

MANAGING WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT: COPING RESPONSES AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS AMONG WORKING WOMEN

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Abstract

The conflicting demands of work and home often place emotional, physical, and psychological strain on working women causing them to adopt different coping responses to manage these challenges effectively. The present study examines the coping strategies used by working women to deal with work-family conflict, and how well they think of these responses in balancing professional and family lives. A qualitative research design was used to gain a comprehensive grasp of participants' coping practices. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with working women purposively sampled to include participants with work-family conflict relevant experiences. The data gathered was examined through thematic analysis. The results revealed a variety of coping responses practiced by working women such as time management, emotional support, family support, workplace flexibility, prioritization of tasks, seeking social support and problem solving strategies. Significant contributors to reduced work-family stress included a supportive family environment, flexible work arrangements, and strong personal coping skills. The findings emphasize the importance of creating supportive environments at the family and the work level to better enable women to cope with work-family conflict.

INTRODUCTION

In urban and rural areas of contemporary societies number of working women is on the increase. Some of the reasons influencing this development are the economic demands of families, the increase in women's education and skill levels, and the shifting social standards about women's responsibilities. Work-family conflict is usually derived from the conflicting and varied responsibilities between the work and family domains. The conflict between work and family can have a significant impact on women's physical and mental well-being, as well as the quality of family relationships (Simanjuntak, Yuliati, &

Kumalasari, 2024). Therefore, in order for working women to optimize their roles, efforts to resolve work-family conflict are crucial.

Coping strategies are central to managing work family conflict as they determine how individuals respond to and reduce the stress that results from competing role demands. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) define coping as cognitive and behavioral efforts that are used to manage internal and external demands that are appraised as demanding or exceeding the resources of a person. In the context of work family conflict, coping strategies have been classified into problem-focused,

emotion-focused and more recently boundary management and avoidance strategies.

Problem-focused coping strategies aim to directly confront the sources of the conflict by changing the conditions that generate stress. These include effective time management, prioritizing tasks, allocating responsibilities, and seeking active support from supervisors, colleagues, or family members (Carlson, Grzywacz, & Zivnuska, 2009). Whereas, emotion-focused coping strategies aim to regulate the emotional response to stress but not the stressor. These can include rational reassessment, acceptance, mindfulness, seeking emotional support through social networks (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004). Despite these strategies may not eliminate the source of conflict, they can help reduce psychological distress and improve overall well-being.

Recent literature has paid attention to boundary management strategies beyond these traditional categories. These include the intentional management of boundaries between work and family roles, ranging from keeping roles separate to blending roles (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000). For example, setting clear work hours, limiting after-hours communication, or creating physical and psychological boundaries between work and home can help reduce role interference. Hence, it is relevant to conduct an in-depth study on coping strategies of work family conflict among working women in Pakistan especially Balochistan. The findings of the present study suggest that working women experience conflicts of dual roles and stress as a result of work demands outside the home that are not aligned with household and child care responsibilities. Surely, these working women adopt various strategies to manage work-family conflict, but no detailed study was conducted on their coping efforts especially in Balochistan. Thus, the aim of this study is to investigate and describe coping strategies used by working women in overcoming work-family conflict. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the literature on coping strategies for work-family conflict among female workers. Thus, it can provide valuable insights for relevant authorities to formulate policies supporting

working mothers in managing their dual roles effectively.

Literature review

Maintaining a healthy work-family balance is crucial for personal well-being and overall productivity. It refers to the ability to manage time and energy effectively between work responsibilities and family life, which can be a challenging task. Many factors, such as long working hours, frequent travel, inflexible work schedules, and family responsibilities, can make it difficult to strike a balance. However, there are several coping strategies that individuals can use to manage the demands of work and family life effectively. One of the most effective coping strategies is to prioritize and schedule time for both work and family activities. Individuals can create a to-do list and prioritize their tasks based on their urgency and importance. By doing so, they can avoid wasting time on non-essential activities and focus on those that matter most. According to a study by Kalliath and Kalliath (2014), individuals who use time-management strategies have better work-family balance than those who do not.

Another coping strategy is to set boundaries between work and family life. This involves creating physical and mental boundaries between the two domains to prevent them from overlapping. For instance, individuals can turn off their work phones and laptops during family time to avoid interruptions. By setting boundaries, individuals can improve their work-family balance and reduce stress levels (Dahm & Glaser, 2019). Flexibility is another important coping strategy that individuals can use to balance work and family responsibilities. As per Jansen and Kant (2019), flexible work arrangements are positively associated with work-family balance and job satisfaction. Finally, social support is an essential coping strategy that can help individuals balance work and family responsibilities. Social support refers to the emotional, instrumental, and informational assistance that individuals receive from their family, friends, and colleagues. By seeking social support, individuals can reduce

stress levels and improve their well-being (Frone et al., 2015).

Women are often tasked with balancing work and family life, which can be a daunting challenge. Social support can play a crucial role in helping women manage these competing demands. Social support can take many different forms, including emotional support, instrumental support, informational support, and appraisal support (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Women who receive emotional support are less likely to experience depression, anxiety, or other mental health problems (Barnett & Hyde, 2001).

Moreover, social support can provide a sense of belonging and connection to others, which can improve a person's overall quality of life. Social support is essential for women who are balancing work and family life. It can reduce stress, provide resources and information, and promote mental health and well-being. By fostering social support networks, employers, policymakers, and communities can help women to succeed both in the workplace and at home.

Prioritizing Tasks

Balancing work and family life can be particularly challenging for women, who often have additional responsibilities related to childcare and household management. Prioritizing tasks is an important strategy for women to manage their time effectively and achieve a healthy balance between work and family life. According to a study, women who effectively manage their time by prioritizing their tasks experience lower levels of work-family conflict and higher levels of job and life satisfaction. It is also found that effective time management can help women to reduce stress levels and increase their sense of control over their lives (Allen et al., 2014). To prioritize tasks effectively, women can use a variety of strategies. One approach is to create a to-do list that prioritizes tasks based on their importance and urgency. Women can also delegate responsibilities to family members, friends, or colleagues, particularly for tasks that are not essential to their work or family responsibilities.

Managing Time

Time management is essential for balancing work and family life. It helps women to prioritize their tasks and ensure that they are allocating their time effectively to meet their responsibilities both at work and home. Time management skills can help individuals to reduce stress levels and improve their overall well-being. According to Yun (2018), balancing work and family life is essential for individuals' mental and physical health. Effective time management can help individuals to reduce stress levels, improve their sleep quality, and enhance their overall quality of life (Yun, 2018). Managing time is crucial for women who are balancing work and family life. It can help them to prioritize their tasks, set realistic goals, reduce stress levels, and improve their overall well-being. By using effective time management strategies, women can achieve a healthy balance between work and family life.

Establishing Familial Relationship at Work

Establishing familial relationships at work can be an effective coping strategy for managing work and family life. It involves building strong relationships with colleagues and treating them as a supportive family. This can help individuals to reduce stress levels, feel more connected to their work, and achieve a better work-life balance. As a matter of fact, establishing familial relationships at work can help individuals to manage work family conflict and improve their overall well-being. It is also stated that individuals who had strong relationships with their colleagues reported lower levels of stress and a higher sense of work-family balance (Beutell & Berman, 2008). To establish familial relationships at work, it can create a supportive and positive work environment. Individuals who feel supported by their colleagues are more likely to be engaged in their work and have higher job satisfaction levels. This, in turn, can help to reduce turnover rates and increase productivity (Beutell & Berman, 2008).

Establishing Good Relationship at Home and Workplace

Building positive relationships both at work and home can help individuals to feel more supported,

reduce stress levels, and improve their overall well-being. According to researchers, individuals who have positive relationships at work are more likely to be satisfied with their job and report higher levels of well-being. The study found that the quality of relationships with colleagues was a significant predictor of job satisfaction and overall well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

Establishing good relationships at home and work can also help individuals to manage their work and family responsibilities more effectively. For example, having a supportive partner or family member can help individuals to manage childcare responsibilities and other household tasks, allowing them to focus more effectively on their work. Similarly, positive relationships with colleagues can lead to better communication and collaboration, which can improve productivity and work quality (Krouse, & Afifi, 2007). Positive relationships can create a more enjoyable and fulfilling life both at home and work. Feeling valued and supported by others can increase feelings of happiness and contentment, which can have positive impacts on overall well-being.

Hiring Helping Workers for Household Responsibilities

It involves outsourcing household tasks to external helpers, such as cleaning or childcare services. This can help individuals to reduce stress levels, increase productivity, and achieve a better work-life balance. According to a study, outsourcing household tasks can improve overall well-being and reduce work-family conflict. The study found that individuals who hired external helpers reported lower levels of stress and higher levels of life satisfaction compared to those who did not hire external helpers (Chen et al., 2018). Furthermore, hiring helpers for household responsibilities can increase productivity at work. When individuals have less household tasks to manage, they can devote more time and energy to work-related responsibilities. This, in turn, can lead to higher job performance and career success (Chen et al., 2018).

Day Care Center Facility

Day-care center facilities can be incredibly helpful for working women who have young children.

These facilities provide a safe and nurturing environment for children to play, learn and grow while their mothers are at work. According to a report by the National Women's Law Center (NWLC) (2018), access to affordable and quality childcare is critical for women's economic stability and workforce participation. Without access to affordable childcare, women are often forced to make difficult choices between staying at home to care for their children or entering the workforce to earn a living (National Women's Law Center, 2018). Day-care center facilities can provide a solution to this problem by providing affordable and high-quality childcare services. These facilities provide a safe and stable environment for children while their mothers work to provide for their families.

Gender Sensitization both at Home and at Workplace

Gender sensitization is an important process of creating awareness and understanding about gender roles, stereotypes, and biases, and it can be beneficial both at home and in the workplace. Gender sensitization at home can promote healthy relationships and reduce gender-based violence by helping family members recognize and challenge gender stereotypes and biases. In the workplace, gender sensitization can create a more inclusive and equitable environment, help reduce gender based discrimination and harassment, and promote equal opportunities for men and women (Kulkarni et al., 2018). Gender sensitization is an important process that can create more inclusive and equitable environments both at home and in the workplace. By promoting equality, reducing discrimination and stereotypes, and creating a safe and respectful environment, gender sensitization can contribute to healthier and more productive relationships, families, and workplaces.

Recreational Activities

Recreational activities are an essential component of a healthy work-family balance for women. Participating in recreational activities can help women manage stress, improve mental health, and enhance their overall well-being (Bowling et al., 2010). Regular physical activity is essential for

maintaining good health and reducing stress. Exercise can also improve mood, increase energy levels, and promote better sleep (National Institute of Mental Health).

Engaging in hobbies such as painting, reading, or gardening can be a great way to relax and unwind after a long day at work. Hobbies can also promote creativity and provide a sense of accomplishment. Participating in social activities such as joining a book club, attending a yoga class, or going out to dinner with friends can be an excellent way to build social connections and support networks. According to a study, participation in recreational activities is positively associated with better mental health and well-being among women. The study found that women who engaged in recreational activities reported lower levels of stress, greater life satisfaction, and better mental health compared to those who did not ((Bowling et al., 2010). Therefore, recreational activities are an important aspect of work-family balance for women. By promoting physical and mental well-being, enhancing social connections, and providing a sense of purpose and fulfillment, recreational activities can help women maintain a healthy and fulfilling work-family balance.

Awareness programs

According to researchers, awareness programs can be effective in promoting work-family balance among women. The study found that women who participated in awareness programs reported lower levels of work-family conflict and higher levels of job satisfaction (Raju & Srivastava, 2018). Awareness programs can be an effective way to help women balance their work and family responsibilities. By providing education and support, these programs can help women better manage their time, family obligations, and mental health, promoting a healthy and fulfilling work-family balance.

Consultancy/Family Friendly Policies

Consulting firms can offer guidance to organizations on implementing family-friendly policies, while family-friendly policies themselves can provide women with the flexibility and support they need to successfully manage their work and family responsibilities. Here are some

elements of family-friendly policies such as flexible work arrangements, parental leave, childcare subsidies and workplace lactation support etc. Consultancy firms can play an important role in promoting family-friendly policies. It is found that consultancy firms can offer guidance and support to organizations on implementing these policies, as well as provide education and training to employees on work-family balance (Elizalde & Otamendi, 2020).

Research Methodology

A qualitative research design was used in this study to explore working women's experiences in managing work-family conflict, coping responses, and the perceived effectiveness of those strategies. A qualitative approach was chosen as it allows for a deep understanding of the participants' personal experiences, perceptions and meanings attached to the balancing of work and family responsibilities. The target population was 10 working women working in different professional sectors (Universities, Banks, NGO's). A purposive sample of participants, who had direct experience of work-family conflict, was selected.

Participants were chosen based on specific inclusion criteria, including being employed women with family responsibilities and willingness to share their experiences. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, allowing participants to discuss their experiences openly while enabling the researcher to focus on specific themes related to work-family conflict and coping responses. In depth interviews were conducted. The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Interview transcripts were carefully reviewed and coded to identify recurring patterns, meanings, and themes. This method helped in identifying key coping responses used by working women and evaluating their perceived effectiveness in managing work-family conflict.

Findings

Coping strategies used by women

Coping strategies for balancing work and home responsibilities can help women to ease their lives. It includes various strategies that working women can use to manage their energy levels,

mental load, stress, and anxiety, prioritize their responsibilities, and balance their roles as working women and family members.

1. Prioritizing tasks and making schedules

Task prioritization in demanding jobs and family responsibilities and practicing can be essential for maintaining well-being of working women. According to respondents balancing work and family can be challenging, but for all working women, it's a necessary part of life. In this context, a woman talks about how she tries to manage her responsibilities as a working woman while also fulfilling her duties as a daughter, sister, and mother, and the strategies she uses to achieve balance.

She shared that

"It's not easy, but I try my best to prioritize my tasks and responsibilities. I have a schedule for work and household tasks, and I also set aside time for my family. For instance, I make it a point to have dinner with my family every night, and I also try to help out with my parents' needs on weekends. It's all about finding a balance and making sure that I'm meeting everyone's needs as best as I can." [INT University Teacher]

Prioritizing tasks was the most commonly used strategy by the majority of the respondents, as it provided them with mental relaxation as well as some quality time with family and friends.

As one of the respondent shared that

"To manage burnout, I prioritize self-care and make sure to take breaks when needed. I also try to delegate tasks and ask for help when necessary. Practicing mindfulness and maintaining a healthy work-life balance also helps to prevent burnout." [INT University Teacher]

Another one said that

"When I have multiple deadlines, I make sure to plan my work accordingly. I break down the tasks into smaller, more manageable chunks and assign a deadline for each of them. I also communicate with my colleagues to ensure we're on the same page about what needs to be done." [INT Bank Employee]

Another one shared her experience that

"When I feel overwhelmed with work and family responsibilities, I try to prioritize and make a schedule for myself. I find that breaking down my tasks into smaller, manageable pieces helps me to feel less stressed. I also try to communicate with my family and colleagues about my workload and limitations so that everyone is on the same page." [INT Bank Employee]

Working women said that they realize that they are not robots who can do all their work assignments in a day. So they take breaks and relax so that after they are fresh, they can work more efficiently. It is important for them to prioritize their mental and physical health, as it ultimately affects their productivity and overall well-being.

2. Self-care, breaks and recreational activities

Working women said that they use a variety of strategies to unwind from the stress of work and family issues, including self-care, taking breaks, and participating in leisure activities. It is important to keep in mind that self-care includes not only physical activities but also one's mental and emotional health.

As one of the respondent's shares that

"I try to take breaks throughout the day to rest and recharge. This can be as simple as taking a walk around the office or doing some stretches at my desk. I also make sure to eat healthy meals and snacks that give me sustained energy throughout the day." [INT Ngo Employee]

Another one said that

"When I feel overwhelmed, I take a step back and focus on my breathing and practice self-care strategies of my own. I find it helpful to talk to a friend or family member for support. Finally, I try to engage in activities that help me relax and de-stress, like reading or taking a bath." [INT Bank Employee]

Another participant shared that

"One of my coping strategies is to practice self-care. I make sure to take breaks throughout the day, whether it's going for a walk or just taking a few deep breaths. I also try to set boundaries with my work and home life, so that I don't feel like I'm constantly on call. It's important for me to have time for myself and my own well-being. Sometimes

going to a picnic or dinner also helps to feel relaxed" [INT University Employee]

Another participant said

"To cope with feelings of anxiety or stress, I make sure to prioritize self-care and take breaks when needed. I also try to practice mindfulness and stay present in the moment, rather than dwelling on past or future stressors. Seeking support from friends or a therapist can also be helpful in managing burnout." [INT University employee]

3. Support from husband, family and friends

When differing expectations from family members lead to conflicts, communication becomes crucial. In such situations, it is important to have open and honest conversations and find compromises and solutions that work for everyone, while prioritizing work commitments and mental health.

A respondent said that

"Support from husband is very very important. It's been tough, to maintain a healthy relationship but we've tried to be open and honest with each other about what's going on at work. We've also made a conscious effort to not bring work drama and stress into our home life. We've set boundaries and agreed to support each other no matter what happens at work. We've also tried to find other ways to relieve stress, like exercise or hobbies, so we're not constantly on edge. It's a work in progress, but we're committed to each other and our marriage." [INT University Teacher]

In addition to effective communication, setting boundaries has also played a role for respondents in resolving conflicts in marriages. Couples have learned to recognize when they need some space or time to themselves, and they communicate that to each other in a respectful way. One of the respondents said that

"Communication is key in such situations. I try to have open and honest conversations with my family members including my husband about my work commitments and the time and energy it requires. I also listen to their expectations and try to find ways to meet them as much as possible without compromising my work or mental health. It's not always easy, but we try to find compromises

and solutions that work for everyone. At the end of the day, we are all family and want the best for each other." [INT University Teacher]

Balancing personal needs with family responsibilities can be a challenging task. In this context,

an interviewee shares her experience of finding a balance between the two and the strategies that have worked for her.

"Finding a balance between my own needs and the needs of my family is something I've struggled with at times. I've found that it's important to carve out time for myself to pursue my own interests and recharge, while also making sure that I'm meeting my family's needs and responsibilities. This can be a delicate balancing act, but it's important to prioritize self-care and communication within the family." [INT Bank Employee]

4. Establishing Familial Relations with co-workers

Working women use the strategy of establishing relationships with coworkers and then projecting kin roles onto these fictive relationships. This indirectly benefits women by controlling the behavior of male colleagues, managing internal organizational politics, and forming close networks of support.

One of the interviewees highlighted that

"I realized that calling my colleagues my brothers and son is a good gesture. Bhai and beta are the words that make them realize that I'm someone respectable for them and that my safety is their responsibility. This is seriously a good technique to avoid harassment and bullying issues and keep the workplace less stressful. It creates an environment of mutual respect in the workplace and promotes a safer and more inclusive work environment where everyone feels valued and protected." [INT Ngo Employee]

Another one shared that

"Dealing with difficult coworkers can be challenging, but I make an effort to behave professionally and respectfully. I take care to be confident and clear in my communication, and I try not to let their actions affect how I feel. I make an effort to develop familial ties with them in

order to enhance our working environment. I also try to focus on our shared objectives and find areas of agreement. It's crucial to keep in mind that we are all on the same team and must collaborate to reach our objectives. I also try to be respectful and open in my communication with my coworkers. As a result, there will be a greater level of trust and understanding at work, which will enhance morale and productivity." [INT University Teacher]

One of the respondents said that

"Transposing familial roles allows me to stay (to some extent) in power. It also helps to be on the safe side because it reduces the risk of scandalising my relationships, which is a common male strategy in organisations. This strategy allows me to control the behaviour of my male colleagues by establishing boundaries in my relationships, which ultimately allows me to avoid harassment ". [INT Ngo Employee]

Working women claimed that they make an effort to interact with the families of their male coworkers or bosses, particularly the wives, in order to strengthen this familial bond between both

families. By doing this, women subtly influence the behaviour of their male co-workers and delicately convey that their families are doing well.

One of the respondents expressed in this way;

"I relate my co-workers to my brothers and son, which is a nice gesture. I sometimes make them realize that it is their responsibility to ensure my safety. They take this responsibility very seriously because they have been socialized to believe that they are superior and have the upper hand over women." [INT Bank Employee]

5. Hiring servants for household work

Another common strategy researcher found that women use to balance work and family life is hiring maids or servants for their homes. Respondents said that by hiring full time or half time

maids or servants, they give them a supporting and helping hand in many of the household chores which make it very easy for them to manage work and also have free self-care time and a healthy time with husbands and family, which makes their family relations strong and healthier.

As one of the respondent said that

"I have hired a full-time worker to help me with housekeeping activities. Having an extra hand around the house will allow me to focus on other important tasks and also ensure that my home stays clean and organized regularly. I am looking forward to having a more stress-free and comfortable living environment. This is a real sigh of relief for me. I don't have to run for everything every time. Now I have a better social life. Having a maid has not only reduced my workload but also given me more time to focus on other important things in my life. It has made a positive impact on my overall well-being and happiness." [INT Bank Employee]

Another one said

"I feel I'm less stressed now by having a helping hand, my maid, who not only helps me but also helps my family in my absence. Now I have self-time on weekends we can go out for dinners, or to park and I don't have to rush home from office to do manage my house." [INT Ngo Employee]

Working women feel very relaxed in the presence of a maid who is respectful and trustworthy.

This is because respondents can trust the maid to handle their household chores efficiently and maintain their privacy. Additionally, having a maid allows women to have more free time to focus on other aspects of their lives, such as their careers or leisure activities to deal with the stress and anxiety due to work family conflict.

6. Setting boundaries

Some of the respondents agreed on the fact that setting boundaries between work and family time is a helpful technique that can reduce the level of stress for working women. They said that by setting clear boundaries, working women can ensure that they have dedicated time for both work and family responsibilities, which can lead to a better work-life balance. This can ultimately improve their overall well-being and job satisfaction as one of the respondents expressed that

"It's definitely been a difficult challenge to manage. I've found that setting boundaries between work and home life has been helpful. For example, I try to avoid checking work emails or

taking phone calls during family time. I also make a point to schedule time for other activities, such as spending more time with husband and kids, watch a movie or go for outing to help manage my stress levels. It's important to have an open and honest dialogue about my needs and limitations.”[INT Ngo Employee]

Another said

“I try to approach conflicts or disagreements in a calm and professional manner. I try to set boundaries in my work and family life. I try to leave my job at office and become a complete housewife at home. I make sure to listen to the other person's perspective and communicate my own thoughts and concerns clearly. I also try to find a compromise or solution that works for both parties. It can be challenging to navigate these situations, but I believe it's important to maintain respectful and open communication.” [INT University Employee] Respondents were in opinion that your mental, physical, and emotional well-being may suffer if you don't set clear boundaries between work and personal life.

One participant said that

“Working in a toxic environment can be incredibly stressful and draining. It's important to set boundaries and not let negativity affect your mental health. Keeping professional and personal lives separate is difficult but can be achieved, and it is very helpful to manage stress in both domains. I try to focus on my work and stay professional, even in difficult situations. It's also helpful to have a support system outside of work, like friends or family, who can provide a listening ear and offer perspective.”[INT Bank Employee]

Setting boundaries is a means to achieving a healthy work-life balance. By setting boundaries, working women can prioritize their personal lives and avoid burnout from work-related stress. It also allows for better time management and increased productivity in both personal and professional areas of life.

7. Child care facility

For working mothers with infants and young children, a daycare is important. While their mothers are at work, it offers a secure and loving environment for kids to learn and develop.

University teachers were especially in favor of this facility as they drop their children off at the daycare center in the morning, which is within the premises of the university, and take them home. As one of the respondents shared that “I once hired a maid to look after my kids so I could leave for work without worrying about them, but she was very careless and frequently neglected her responsibilities. I was tense all the time. Then I made the decision to admit my kids in daycare, where there is never a problem with absences and where the staff members are professionals who are always available to watch your kids. Knowing that my children are secure and that someone is caring for them while I'm away from home made me feel so at ease at work. . Additionally, the daycare provides a structured environment for my children to learn and socialize with other kids their age, which I believe is important for their development. Overall, choosing a reliable daycare has been a great decision for both my family and my career.” [INT University Teacher]

One of the respondents shared that

“The responsibilities of being a mother, a family provider, and an employee are frequently seen being balanced by working women. A daycare facility is a basic requirement for working women. One of the ways I choose to manage work-family conflicts is by enrolling my kids in daycare. On a personal level, daycare centers are essential to preventing burnout and enabling me to concentrate on my work responsibilities. Daycare facilities also offer a social and educational environment for kids, which can help with their development and get them ready for later education.” [INT Ngo Employee]

Another one said

“As a working mother, I believe that enrolling your child in daycare is preferable to leaving them with your in-laws in order to prevent arguments at home. While it may be appealing to entrust family members with your child, doing so may put strain on the relationships if there are conflicts over parenting methods or schedules. In addition, I think daycare facilities frequently offer structured activities and chances for socialization that can help a child's development.” [INT Bank Employee]

Respondents said that it can be extremely difficult to balance work and childcare when you're a working mother. You can get help and support from a daycare facility by having them watch your kid while you're at work.

Discussion

The study's findings point out that work-family conflict remains a serious problem for women in work force as they constantly deal with the competing demands of professional and family responsibilities. Thematic analysis identified that participants used a range of coping responses to manage these conflicts, demonstrating both personal resilience and reliance on external support systems. Some common mechanisms used to cope with the work-family pressures were time management, prioritization of tasks, emotional regulation, social support and negotiation of responsibilities within the family. Family support was one of the findings of the study that contributed to the reduction of work-family conflict.

The results suggest that women's capacity to deal with multiple demands is important in family relations. Women with little support from their families often felt emotionally drained, frustrated and overwhelmed. The study also found that work environment factors were significant determinants of coping effectiveness. The study found that flexible work schedules, supportive supervisors and understanding co-workers helped reduce stress and improve work-life balance. Conversely, exacting workplace expectations and hefty workloads escalate psychological pressure and in result women's capacity to manage family responsibilities effectively reduce. According to the findings organizational support can serve as an important protective factor in minimizing work-family conflict.

An additional major theme emerging from the findings was the emotional burden related with juggling dual responsibilities. Many participants stated that they felt guilty, stressed, tired and anxious due to social and family expectations. Although many women used alternative coping mechanisms, multiple women stated they struggled to find a full balance, suggesting that

coping strategies may reduce conflict but not eliminate it entirely. Social and cultural expectations around women's roles in caregiving, especially for married women and mothers, added to these pressures.

The study also revealed that personal coping strategies such as problem-solving, positive thinking and setting personal boundaries helped in better conflict management. Women who reported actively planning their schedules and who had good communication with family members reported increased confidence in managing work and family demands. But the success of these strategies often depended on the availability of emotional, social and institutional support. The results suggest that managing work-family conflict is a multidimensional process, which is dependent on the individual's ability to cope, family relationships, work environment and social expectations. The perception of a supportive environment at home and at work seems to be critical to be able to effectively balance competing demands and to maintain psychological well-being amongst working women.

Conclusion

This qualitative study thematically analyzed the coping responses and effectiveness of these strategies for working women to cope with work-family conflict. The results show that working women adopt a combination of coping mechanisms such as time management, emotional regulation, family support, prioritization of tasks, and social assistance to manage the dual demands of their professional and domestic lives. The study concluded that the effectiveness of coping responses was largely dependent upon the level of support available in family and work environments. Women who had emotional and practical support from family and flexibility in their jobs were better able to deal with conflict and keep balance. On the contrary, inadequate support, huge responsibilities, and social pressure increased emotional stress and reduced coping ability.

The findings also highlight that work-family conflict is not merely an individual problem, but a larger social problem that needs collective efforts

from families, workplaces, and policymakers. Working women may be relieved of some burden by better awareness of family responsibilities, supportive work practices and gender-sensitive policies. Also, future research could be conducted to study coping experiences in various occupations, cultural contexts and family structures in order to gain a better understanding of work-family conflict among women.

In conclusion, successful management of work-family conflict among working women is reliant on a combination of personal resilience, supportive relationships, and positive workplace conditions. Strengthening these support systems can result in improved well-being, reduced stress, and a healthier work-family balance.

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