

Parental Stress, and Parental Self-Efficacy as Determinants of Work-Family and Family-Work Conflict among Working Fathers

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ABSTRACT

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The present study aimed to examine parental self-efficacy (PSE) and parental stress as determinants of work-to-family conflict (WFC) and family-to-work conflict (FWC) among full-time employed fathers. Using the G*Power tool, a total sample of one hundred fathers (N = 100), aged 22–52 years, with children aged between 1 and 12 years, was selected through a snowball purposive sampling technique. The data was collected using the Brief Parental Self-Efficacy Scale, the Parental Stress Scale, and the Work-Family Conflict Scale. The data was analyzed using multiple linear regression analysis and descriptive statistics. Results showed parental stress significantly predicted both WFC and FWC. However, parental self-efficacy (PSE) did not have a significant impact on either WFC or FWC. The findings underscore the critical role of work–family conflict in shaping employee well-being, particularly among working fathers, and highlight its broader implications for organizational effectiveness and sustainable development.

Keywords: Work-Family Conflict, Parental Self-Efficacy, Parental Stress, Fathers, Work-Life Balance, Mental Health.

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Introduction

Work family conflict (WFC) is becoming a growing concern in contemporary society, with many men and women experiencing difficulty finding stability among responsibilities of work and family (Glavin & Schieman, 2012). After years of not giving this issue attention, several demographic and societal shifts have made it a more pressing problem. In the first place, more and more mothers are participating in the workforce, and balancing their professional duties alongside childcare is not easy. Secondly, the aging population worldwide has increased the demand for elder care. This role has been mostly taken over by working individuals, adding an additional responsibility to their role. Lastly, in recent times, men also have started taking greater role in childcare due to evolving notions of gender in Western societies (Kossek & Distelberg, 2009; Kossek & Ollier Malaterre, 2013). Together these converging trends have intensified WFC and have made the link between work and family increasingly complex.

In the present era technological advances have changed the overall picture of both work and the family, such as digital communication tools have become so universal and mandatory that everybody is simply expected to be responsive and in constant communication with others in both work and the family situations. Therefore, it becomes difficult for a professional to be unavailable for the family even during duty hours as well as helpless to get a pure off from the duty in their home time. (Kossek, 2016). This mere fusion or confusion of work and family leading to sometimes Family to Work Conflict (FWC), where family demands interfere with professional responsibilities and adversely impact one's focus, productivity, or availability at work (Netemeyer et al., 1996) and sometimes at the flip of the coin is WFC which reveals that conflict is not only initiated by the family but can also stem from the work domain and make a person's family life overwhelmed. These complicated and two-way conflicts need to be understood and addressed effectively.

In the context of both FWC and WFC the word family is mostly attributed to married people with spouses but reality is that even those who are living without spouses or children often experience similar strains due to caregiving responsibilities for aging parents or siblings, or through close relational obligations with friends who serve familial roles (Casper et al., 2007). As both work to family and family to work dynamics create tension might be because of certain unwavering expectations, WFC or FWC emerge as the complex and pervasive issues with wide-ranging consequences.

Greenhaus and Beutell in 1985 stated that WFC is an inter role struggle, where the weights of work and family domains cannot be managed together. This includes two key dimensions: work interfering with family (WF) and family interfering with work (FW). Both aspects are associated with reduced marital satisfaction, mental health issues, and overall well-being (Allen et al., 2000; Byron, 2005). Studies have shown that females are experiencing these conflicts more as compared to males may be because they are expected to be carrying more communion traits, but in terms of intensities of conflict both experience the conflict at the same level (Ahmed & Zohra, 2008). However, in eastern cultures like Pakistan this conflict could be perceived differently not because of sex differences but because of gender roles assigned to male and female counterparts under patriarchal division of societal identities where, male spouses are supposedly the breadwinners and the key responsible figure for the financial support and stability of the family. At the same time as the head of the family, they have to be an equal representative of a strong masculine role and are expected to be emotionally available at home and excelling professionally. Consequently, males as a husband and fathers might face more intensified WFC and FWC.

Additionally, in last couple of decades men's role as a father has evolved noticeably and has shifted beyond that of traditional breadwinners. Such as fathers are now increasingly involved in child rearing and household responsibilities. This transition has not only shaped the father children relationship in a positive manner and supported increased fairness in parenting but on the other side it has increased fathers' vulnerability to both directions of WFC, particularly when caregiving responsibilities intrude on work performance (Cooklin et al., 2016). In particular, elevation of FWC can cause emotional exhaustion, lower parenting satisfaction, and higher psychological distress, which might bring a change in perceived ability of parents to control the family matters especially among fathers.

Different factors can be considered as potential determining factors of FWC or WFC such as work pressures, unexpected family duties and inadequate provision of infrastructures and facilities (Adisa & Osabutey, 2016) uncertain work schedules, uncooperative members of the family and conventional gender roles and some personal characteristics (Rehman & Hossain, 2025). These personal characteristics can be many such as self-esteem, self-efficacy and confidence etc. In addition to the aforementioned factors which can be caused by FWC or WFC, another major matrimonial factor could be Parental Self Efficacy (PSE).

Parental Self Efficacy is a parent's confidence in their own abilities to manage effectively the parenting tasks. PSE is primarily based on Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory and mainly determined by their experiences, upbringing

values, and societal norms. (Murdock, 2013). Self-efficacy studies have demonstrated a relationship between levels of efficacy and lower stress and greater capacity to meet role demands (Siu et al., 2005; Erdwins et al., 2001). Thus, it can be assumed that PSE may also act to mitigate or mediate the intensity of WFC and FWC. Findings have been conflicting (Beauregard, 2006).

Only a few numbers of studies have directly explored the relationship between PSE and WFC. For example, Cinamon et al. (2007) conducted research on Israeli working parents and found a negative correlation between PSE and WFC. Research on Portuguese dual-earner couples has also illustrated that increased WFC decreases parenting confidence in mothers and fathers (Vieira et al. 2016). These results further support the concept that there is a significant relationship between parental identity and competence, and WFC particularly spillover from the family domain to work.

Individual fathers with high PSE have a tendency to adopt more effective coping mechanisms that protect them against the negative impact of WFC and FWC. Rather, fathers with low PSE are likely to perceive themselves as inefficient, thus accumulating their part in the conflict and exacerbating the conflict (Carlson et al., 2000). The trend followed in the present study is that PSE does not just offer an insight into the responses of fathers to WFC but it also offers an insight on how WFC mediates its influences on the psychological health and the entire experience of parenting among fathers.

The best way with which this dynamic can be demonstrated is by parental stress where the parent is the one who suffers the cost of well-being and child development (Deater-Deckard, 1998). WFC is interchangeably related to parental stress: stress is caused by conflict, and high stress tends to make families more susceptible to conflict in the future. This process is explained by Hobfoll (1989) Conservation of Resources Theory: we get stressed when we deplete key personal resources like time, energy, or emotional capacity. When fathers are also affected by WFC (either work or family-driven) and they have low PSE, there are fewer resources available, leading to increased vulnerability to parental stress (Cooklin et al., 2016). As a result, PSE functions as a buffer that conditions how fathers interpret and respond to the resource depletion from FW and WF conflict.

Despite the growing involvement of fathers in childrearing, most research on WFC and parental stress and its role remains mother-centric or fails to differentiate by gender. This is a critical oversight, as fathers face unique pressures related to fulfilling double roles as providers and caregivers (Cabrera et al., 2000). These gendered expectations often traverse with FWC, creating distinctive pathways to stress that merit separate investigation.

The aim of this research is to understand the relationships between WFC, parental self-efficacy, and parental stress in fathers so as to enrich the research on working fathers' pressures. To address the gap in the existing literature, this research focuses on fathers and demonstrates the need for gender-sensitive approaches to supporting work-life balance.

Literature Review

Work family conflict (WFC) is defined as a condition in which demands from work and family roles are mutually incompatible, making participation in one role more difficult because of the demands of the other (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). It includes two directions: work interfering with family (WIF) and family interfering with work (FIW) where WFC has a strong connection with individuals' well-being and family dynamics.

For example, among fathers who face high levels of WIF, there are reported lower levels of job satisfaction, greater strain in family relationships, and higher psychological distress (Mauno, Kinnunen & Ruokolainen, 2006). A Hong Kong study by Lau & Yuk (2010) found that fathers' work-to-family conflict negatively affects father-child interaction quality, which in turn was associated with lower children's self-esteem. Moreover, in a more recent study focusing that work-family gains (positive aspects of balancing work and family) and work-family strains (negative aspects) influence father involvement via parenting styles: fathers who perceive more gains report higher involvement via positive parenting styles, while those perceiving more strains report lower involvement via negative parenting styles (Diniz et al., 2023).

However, contrary to the findings observing WFC as a cause of multiple problems, a Chinese study revealed that work stressors like conflicting and ambiguous working roles can lead to both WFC and FWC (Foley et al. 2005).

Parental Stress and Its Determinants

Parenting stress is related to the challenges and responsibilities of being a parent and can be measured by instruments such as the Parental Stress Scale (Berry & Jones, 1995). High parental stress is correlated negatively with parental self-efficacy and positively with WFC (Abidin, 1992). As Belsky (1984) suggested, increased parenting stress tends to influence the quality of parent-child and partner relationships.

Meta-analysis by Rusu et al. (2025) showed that parenting stress significantly undermines parental well-being. The Korean fathers' study mentioned above stated that work-family strains enhanced fathers' parenting stress (Lee & Jung, 2024). These findings support the idea that parenting stress is a major mechanism linking poorer parenting outcomes to work-family conflict.

Parental Self-Efficacy and Its Role in Family Functioning

In Pakistan, a study of medical professionals found that higher family-to-work conflict was associated with lower general self-efficacy and emotional intelligence (Zeb et al., 2021). However, Parental self-efficacy (PSE) is the parent's belief in their capability to effectively execute parenting tasks. Fathers with high PSE tend to be more involved in childcare and better able to cope with work–family demands. Jones & Prinz (2005) found a strong negative association between parental stress and PSE, and a positive association between PSE and better parenting outcomes.

A systematic review by Coleman & Karraker (2017) identified many factors associated with PSE (including parenting stress and social support). More recently, Carbone, Pestell, Nevill & Mancini (2025) found that father's self-efficacy indirectly predicted children's mental health difficulties via parenting style and emotion regulation.

Gender Norms, Role Expectations, and Cultural Context

Fathers often experience greater pressure in balancing work and family due to traditional gender-role norms positioning them as primary breadwinners. Kaufman (2013) argued that when fathers perceive inadequacy in either breadwinning or caregiving, WFC and parenting strain tend to increase. Fathers adopting more egalitarian beliefs and engaging more in caregiving report lower stress and conflict (Lamb, 2010).

Contemporary research has shown that work-family gains and strains in fathers are mediated through parenting styles (Diniz et al., 2023). While direct studies focusing on fathers in Pakistan are limited, evidence from medical professionals suggests significant levels of work-family conflict and low self-efficacy (Zeb et al., 2021). Given the cultural context of strong paternal breadwinner norms and limited caregiving flexibility, the experience of WFC and associated stress may be particularly salient for fathers in Pakistan.

Furthermore, the literature supports a model where WFC → increased parental stress → reduced PSE → poorer parenting outcomes. For example, Crnic & Low (2002) suggested that parental stress mediates between WFC and negative parenting. According to the broader review by Bianchi & Milkie (2010), spillover of work demands into the family domain undermines parenting resources. In fathers, studies show that work–family strains link to higher parenting stress and via negative parenting styles to lower involvement (Diniz, 2023). The systematic review of PSE factors (Coleman & Karraker, 2017) further indicates that parenting stress and lower self-efficacy cluster together.

Evidence from Pakistan and Similar Contexts

A study by Mahmood & Khan (2024) found that employees in Pakistan had decreased well-being as a result of WFC, and that psychological capital (to which self-efficacy belongs) moderated the relationship. Although this study did not focus specifically on fathers or parenting, it suggests that WFC and self-efficacy are meaningful and correlated constructs in the Pakistani context. Moreover the existing literature has mixed results based on mixed aims of researches to explore the WFC OR FWC as determinants of parental self-efficacy while on the other hand explored these conflicts as caused by parental self-efficacy. Therefore, further research is needed that not only takes a clear stance on the effect of self-efficacy on WFC OR FWC. Moreover there is a need of advancement in the literature that can elaborate the sample differences in terms of exploring the causal relationship between parental self-efficacy and WFC for example specifically targeting the role of working mothers and working fathers in Pakistan. Therefore, the present study aimed to see the relationships among work-to-family conflict (WFC), family-to-work conflict (FWC), parental self-efficacy (PSE) and parental stress in full-time employed fathers. There were four hypotheses established, 1-Higher levels of parental stress will significantly predict higher levels of work to family conflict. 2- Higher levels of parental stress will significantly predict higher levels of family to work conflict. 3- Higher levels of parental self-efficacy will significantly predict lower levels of work to family conflict. 4- Higher levels of parental self-efficacy will significantly predict lower levels family to work conflict. There were many reasons of studying these hypotheses such as Fathers have historically been neglected in research, particularly on work and family dynamics, with much of the focus centered on mothers or generalized findings are lacking in addressing the distinct challenges faced by fathers. While the shift toward shared parenting responsibilities has brought greater attention to fathers' roles, there remains a major gap in considering how work-family conflict (WFC) is linked with fathers' parental self- efficacy (PSE) and parental stress.

Studies have shown that reduced PSE and increased parental stress can increase WFC which only complicates the problems of fathers. Indicatively, Deater-Deckard (2004) noted that parenting stress is prominent and closely associated with the individual's perceived capacities to attain caregiving needs. Marital stress can be increased among fathers who are likely to have to balance between being the breadwinners and involved caregivers.

This study sheds light on how parental stress and parental self-efficacy impact WFC and FWC among fathers, aiming to highlight their specific challenges

and provide insights for gender-sensitive interventions. By focusing exclusively on fathers, this study enhances a balanced understanding of work-family dynamics and encourages the formulation of policies and practices that support fathers in fulfilling both their professional and parental roles.

Methodology

Research Design

A quantitative correlational design was used to examine how work-family conflict, parental self-efficacy, and parental stress are related among employed fathers.

Participants

According to G*power the sample consisted of one hundred (N=100) diverse employed fathers of the children with the age of 12 years or below. They were recruited using purposive and snowball sampling. Different Karachi based community networks and workplaces were used to identify and select the participants. First, snowball sampling method was used in which the current participants recommended other possible respondents within their social and professional networks. This was then followed by purposive sampling, which was used to select people that fit the study inclusion criteria. To make the sample uniform following inclusion and exclusion criteria have been followed.

Category	Criteria/Variables
Inclusion Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fathers with at least one child aged 12 years or younger.• Fathers actively involved in managing their children's care and education.• Fathers employed full-time.
Exclusion Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fathers whose children were all older than 12 years.• Fathers who were not employed full-time (e.g., entrepreneurs, freelancers, or business owners).
Demographic Variables	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Age• Socioeconomic status• Total number of children• Number of children aged 12 years or younger

Measures

1. Brief Parental Self-Efficacy Scale (BPSES)

Brief Parental Self-Efficacy Scale (BPSES) is a parental self-efficacy five item scale that targets parental self-efficacy as a 5-point Likert scale (Woolgar et al., 2023). The highest and lowest score of the scale is 5 to 25 with higher marks of the increased levels of self-efficacy with parents. This has shown that the BPSES has a strong internal consistency reliability with the value of Cronbachs Alpha being 0.85. In addition, the scale shows that there is a pleasant construct validity, which is parental self-efficacy in different terms of parenting interventions and with different ages of children that is determined through a confirmatory factor analysis and a correlation with other constructs.

2. Parental Stress Scale (PSS)

In 1995 Beryy and Jones created the scale of Parental Stress Scale. The scale is made up of 18 items which evaluates the positive and negative aspects of parenting. Responses are measured on a 5-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating greater levels of parental stress. PSS has shown that internal consistency reliability is high with reported values of Cronbachs alpha at 0.83 to 0.87 in different studies. Also, the scale has good convergent validity as proved by high correlations with emotional functioning, parenting satisfaction and life stress and is therefore a good measure of parental stress.

3. Work–Family Conflict Scale (WAFCS)

Carlson, Kacmar, and Williams (2000) proposed another scale, the Work–Family Conflict Scale (WAFCS), which is a 10-item scale measuring the conflict in two directions; work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict. The scale ranks items on a 7-point Likert scale with subscale scores having a range of 5-35 with higher scores reflecting an increased conflict. WAFCS has proved to be highly reliable in terms of internal consistency reliability with Cronbach alpha value of 0.91 in the work-to-family conflict subscale and 0.88 in the family-to-work conflict subscale. The scale also demonstrates good construct and discriminant validity which has been established by confirmatory factor analyses and significant correlation with job satisfaction, stress levels and turnover intentions.

Procedure

Each of the finally selected participants received a comprehensive briefing concerning the objectives, procedures, and ethical issues of the study regarding maintaining confidentiality in line with informed consent requirements and their right to quit from the study at any point of discomfort.

Self-administered questionnaires with the following instruments were used to gather data; Brief Parental Self-Efficacy Scale (BPSES), Parental Stress Scale (PSS), Work-Family Conflict Scale (WAFCS) and a demographic information form were used. The data was collected online and took two weeks.

Ethical Considerations

Before starting the data collection, the purpose, aims, and the processes of the study were properly communicated to the participants. All the participants were given informed consent that was written before filling the questionnaires. They also got to know that their names would not be disclosed in any case and that they were free to quit the study at the will of their choice. In order to maintain confidentiality, all the survey answers were anonymous and no personal identifiable information was gathered. The procedure was conducted according to the guidelines of the Ethical Approval Board.

Statistical Analysis

The data was examined by using statistical inference methods. The study uses Multiple Linear Regression Analysis to predict the connection between work-family conflict, parental stress and parental self-efficacy variables. Moreover, descriptive statistics was used to present the simplest understanding of the variables.

Results

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables (N = 100)

Variables	Range Min-Max	M	SD
Parental Stress Scale	46-87	61.73	7.64
Parental Self-Efficacy	15-25	20.08	2.35
Work-to-Family Conflict	9-30	20.15	4.30
Family-to-Work Conflict	7-30	15.56	5.12

Descriptive statistics were calculated for all primary study variables (see Table 2). The mean score for the Parental Stress Scale was 61.73 (SD = 7.64), reflecting a moderate to high level of parental stress among participants. PSE had a mean score of 20.08 (SD = 2.35), suggesting an overall good perception

of parenting competence. The mean score for WFC was 20.15 (SD = 4.30), while the mean score for FWC was slightly lower at 15.56 (SD = 5.12).

Table 2

Pearson Correlations among Parental Stress, Parental Self-Efficacy, Work-to-Family Conflict (WFC) and Family-to-Work Conflict (FWC). (N=100)

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Parental Stress Scale	—	.37**	.53**	.39**
2. Parental Self-Efficacy			.23*	.04
3. Work-to-Family Conflict				.57**
4. Family-to-Work Conflict				—

* $p < .05$ (1-tailed). ** $p < .01$ (1-tailed).

Parental stress showed significant positive correlations with parental self-efficacy ($r = .37, p < .01$), WFC ($r = .53, p < .01$), and FWC ($r = .39, p < .01$). Parental self-efficacy was weakly but significantly correlated with WFC ($r = .23, p < .05$), but it did not show a significant relationship with FWC ($r = .04, p > .05$). WFC demonstrated a strong positive association with FWC ($r = .57, p < .01$). These findings indicate that higher parental stress is associated with higher levels of both directions of work–family conflict, while parental self-efficacy relates only to work-to-family conflict.

Table 3

Regression Results for Work-to-Family Conflict

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	Sig.	R Square
Constant	.825	3.756		.827	.279
Parental Stress	.288	.052	.511	.000	.279
Parental Self-Efficacy	.077	.170	.042	.650	.279

Note. $R^2 = .279$. $p < .05$ indicates significance.

The results show that parental stress significantly increases work-to-family conflict. Parental self-efficacy does not have a significant effect. Overall, stress is the main factor explaining work-to-family conflict in this sample.

Table 4

Regression Results for Family-to-Work Conflict

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	Sig.	R Square
Constant	2.979	4.826		.539	.160
Parental Stress	.287	.067	.428	.000	.160
Parental Self-Efficacy	-.256	.218	-.117	.244	.160

Note. $R^2 = .160$. $p < .05$ indicates significance. The findings indicate that parental stress also significantly increases family-to-work conflict. Parental self-efficacy again does not significantly influence this conflict. So, stress plays the key role in family-to-work conflict.

Discussion

This research sought to examine the relationship of parental self-efficacy (PSE), and parental stress with work-family conflict (WFC) and family-work conflict (FWC), among working fathers. The findings showed significant determining relationships between the main variables, however, some of which challenged existing assumptions in the literature. The results provided important insights into how fathers balance their professional and caregiving roles and highlight the complex dynamics and their implications for psychological well-being

Maintaining balance between the work and family life is a hard core for almost all working personnel, however it’s a matter of perception. If a person can maintain the balance or feel that it is balanced, they can be more satisfied and stress-free however, if not, it can increase stress and lead to conflict. The first and second hypotheses of the study were related to the same phenomenon of parental stress especially among fathers. Hypotheses of the study were “higher levels of parental stress will significantly predict higher levels of work to family conflict” and “higher levels of parental stress will significantly predict higher levels of family to work conflict” which have been proved. The findings regarding impact of stress on WFC can be understood within the frames of the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory by Hobfoll (1989). According to the COR, the experience of stress is when individuals lose or feel their cherished personal resources, including time, energy, and well-being, are

endangered. Fathers may undergo a decline in these resources in a working environment or in a family situation where they might find it difficult to meet several obligations arising from their family and work interactions. Time and energy are the most salient resources because fathers might think that work tasks should be given priority over family responsibility, which might give rise to a sense of guilt, frustration, and stress. This resource depletion is in line with Deater-Deckard (1998), who reported that very high levels of work-related stress may disable a parent from interacting effectively with their children, further catalyzing sources of torment. In such a case, the demands of work may be more disruptive to the family domain, and therefore, WFC might be a more prominent outcome of stress for fathers. Similarly high demand from the family is another dimension of the work family conflict in which family is creating the pressure to fulfil their demands unconditionally. In countries like Pakistan where people are in general facing troublesome to get good and highly paid jobs, dealing with routine inflation, political instability, high pricing of daily servings and necessities, they are at the same time facing the traditional and cultural demands of getting married and kids in first few years of marriage and to become parents. As close to the nature, these shifts make both the husband and wife very involved in parenting and push them hard to be good and active parents. With the increase in economic recession worldwide, widespread information around the globe, social media, urbanization and inflation at one side change the mind sets and level of acceptance for a fair and equal financial contribution from both the marital partners and parents of a child, on the other side these factors propagate the equality in contribution to the family matters, house chores and child rearing practices. Even with the due limitations of having roots in strong patriarchal and collectivistic society this equality debate slides the stereotypical gender roles, distribution of a man from only breadwinner and agency oriented to the communion and woman only as a communion to the breadwinner. But question arises that is it still so easy and comforting especially for a male and a father who is still living in a collectivistic culture where older generation are still living with the new era men and introjecting the cultural values to be as same as before especially in male and fathers more may be because of firm perception that only men can be the head of the family. Therefore, it can be assumed that today male and especially fathers are more vulnerable to be under stress as they are not only expected to be actively available as a modern father who is equally participating in child rearing and house chores but also fulfil the responsibilities of breadwinner as a head of the family. When these stressors interfere with work responsibilities can lead to FWC. These findings were consistent with the previous researches that when individuals experience higher stress levels, it may result in conflict between the two roles (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010).

The third hypothesis suggested that “higher levels of parental self-efficacy will significantly predict lower levels of work to family conflict” and fourth hypothesis suggesting “higher levels of parental self-efficacy will significantly predict lower levels family to work conflict” have been disproved which showed that PSE does not have any significant effect.

Parental self-efficacy (PSE) has been linked with better coping and parenting results (Jones & Prinz, 2005). According to Murdock (2013) and Cinamon et al. (2007), high PSE is positively related to the outcomes of parenting and low WFC because confident parents are more effective in their coping strategies. However, in the present sample, PSE does not have any significant effect on WFC or FWC. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) explained that in the male dominant cultures, men have a strong idea about masculinity and breadwinner roles. They often face strong cultural pressures that shape their role as a father. Fathers with higher parental self-efficacy can still be tied up in expectations of society and workplace norms that focus more on income and financial support rather than caregiving. Therefore, it limits the role of PSE and it might be overshadowed by the cultural role of breadwinner. Pakistan is also a society that has cultural and societal expectations for both genders and has strong masculinity roles. Therefore, the role of PSE might got limited due to cultural expectations.

Jeong et al. (2018) also shed light on fathers’ roles in Pakistani society that fathers are considered as breadwinner and financial supporter of the family, but they also have caregiving roles. However, these dual responsibilities together increase stress. Even if the father has strong PSE, this dual responsibility limits its role in reducing the WFC.

In conclusion, the findings proved that parental stress plays a significant role in WFC and FWC, whereas parental self-efficacy doesn’t have any significant impact on both.

The stress that fathers experience at work can often affect responsibilities at home. In the same way, if the work is demanding and stressful, it can impact their family life (Mauno et al., 2006). Bianchi & Milkie (2010) highlighted that organizational reforms are needed to reduce the effect of WFC. Long working hours and lack of family-oriented policies often increase this conflict. If companies included flexible schedules, supportive leadership and management, parental leave, and adequate working hours, it would significantly impact WFC in a positive way. Among the fathers, flexible working hours, paternity leaves, and other work-friendly policies are essential needs in order to avail the dad’s space to balance the competing family and work life in a more sensible way. The work of Kossek and Ollier-Malaterre (2013), and Glavin and Schiemann (2012), has demonstrated that balancing

policies for work and life have a beneficial effect on the harmful effects of WFC on the psychological outcomes of fathers.

Conclusion

The study provides an understanding of how fathers are experiencing work-family conflict (WFC), parental self-efficacy (PSE), and parental stress. The findings highlighted that parental stress significantly predicts both WFC and FWC. These results support the applicability of targeted efforts to manage WFC. Interventions such as flexible work policies and supportive organizational structures are essential for reducing psychological strain. Further investigation ought to take into account how help systems external to the family, such as family or community support networks can be utilized to minimize work-family conflict and maximize fathers well.

Besides this, the study highlights the need to have gender-sensitive policies and practices that consider the special issues of men as they attempt to balance family and work together. The cultural norm of the fathers as caregivers, providers, decision makers and working personnel at stressful workplaces also directing to the psychological expenditure of WFC. The policy recommendations that will be developed based on the results of work and life balance enhancement are likely to lead to the establishment of healthier families and fathers that are more emotionally resilient.

Practical Implications

In patriarchal societies, such as Pakistan, fathers are associated with the role of the provider, authoritative figure, leader or the main decision maker. Often, they are the main financial providers of the family. These stereotypical expectations increase the pressure on fathers that may result in conflict or stress, particularly with reference of fulfilling the needs of their family. Moreover, with lack of adequate employee friendly policies or the absolute void of any employee unions, fathers are often expected to work over time. This leaves them with limited time to spend with their families and children.

Studies have also highlighted that organizations often encourage the “ideal worker” norm, where fathers are expected to prioritize their work over their care-giver role. In his Allard et al. (2011) highlighted that the organizations that had family supportive policies had a significant impact on fathers’ experiences of work–family conflict, while the organizations lacking such policies often discouraged fathers in participating as active caregivers, as it may be perceived as being less productive.

This study further highlights the on-going changes in gender roles. Particularly, highlighting the roles of fathers’ simultaneously managing work and family responsibilities. It challenges the traditional roles of fathers as just

providers and mothers as caregivers, instead it also recognizes the role of father as caregivers. Furthermore, it proposes for better organizational policies that support fathers in effectively managing their work and family simultaneously.

This study also encourages mental health workers to recognize the role of fathers and the challenges they face while balancing their work and family, as these challenges are often overlooked due to cultural norms and stereotypes. Psycho-social interventions could be designed particularly focusing on the stress management, parental counseling and emotional regulation. They should also be screened for chronic burnouts and appropriate interventions should be provided.

At organizational level, this studies not just highlights the need of supportive workplace policies and flexible working hours, but it's also sheds light on the limited availability of psychological help or mental health programs, especially for fathers that may be struggling to cope with their dual responsibilities.

Limitation and Suggestions

Despite the fact that this study is significant in providing crucial information on the life of working fathers full of time, it has its limitation. Presently, the sample was only focused to fathers working in a traditional full-time job only, and the sample of the freelancer, entrepreneur, or the part-time worker with work and family conflict experiences may rather be quite different. This restricts the relevance of the results.

Secondly, introduction of self-report measures introduces the threat of social desirability bias. The second limitation of the correlational design is that it compares variables at a single instance, and causality is impossible. Perhaps, longitudinal research or interview based qualitative design would provide profounder data on the patterns of WFC, parental self-efficacy, and stress over time. Also, the study uses older scales due to convenience and availability. More updated and recent scales can be used in future researches.

Further research needs to engage more and more varied samples and other contextual factors; e.g., spouse support. Moreover, the cultural situation and changes in social norms of fatherhood must be viewed with more caution, as they undoubtedly affect the level of stress and the attitude to self-efficacy. Overall, the extension of the scope of the future study can contribute to the introduction of more accepting and realistic solutions to the support of the fathers in fulfilling their dual roles.

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