

	<p>Annals of Social Sciences and Perspective</p> <p>ISSN (Print): 2707-7063, ISSN (Online): 2788-8797 Volume 4, Number 2, July-December 2023, Pages 331-340 Journal homepage: http://assap.wum.edu.pk/index.php/ojs</p>
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Work-Family Conflict and its Relationship with Emotional Well-Being of Working Women in Police

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ARTICLE DETAILS	ABSTRACT
<p>History:</p> <p>Received: August 8, 2023 Accepted: November 3, 2023</p> <p>Keywords:</p> <p>Work-family Conflict Emotional well-being Married Police Women Unmarried Policewomen Punjab Police</p> <p>DOI:</p> <p>10.52700/assap.v4i2.299</p>	<p>Work-family conflict in Pakistan is one of the leading issues that affect working women's mental health. This study aimed to identify a relationship between work-family conflict and the emotional well-being of policewomen. The study was carried out using a quantitative method under survey research design. Working women (4268) in the Punjab police made up the total population of the study. Lahore and Sargodha divisions were selected as clusters, from which a sample of 330 policewomen was drawn. Pearson's correlation found a significant positive correlation between work-family conflict and emotional well-being ($r = .65, p < .05$). Married policewomen were more likely to face work-family conflict ($M = 39.80, SD = 6.68$) than unmarried policewomen ($M = 34.51, SD = 7.51$). Work-family conflict affected the emotional well-being of married policewomen more ($M = 52.75, SD = 10.36$) than unmarried policewomen ($M = 45.42, SD = 10.01$). The overall study concluded that there was a significant relationship between work-family conflict and the emotional well-being of working women in the police force; married policewomen faced greater work-family conflict compared to unmarried policewomen; and work-family conflict affected the emotional well-being of married policewomen more than unmarried policewomen.</p> <p>© 2023 The Authors, Published by WUM. This is an Open Access Article under the Creative Common Attribution Non Commercial 4.0</p>

1. Introduction

It becomes more difficult for a person to complete both jobs when he encounters expectations that are incompatible with his family and career commitments (Abdullah et al., 2023b). No matter what countries or cultural traditions exist around the world, work-family conflict (WFC) is a universal issue that affects everyone (Khursheed et al., 2019). It is turning into a severe problem that affects modern society in many countries, both industrialized and developing (Panorama & Jdaitawi, 2011).

According to Ashraf et al. (2017), Pakistan has a male-dominated society, which affects how women are treated there (Jamil & Mohyuddin, 2015). Working women now have more authority as a result of some reforms in the nation's socioeconomic framework. Women are encouraged to work outside the home and contribute to the economy through a number of jobs and businesses that welcome them. In every state, more women are working, and they are progressively entering industries where men predominate (Ali, Bajwa & Hussain, 2015; Amir et al., 2018). Women are employed in a range of administrative roles today, including those in businesses, mills, engineering, banks, and law

enforcement. Women have historically found it challenging to work in fields where men predominate (Farid et al., 2016). Women face social, cultural, religious, ideological, and institutional obstacles when they enter the workforce in the public sector (Haider, 2015).

In Pakistan, WFC is now a growing problem (Saher et al., 2013). Women are initially expected to have a domestic role that comprises taking care of families and children (Zaman & Shahid, 2023), whereas men only execute a small number of household duties (Ansari, 2011). Women who are employed must work the second shift. They must strike a balance between their domestic and professional obligations as housewives. The mismatch between work and family is one of the main obstacles keeping working women from adopting the same work habits as men. This is because women struggle mightily to balance their socially assigned dual responsibilities as wage earners and homemakers.

For women, being a policewoman is difficult (Todak, 2017). Role conflict may arise because police department staff frequently work long hours (Frank et al., 2022). The schedule frequently starts early in the morning and ends late at night. They occasionally have to stay at duty stations for a full day because of emergency duties. Women are unable to spend enough time with their families due to the imbalance between job and family. Insecurity and disagreements with spouses and other family members are frequently brought on by the late return from work (Jamil & Muhyuddin, 2015).

To develop pleasant feelings, moods, ideas, and sentiments as well as to adjust in the face of adversity and stressful situations, one must have emotional well-being (EWB) (Melkonian, 2021). According to Zakaria and Ismail (2017), a high level of WFC is associated with negative impacts on people's EWB, such as frustration, despair, anxiety, and ill health. Women may suffer negative repercussions for their physical and emotional well-being, interpersonal relationships, and even their capacity to sustain strong familial ties. Employee absenteeism, tardiness, and lack of dedication to the company are the results of these negative effects. WFC subsequently has a direct impact on Pakistani employees' physical and mental health as well as a secondary impact on organizational performance (Ali, Qamar & Ali, 2017; Shah et al., 2021).

Numerous studies on the issues impacting working women in the police have been done in Pakistan. Jamil and Muhyuddin (2015) outlined the general issues facing women police; Hussain et al. (2021) looked at the opportunities and difficulties facing women in law enforcement; and Haider (2015) analyzed the requirements and difficulties facing women police. Numerous difficulties faced by policewomen were thoroughly discussed in the literature that was already available, but their effects on women's well-being were not yet known. The current study was designed to determine the relationship between WFC and EWB among working women in the police in order to close a knowledge gap in the literature.

1.1. Problem Statement

Due to dual roles, work-family balance has always been an issue for working women in Pakistan. Existing literature revealed that the inflexibility of working hours in an organization is one of the root causes that affect women's overall mental, emotional, and personal well-being. So the current study was organized to seek the perception of policewomen concerning the relationship between WFC and their EWB.

1.2. Research Questions

1. Is there any statistically significant correlation between WFC and EWB among working women in the police?
2. Which category of policewomen, married or unmarried, is more likely to face WFC?
3. Does WFC affect the EWB of married policewomen more than unmarried policewomen?

1.3. Research Objectives

1. To identify a relationship between WFC and EWB among working women in the police.
2. To investigate which category of policewoman, married or unmarried, is more likely to face WFC.
3. To explore which policewoman category's EWB, married or unmarried, is more affected by WFC.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Work-family Conflict

In Pakistan, working women are expected to fill a range of roles. People who were married and working had to perform both their domestic and professional obligations (Rehman & Roomi, 2012). Police employment is regarded as difficult, and shift length is frequently necessary. Women in the police force in Pakistan have encountered WFC. Their shifts occasionally ran longer than 18 hours a day because there was no set plan for working hours. Nevertheless, the department frequently called them to request their assistance with pressing tasks (Haider, 2015).

In Pakistan, men predominate in most fields of employment. In patriarchal Pakistani society, men are often seen as the primary suppliers of services. They are not tasked with any domestic duties (Nasir, 2005). On the other hand, working women must put in double shifts. In addition to their tasks at work, they also have responsibility for managing their houses. Women eventually become bored and suffer from mental problems as a result of juggling their personal and work lives. According to Habiba et al. (2016), married women who traveled frequently were more likely to have an unbalanced work-family schedule. Women in professions like law enforcement are unable to provide their families with the time and attention they require because of the lengthy hours they spend on duty (Hussain et al., 2021; Ali et al., 2013).

Jamil and Muhyuddin (2015) found that the long hours that married women in the police force must put in at work make it difficult for them to properly care for their families. Sad to say, women often argue at home with their husbands and other family members because they work too little and spend most of their time away from home, neglecting their families. Policewomen frequently find it difficult to perform their responsibilities to their families because of the lengthy hours they are forced to work. They are unable to spend meaningful time with their children and other family members because they arrive home from work late. Additionally, Pakistani policewomen are only allowed to take four leaves every 60 days. What can they do over the course of these four days while they attend to family and personal matters? The main reason why Pakistani women dislike starting occupations with no flexibility is because of this.

In Pakistan, the police job is regarded as a male-dominated occupation. To maintain this occupation, employees must dedicate themselves full-time. Police department employees may work 24-hour shifts. Policewomen face many challenges in their careers since they must put in a lot of effort and energy to carry out their duties, especially if they are married. Given that they just need to make a living; male police personals can easily manage to work in such occupations. However, because they sometimes have to play two or even three roles, women employees deal with WFC. Women were worn out and sluggish due to long shifts and dealing with criminals; as a result, they had more difficulties returning home on public transport. (Gilmore et al., 2015; Ali, 2015).

2.2. Emotional Well-being

Women who have WFC struggle to enjoy their personal and social lives and feel emotional stress. As

a result, women are put in a stressful environment that makes it challenging for them to perform well in their roles as wives or employees (Duxbury et al., 2021). Due to the extremely long hours and low moral standards, the majority of parents in Pakistan do not want their daughters working for the police. Since they spend the majority of their time working and disregarding their houses and children, women frequently argue with their husbands and other family members at home (Jamil & Muhyuddin, 2015). As a result of this circumstance, policewomen suffer from stress, sadness, and other mental diseases (Wang et al., 2011).

Arif et al. (2017) argued that Due to their multiple duties, professional women endure more stress-related problems than their male counterparts. Women experience extreme stress and anxiety due to conflicts between job and family. They can't do their jobs well. It might also have an effect on job satisfaction, leading women to leave their professions or stay away from careers that demand long hours of work. Sometimes, after feeling stressed out by a conflict between their personal and professional lives, women begin using medications to treat their pain and desperation.

Stress, hopelessness, and worry are brought on by conflict between work and family. It affects how well women succeed in all occupations and how they feel about themselves. Among the physical and psychological problems brought on by workplace stress are depression and a lack of contentment at work (Greenhaus et al., 2006). In conclusion, WFC is associated with both mental health and general life satisfaction.

Because stress and conflicts in their personal lives affected their ability to focus, be productive, and be creative at work, the organizations that did not encourage a more harmonious work-family balance for their employees made it harder for them to do so (Umer & Zia-ur-Rehman, 2013). Lower levels of focus and concentration when executing job-related tasks as well as low job participation were linked to more WEC. All of these factors are related to lower levels of overall job performance and satisfaction (Madsen et al., 2005).

2.3. Research Hypotheses

H₁ There is a statistically significant correlation between WFC and EWB among working women in the police.

H₂ Married policewomen face WFC more significantly than unmarried women.

H₃ WFC affects the EWB of married policewomen more significantly than unmarried women.

3. Methodology

3.1. Method and Design

The study was quantitative in method, with survey research design. Survey research provides the researcher with an opportunity to produce quantifiable and reliable data that can be generalized to a wider population. The same methodological framework was also followed by Abdullah et al. (2023a) in a study identifying a comparative role of parents and teachers in developing strategies against social media misuse among students.

3.2. Population and Sampling

The population of the study consisted of all working women in the police department in Punjab, Pakistan. The Punjab province was composed of 10 divisions, and each division was further divided into districts. There were 36 districts in the whole province, with 4268 active policewomen. The study sample was drawn through cluster sampling. Two divisions, i.e., Lahore and Sargodha, were selected as clusters using simple random sampling. Hereafter, the data was collected conveniently

because it would not be possible for the researcher to separately approach the duty points of every selected respondent if the sample selection were further made randomly. Lahore division consisted of four districts with 587 policewomen, while Sargodha division also had four districts with 243 policewomen. Both divisions, in sum, had 830 active policewomen. Out of 330 as a sample size, 207 policewomen were selected from Lahore division and the remaining 123 from Sargodha division. District-wise sample information is added in Table 1.

3.3. Instrumentation

A self-constructed questionnaire was used for the purpose of data collection, which was built on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = uncertain, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree). The questionnaire consisted of two scales with a total of 21 items. The first scale was WFC with 9 items, while the second one was EWB with 12 items. The scale of EWB was composed of negative terms like depression, anxiety, frustration, etc. The questionnaire included four necessary demographic variables with informed consent. By sending the questionnaire to five highly qualified experts with significant knowledge in related fields of social science research, the questionnaire's content and face validity were established. The necessary additions, deletions, and alterations were made for improvements in light of the advice of specialists. Twenty policewomen participated in a pilot test of the questionnaire, which enabled the researcher to spot any ambiguities, inconsistencies, or distractions and confirm the viability of the research design. Only items having a reliability coefficient > 0.80 were included in the survey after the internal reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha.

3.4. Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

Before the data collection process, the researcher approached the concerned authorities of the divisional and district police to seek permission and gain their confidence about the purpose of the study. The deployment localities of respondents were confirmed by the officials a day before the start of data collection. The researcher visited the duty points of the respondents in person and collected the required data. Before handing over the questionnaire to the respondents, informed consent was presented to them for their agreement and volunteer participation. A rapport of trust and loyalty was established with the respondents, and they were assured of their confidentiality and anonymity. The researcher distributed 330 questionnaires among the respondents. Each respondent took 20–30 minutes to fill out the questionnaire, and this process continued for 67 days.

After the data collection process, the data were analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) V-20. The data of 309 respondents was considered worthwhile for analysis as a small amount of missing data was spotted in some questionnaires. In this way, the overall response rate remained at 94%. A descriptive analysis of scales was performed with the help of the mean, standard deviation, range, and Cronbach's α . Hypothesis testing was performed with the help of Pearson correlation and the t-test. Pearson correlation was used to identify the relationship between WFC and EWB. An independent sample t-test was run to compare differences in perception among married and unmarried policewomen. In accordance with the nature of the hypotheses, the comparison was performed separately for WFC and EWB.

4. Results

Table 1 revealed that 60.5% of policewomen were married. Most of the policewomen (83.5%) were living in their own houses instead of police quarters. Statistics also showed that the majority (86.4%) of policewomen had to work for 8 to 12 hours a day.

Table 1: Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participants

Variables	<i>n</i>	%
Marital Status		
Unmarried	122	39.5
Married	187	60.5
Residence		
Own House	258	83.5
Police Quarter	51	16.5
Duty Hours (a day)		
Below 8 hours	24	7.8
8 to 12 hours	267	86.4
Above 12 hours	18	5.8
Location		
Lahore ^a	97	29.4
Kasur ^a	29	8.8
Nankana Sahib ^a	33	10.0
Sheikhupura ^a	48	14.5
Sargodha ^b	43	13.0
Khushab ^b	21	6.4
Mianwali ^b	31	9.4
Bhakkar ^b	28	8.5

Note. N = 309. ^a Districts of Lahore division, ^b Districts of Sargodha division.

Table 2: Psychometric properties for WFC and EWB scales

Scale	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range	Cronbach's α
Work-Family Conflict	37.7	7.48	9-45	.91
Emotional Well-being	49.7	10.82	12-60	.85

Table 2 shows the psychometric properties of the scales that were used in this study. The Cronbach's α value for WFC was .91, while this value for EWB was .85. Both values were $>.70$ indicating a high level of internal consistency in the scales.

Table 3: Pearson correlation between WFC and EWB

Variables	<i>N</i>	1	2
Work-Family Conflict	309	-	
Emotional Well-being	309	.65***	-

*** $p < .001$.

Table 3 revealed that WFC has a significant positive correlation with EWB ($r = .65, p < .05$). The statistics indicate a moderate relationship between two variables.

Table 4: Mean comparison of unmarried and married policewomen on WFC

Variable(s)	Unmarried Policewomen		Married Policewomen		<i>t</i> (307)	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Work-Family Conflict	34.51	7.51	39.80	6.68	6.502	.000	0.74

Note. Unmarried policewomen ($n = 122$), Married policewomen ($n = 187$).

Table 4 revealed a significant mean difference on WFC with $t(307) = 6.502, p < .05$. Findings showed that married policewomen exhibited a higher score on the WFC ($M = 39.80, SD = 6.68$) compared to unmarried policewomen ($M = 34.51, SD = 7.51$). The value of Cohen's d was 0.74, which indicated a medium effect size.

Table 5: Mean comparison of married and unmarried policewomen on EWB

Variable(s)	Unmarried		Married		<i>t</i> (307)	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	Policewomen		Policewomen				
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Emotional Well-being	45.42	10.01	52.75	10.36	6.163	.000	0.72

Table 5 showed a significant mean difference on EWB with $t(307) = 6.163$, $p < .05$. Findings revealed that married policewomen exhibited a higher score on the EWB ($M = 52.75$, $SD = 10.36$) compared to unmarried policewomen ($M = 45.42$, $SD = 10.01$). In other words, the EWB of married policewomen was more affected by WFC compared to unmarried women. The value of Cohen's d (0.72) indicated a medium effect size.

5. Discussion

This study aimed to identify the relationship between WFC and EWB among working women in the police. The study also intended to explore differences, if any, among unmarried and married policewomen in respect of work-family issues and their EWB. The study found that working women in the police department had to face WFC. Sociodemographic characteristics revealed that the majority of policewomen had to spend more than eight hours a day on their duty, which is very conflicting, especially for those who were married. Supporting the findings of the current study, Habiba et al. (2016) concluded that policewomen had to face WFC, Haider (2015) stated that there was no fixed schedule of duty hours in the police, and Gilmore et al. (2015) argued that sometimes police employees in Pakistan have had to perform duties for 24 hours.

Women handle household duties and care for the family in Pakistan. Findings showed that policewomen were unable to fulfil their family obligations since their employment schedules did not coincide with those of their families. Women who were employed were required to work a second shift after leaving the office. They are expected to take care of their children and other family members after completing their work duties. These results are in line with a study by Jamil and Muhyuddin (2015) that found policewomen were unable to complete their family obligations because of excessive work hours. They didn't have enough time to spend with their family and no free time to enjoy themselves. Long workdays make it impossible for policewomen to balance work and family. The inflexibility of working hours mostly affects the families of policewomen. Haider (2015) came to the same conclusion, supporting the findings of this study, that timeliness and lengthy service hours were more detrimental to policewomen than to policemen. Their family and kids are badly impacted by these lengthy duty hours. The situation becomes worse and more complicated when policewomen do not see their children awake for weeks. According to the report, being a police officer is harder and more demanding. Long work days typically rob women of time to manage their personal affairs in their free time. In his study, Haider (2015) noted that scheduling and lengthy shifts have an impact on policewomen. Their families suffer because of these types of duty hours, and they often go weeks without seeing their kids awake.

The study discovered that WFC has a detrimental impact on policewomen's EWB. They became anxious and irritated over WFC. They began to experience stress and agitation, which affected how well they performed at work. These results are in line with a study by Duxbury et al. (2021), which found that working women are more likely to experience stress, depression, heart disease, and stomach illnesses when they are under a lot of professional stress. Findings showed that a work-family imbalance made policewomen feel unwell and exhausted. Umer and Zia-ur-Rehman (2013) backed up the findings of this study by stating that one of the major causes of poor health and wellness is WFC, which has a detrimental effect on both mental and physical well-being, lowers life satisfaction, raises stress levels, which causes emotional exhaustion, and raises anxiety and depression.

The study discovered that among working women in the police, WFC and EWB had a significant positive relationship. The study indicated that married women were more likely to experience the issues when comparing unmarried and married policewomen about WFC. Despite the fact that both married and single policewomen experienced WFC, married women were more vulnerable to the problem due to their engagements and obligations to their offspring. In police quarters, where the severity of the work-family imbalance was modest, a few single policewomen were residing. Habiba et al. (2016) draw the conclusion that married women were more vulnerable to work-family imbalance since they had to take care of their children, which supports these findings. Additionally, the study discovered that policewomen who were single were more inclined to value EWB. Despite the fact that WFC had an impact on both married and single policewomen's EWB, married policewomen experienced greater harm. The difference is due to the fact that single policewomen were not responsible for raising children, which allowed them to go through less emotional pain than their married counterparts.

6. Conclusion

The study concluded that policewomen were facing WFC and that it had a relationship with their EWB. The results showed that policewomen who were married and unmarried both experienced WFC. The fact that women are expected to take on family responsibilities while working as police personnel poses problems for them. Working long hours leaves little free time for family time. When moms spent a significant portion of the day away from their children, it also had an impact on their socialization processes. The study found that married policewomen were preoccupied by their families and were unable to carry out their jobs effectively. According to the study, policewomen who were exposed to WFC were emotionally distressed. Policewomen experienced strain, illness, stress, and anxiety. They felt irritated, frustrated, downcast, anxious, and dissatisfied.

A substantial relationship between WFC and EWB was discovered in the current study. The majority of women experienced a work-family imbalance, which had an impact on their emotional wellness and led to feelings of depression and irritability. The results showed that married women had higher levels of WFC than unmarried women because single policewomen were not responsible for raising their own families. Due to WFC, both single and married policewomen had low levels of EWB. Due to their parental duties when raising children, married policewomen were more likely to experience it in this situation. They became upset mentally and emotionally because they were unable to properly manage their families.

7. Implications

Overall, the research was undertaken to close a knowledge gap by examining the relationship between WFC and EWB among working women in the police. Since the current study was fundamental and theoretical in character, its goal was to help the stakeholders become more aware of the differences between working women in the police and their home lives. The Punjab Police Department is now working very hard to implement several departmental reforms pertaining to the welfare of its personnel. These results indicate that in order to increase the flexibility of police employment in terms of duty hours, it is important to develop certain policies for female personnel. Women are responsible for taking care of the household, and late-night returns make it difficult for them to do so effectively. Therefore, it would be appropriate to reduce the policewoman's working hours and fix them in accordance with their family schedule. The departmental changes for flexible working hours will inevitably boost the EWB and job satisfaction of policewomen.

8. Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Although this research adds to the body of knowledge, it also identifies several methodological

limitations and suggests some new lines of inquiry for future studies. This study, which used a self-made questionnaire, was deductive in nature. It is advised that future scholars do studies on similar topics using an inductive research approach. It would be beneficial to ask policewomen for in-depth expertise on WFC. The current study excluded certain other variables that might have an impact on policewomen's wellbeing in favor of concentrating just on WFC. As a result, it is advised that researchers incorporate inequality, sexual harassment, and physical wellbeing into their future research to boost the worth of the study.

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