation modelling approach. *International Journal of Environmental Research And Public Health*, 13(1): 72.