

## **Work-Family Spillover and Family Functioning in Married Working Women**

**Faiza Safdar**

University of the Punjab

The present study aimed to ascertain the relationship between work-family spillover and family functioning in married working women. It was hypothesized that family functioning will be negatively related with negative dimensions of family-to-work and work-to-family spillover. A positive relationship was assumed between family functioning and positive dimensions of family-to-work and work-to-family spillover in married working women. A sample comprised of 150 married working women with the age range from 25-50 years ( $M = 37.3$ ,  $SD = 8.92$ ) from colleges, universities and hospitals was included. General Functioning Scale of Family Assessment Device (Epstein, Baldwin, & Bishop, 1983) and Work Family Spillover (Grzywacz & Marks, 2000) were translated into Urdu language. Results revealed a significant negative relationship of family functioning with negative dimensions of family-to-work and work-to-family spillover while family functioning was positively related with positive dimensions of family-to-work and work-to-family spillover. Family-to-work and work-to-family spillover significantly predicted family functioning. Work-to-family spillover was significantly higher in working women than family-to-work spillover. The results were discussed in the light of previous literature and theoretical and cultural background.

*Keywords.* Family functioning, work-family spillover, working women, married women, positive spillover, negative spillover

A growing concern of the present modern world is to create ideal balance between work and family life. Both domains of life have their own demands and pose various challenges to the individuals trying to achieve equilibrium between work and family life (Lakshmypriya & Krishna, 2016; Zhang & Liu, 2011). It is challenging to manage

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Faiza Safdar, Centre for Clinical Psychology, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Faiza Safdar, Centre for Clinical Psychology, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan. E-mail: [faiza.ccpsy@pu.edu.pk](mailto:faiza.ccpsy@pu.edu.pk)

demands of work and family especially for married working women. When demands of work and family are not balanced, it leads to work family conflict and affect overall family functioning of working women (Zhang & Liu, 2011). These responsibilities either cause positive spillover by facilitating fulfillment of responsibilities of either domains, or negative spillover in which responsibilities of one domain hinder the fulfillment of responsibilities of other domain (Hanson, Hammer, & Colton, 2006).

Spillover can be characterized as ‘a generalization of the behaviors, attitudes, emotions, feelings and stress of one area of life into the other area of life surrounding the individual’ such as the strain and stress of work is spilled in family-life or on the other hand, the stress and strain of family is spilled in the work-life (Geurts & Demerouti, 2003; Suryawanshi & Mali, 2013).

There are two dimensions of spillover including positive spillover and negative spillover. *Positive spillover* can be defined in terms of transmitting affective states, expertise, activities, and ethics from one domain to the other domain and the receiver is affected favorably by this transmission. It could be from work life to family and from family-to-work life. *Negative spillover* can be of two types that is, time-based and strain-based (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Time-based conflict occurs when more time is dedicated to one domain then it becomes challenging to fulfill the demands of other domain because of shortage of time. Strain-based conflict is when performance of the individual gets affected in one domain because of stress experienced in the other domain. Spillover from the domain of work to the domain of family is more common as compared to family-to-work spillover. It may be due to the strength of boundaries as boundaries of work domain are stronger as compared to boundaries of family domain. Consequently, work domain interferes more with family domain and family domain intervenes less in work domain (Brotheridge & Lee, 2005).

Crouter (1984) proposed four-dimensional model of spillover such as positive spillover from work-to- family, negative spillover from work-to- family, positive spillover from family-to-work and negative spillover from family-to-work. It has also been found that work to home negative spillover reduces job satisfaction and lowers both types of well-being such as physical and psychological (Geurts & Demerouti, 2003).

### **Work Family Spillover and Family Functioning**

Work-family balance has been considered as one of the major

predictors of family functioning. Hill et al. (2008) reported that a healthy balance between the work and family roles of the working women leads to healthy and satisfactory family life. Similar conclusions were also drawn by other researchers (Holmes, Erickson, & Hill, 2012). Working women experience family-to-work interference more commonly and consequently their family functioning gets disturbed (Watai, Nishikido, & Murashima, 2008). Pal and Saksvik (2008) reported that the work stress affected the family life of doctors and nurses in Norway and India, hence, affecting their family role performance. On a sample of Taiwanese managers, Hsieh, Pearson, Chang, and Uen (2005) reported that they also experience difficulty in managing demands of their work and family. Wesley and Muthuswamy (2005) also focused on the direction of the nature of the conflict in dual role responsibilities and concluded that work-to-family conflict was more predominant.

Comparing these researches with the literature available on the samples of Asian women, it is found that they tend to intertwine roles of family with responsibilities of workplace which affects their family functioning as well (Hirao, 2007; Stivens, 2007). This permeability of family roles in work is mainly due to the cultural factors which force working women to prioritize family and women who are successfully able to deal with both roles have better family functioning and psychological health as well (Lu, Gilmour, Kao, & Huang, 2006). Lastly, Stum (2001) suggested that healthy balancing leads to family, and overall life satisfaction.

In general, the previous literature suggests that work and family roles conflict with each other leading to disturbed family functioning, especially, in working women. These researches, specifically, focused on work-family conflict (Martinez-Corts, Demerouti, Bakker, & Boz, 2015; Sonnentag & Binnewies, 2013) and work-family life balance (Offer, 2014) which has been studied extensively in teachers (Amstad, Meier, Fasel, Elfering, & Semmer, 2011), work related stress in nurses (Al Asasi, Al Faisal, El Sawafi, Hussain, & Wasfy, 2015), organizations (Geurts & Demerouti, 2003), and doctors (Bono, Davies, & Rasch, 2012). In Pakistan, till now the available research evidence has been found on work stress among married female school teachers (Pervez & Hanif, 2003), problems of working mothers through in-depth interviews (Hamid & Goraya, 2010) and work-to-family and family-to-work interference in working men and women (Ansari, 2011). The present research builds its pillars on the gaps found in literature as these researches incorporated both genders and also these researches did not specifically find the domains of spillover and its predictive role in family functioning (Ansari, 2011). As

compared to West, Pakistani society shares a different family structure being more collectivistic and different family traditions, so it was necessary to ascertain the relationship between domains of spillover and family functioning. Moreover, in Pakistan women have more prescribed roles to perform and responsibilities in family life as compared to other countries.

With the increase in education opportunities and awareness, women have started seeking work opportunities parallel to men. It has increased the number of working women in different professions. However, unlike men they have dual responsibilities of family life such as taking care of children, fulfilling household chores, care taking of their elderly parents, and much more specifically in collectivistic cultures. These added responsibilities bring about an increase in daily hassles or stress to them, especially, in married working women who have the responsibility of taking care of their children as well (Sinha, 2017). There have also been an increase of working women in Pakistan (Pervez, Zia-ur-Rehman, Javed, & Raza, 2015) which is not solely a passion rather women pursue career to meet the financial demands of the family especially married working women (Pervez et al., 2015; Sadiq & Ali, 2014). In Pakistan, role of women has been strongly tied to the cultural traditions and even being empowered professionally, she is expected to perform certain tasks in her home life such as child rearing, cooking and generally taking care of the home activities. Being working women does not let women to find escape from her household responsibilities and pulling two domains of life together creates certain strain on part of women, which affects women in different domains of her life. The present research builds its rationale on this important aspect of life, so that effects of spillover on family functioning can be determined and appropriate strategies can be planned for working women.

## **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were developed after reviewing previous theoretical and empirical literature.

1. There will be a negative relationship between negative work-to-family spillover and family functioning of working women.
2. There will be a negative relationship between negative family-to-work spillover and family functioning of working women.
3. There will be a positive relationship between positive work-to-family spillover and family functioning of working women.

4. There will be a positive relationship between positive family-to-work spillover and family functioning of working women.
5. Work family spillover will predict family functioning of working women.
6. Work-to- family spillover is likely to be higher than family-to-work spillover in married working women.

## Method

### Sample

Purposive sampling technique was used to get data from married women working with age range of 25-50 years ( $M = 37.3$ ,  $SD = 8.92$ ) from different hospitals, colleges, and universities of Lahore. Most of the participants (53%) were taken from hospitals and (46%) taken from colleges and universities. Most of the participants (36%) were working for 7-8 hours daily. Seventy three percent participants belonged to joint family system, and most of the participants (74%) participants were earning more than 50,000 per month. Among all sample, 74% reported satisfactory relationships with spouse. Most of the participants (54%) participants had three to five children and majority (67%) shared enjoying recreational activities with the family once in a month.

### Measures

**Demographic Sheet.** It was constructed to gather personal information from participants including information about their age, education, occupation, religion, family system, income, nature of residence, number of children, quality time spent with family, spouse and children, nature of relationship with spouse and children, and any physical or psychological illness.

**Work Family Spillover (WFS; Grzywacz & Marks, 2000).** It measures Family-to-work Spillover (positive & negative spillover dimensions) and Work-to-family Spillover (positive & negative spillover dimensions). It consists of 12 items and is based on five-point Likert scale which ranges from (*All of the Time* = 1 to *Never* = 5). For the present study, the alpha coefficients for the scale ranged from .56 to .82. High scores showed high levels of spill-over in each domain.

**Family Assessment Device – General Functioning Scale (FAD-GFS; Epstein et al., 1983).** This scale measures general family functioning and consists of 12 items. The scale is rated on a four-point Likert scale ranging between *Strongly Agree* = 0 to

*Strongly Disagree* = 4). For each item, score ranges from one to four, one reflects healthy functioning and 4 reflects unhealthy functioning. It is scored by accumulation of the total responses and dividing by the total number of items. Higher score indicates unhealthy family functioning. Alpha reliability of General Functioning Scale is .92. The alpha coefficient of the translated version of the measure for the present research was .64.

## **Procedure**

After taking permission from authors of the original tools through e-mails and the authorities of the hospitals, colleges, and universities for collecting the data, a sample of working women was approached. At first, a try out was done 5 women to check level of comprehension of the translated versions of the tool and total time taken in administration of scales. Participant's feedback revealed that there was no difficulty in comprehending scales. Total time taken to fill questionnaires was 15 to 20 minutes as noted by the researcher.

After taking consent and giving information about research, participants were asked to fill the questionnaire booklet. Majority of the participants appreciated research focusing on problems of married working women as there were few researches available with Pakistani population. The response rate was 85%. In the end, participants were thanked for their cooperation.

## **Results**

Bivariate correlation using Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was performed to assess the relationship among work-family spillover, family functioning of working women, and their demographics. Moreover, hierarchal linear regression analysis was performed to find out the degree of predictability of work family spillover on family functioning. Lastly, paired sample *t*-test was conducted to see which nature of spillover was more common in working women.

Demographic variables of working hours, family system, monthly income, relationship with spouse, number of children, and recreational activity were added to perform Pearson Product Moment correlation, but all except working hours were nonsignificantly related with study variables. Table 1 shows the findings of correlation analysis.

Results in Table 1 reveal that there is a significant negative relationship between negative work-to- family spillover and family

functioning. A significant negative relationship also exists between family-to-work negative spillover and family functioning. However, there is a significant positive relationship between positive work-to-family spillover and family functioning. In addition to this, a significant positive relationship also exists between positive family-to-work spillover and family functioning. With increase in working hours, negative work-to-family and family-to-work spill over increases while positive work-to-family spillover decreases.

Table 1

*Pearson Product Moment Correlation Between Study Variables (N = 150)*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	M	SD
1 Negative Work-to-family	-	-.20*	.67**	-.17*	-.35**	.18*	11.033	4.48
2 Positive Work-to-family		-	-.09	.43**	.33**	-.04	10.823	3.36
3 Negative Family-to-work			-	-.06	-.37**	.33*	12.263	3.77
4 Positive Family-to-work				-	.38**	-.27*	10.332	2.96
5 Family Functioning					-	-.36**	26.528	6.67
6 Working Hours						-	2.13	1.07

Note. \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

Hierarchical Regression was computed to see the predicting role of the predictors on outcome variables. In Model 1, working hours came out to be significant positive predictor of family functioning ( $\beta = .24, p < .001$ ) and it accounted for 7% ( $F [1,148] = 2.16 p < .05$ ) variance in family functioning. In model 2, positive work-to-family ( $\beta = .23, p < .001$ ), positive family-to-work ( $\beta = .24, p < .001$ ) turned out to be positive predictor while negative work-to-family and negative family-to-work ( $\beta = -.09, p < .05; \beta = -.23, p < .001$ ) are significant negative predictor of family functioning. Overall, the Model 2 explained 29% ( $F[4,1144] = 9.66 p < .001$ ) variance in the family functioning and total variance explained by both model is 36%. Durbin Watson value was 1.94. Results are reported in Table 2.

Table 2

*Hierarchical Regression Predicting Family Functioning from Domains of Work Family Spillover in Married Working Women (N = 150)*

Predictors	Family Functioning	
	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$
Model 1	.07*	
(Constant)		
Working hours		-.24***
Model 2	.29***	
Negative work-to- family		-.09*
Positive work-to- family		.23***
Negative family-to-work		-.23***
Positive family-to-work		.24***
Total $R^2$	0.36***	

Note.  $\beta$  = Standardized coefficient;

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Lastly, a paired-samples *t*-test was conducted to compare the scores of work-to- family spillover and family-to-work spillover. There was a significant difference in the scores of work-to- family spillover ( $M = 21.75$ ,  $SD = 4.34$ ) and family-to-work spillover ( $M = 22.60$ ,  $SD = 4.62$ ) in working women;  $t(137) = -2.26$ ,  $p = .02$ . These results suggested that work-to- family spillover is significantly higher in working women than family-to-work spillover.

A paired-samples *t*-test was conducted to compare the scores of negative work-to- family spillover and positive work-to- family spillover. There was nonsignificant difference in the scores of work-to- family negative ( $M = 10.99$ ,  $SD = 3.49$ ) and work-to- family positive spillover ( $M = 10.76$ ,  $SD = 3.38$ ) in working women;  $t(140) = .50$ ,  $p = .61$ . These results suggest that work-to- family spillover is significantly higher in working women than family-to-work spillover.

## Discussion

The present research intended to find out the relationship between work family spillover and family functioning in working women. The second main aim was to find out the predictive role of domains of work family spillover (positive and negative) for family functioning.

Results revealed that there is a significant negative relationship of family-to-work negative spillover, work-to- family negative spillover



and family functioning. A significant positive relationship has been found between family-to-work positive spillover, work-to-family positive spillover and family functioning. Moreover, positive work-to-family, positive family-to-work turned out to be positive predictor while negative work-to-family and negative family-to-work were significant negative predictors of family functioning. It can be related to previous researches done on the domain of work-life balance which suggest that work-family balance is a predictor of family functioning (Hill et al., 2008; Holmes et al., 2012). It can also be related to work-to-family negative spillover and its effects on physical as well as psychological health (Geurts & Demerouti, 2003). Previous researches have also found the bidirectional effects of spillover such as it can occur from work-to-family life and from family-to-work life (Geurts & Demerouti, 2003; Suryawanshi & Mali, 2013). Similarly, evidence suggested that positive work-family interference was explained by supportive culture, which enhances positive spillover and reduces negative spillover (Sok, Blomme, & Tromp, 2014).

Among sociodemographic variables, working hours have significant negative relationship with family functioning, which also means that long working hours of jobs have adverse effects on family functioning. This can also be explained through cultural factors where women in Asian countries such as Pakistan are supposed to prioritize their family responsibilities over work responsibilities (Lu et al., 2006). Women in Pakistan are struggling with the plight of working either long hours at jobs such as doctors (Bono et al., 2012) or to bring their work at home such as in the case of teachers who bring academic checking work at home. They tend to complete their work after getting free from household responsibilities at late night which adversely affects their physical health directly. Hence, sleep deprivation due to these long working hours adversely affects their psychological well-being by lifting up their level of distress (Ahmed, 2014).

Lastly, the results of the present research suggested that work-to-family spillover is significantly higher in working women than family-to-work spillover. This is also supported by the previous researches, which show that stress of work is more influenced the family functioning more than stress of family life affecting the work performance. In other words, conflict from work-to-family was more evident than conflict from family-to-work (Hsieh et al., 2005; Pal & Saksvik, 2008; Wesley & Muthuswamy, 2005). Previous researches conducted in Asian countries have found that dual role of working women affects their family functioning due to the intertwined roles of family and work (Hirao, 2007; Stivens, 2007). This can be explained by the cultural factors operating in Asian cultures where women are

pressurized to prioritize their family over their work as in these countries, women have traditionally been conceptualized as being performing indoor tasks rather than to pursue careers (Lu et al., 2006). Culturally, this finding is very significant as women who are supposed to and are trained to be homemakers find it easy to manage the household rather than their jobs leading to the aversive impact of work over their household activities. Managing both responsibilities and creating a healthy balance between them is not an easy job. Hence, the area that gets most affected in work-to family-spillover as compared to family-to-work spillover (Singh & Tatuka, 2013).

### **Limitations and Suggestions**

In the present research, three groups based on professions could not have been successfully made of equal size, hence, different professions were not compared to see differences on study variables. Data could have been gathered by making these three groups comparable and appropriate analysis could have been performed, which would have provided better insight of group difference in spillover among these three professions. It could have also been seen, which group has reported adverse effects on family functioning. It can be taken into consideration in future researches.

Social support could have also been found to get a better understanding of any buffering effect on family functioning as it has been seen that working women who receive support from family or friends report less difficulties in managing the burdens of work and family life, especially, support from husband. Previous researchers have found that spousal support in managing household work and financial issues promotes mental health of spouses (Zimmerman, Haddock, & Current, 2003). The present research did not focus to the psychological well-being or distress level faced by these working women, it could have also been assessed to get an understanding how it personally affected working women.

### **Future Implications of the Research**

Despite few limitations, present study was able to enhance our understanding of work family and family-to-work spillover and its links to family functioning. This study is an important contribution for the clinicians, as women will be the main sufferer if good balance is not achieved between work and family life. It is also imperative in the perspective of family counseling or may be family therapy.

## Conclusion

Overall, this research found that domains of spillover are related and significant predictor of family functioning. It also revealed that work-to-family spillover is dominant over family-to-work spillover. Working hours appeared to be a negative predictor of family functioning in working women. The findings are consistent with previous literature and discussed in the light of cultural factors such as demanding role of women in prioritizing family in comparison to work life or career.

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