

AN EMPIRICAL EXAMINATION OF WORK LIFE BALANCE IN DUAL CAREER COUPLES IN PAKISTAN: A QUALITATIVE APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

This study examine the issues of work life balance in dual career couples in the selected universities of Peshawar city of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province of Pakistan. For this purpose, qualitative research protocol was used while interviewing 22 purposely selected dual career couples in the targeted locales. The selected participants were interviewed through Semi Structured Interviewed (SSI) in the participant setting, their narratives were documented, and thematic analysis were subsequently performed. The extracted themes were including role overload and role conflict, couples with children, spousal relations and interaction, and balancing work and family domain. The study reveals that dual career couples were experiencing role overload, role conflict and stressor while managing the multiple demands of occupational and family domain. Further, it was found that that the reported issues were heightened in the case of the couples with children. It is concluded from the study that dual career couples are experiencing significant role overload and stressor because of the lack of organizational support and absence of a viable public policy in the academic institutes of Pakistan.

Keywords: Dual career couples, Family, Conflict, Role, Support

INTRODUCTION

Dual career couples is a marital union in which both spouses are actively engaged in simultaneous roles of performing as working professionals and homemakers. The term was initially conceptualized by Rapoport and Rapoport in 1969 and later on explored by various researchers across the globe (Rapoport & Rapoport, 1969; Dilworth, 2004; Kinnunen et al., 2006; McGinley, 2009; Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996; Marshall & Barnett, 1993; Kinnunen et al., 2006; Song, Foo, & Uy, 2008; McGinley, 2009; Oscharoff, 2011). Studies have outlined that dual career couples carry out multiple roles as homemakers, breadwinners, and caregivers that reason experience a role stress, role overload and role conflict. Because of the interconnectedness of work and family domains, work related pressure permeates into the family and family related stresses crossover into the work domain which is known as inter role conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). The inter role conflict is also described as spillover which is used to describe the carryover process of feelings, attitudes, and behaviours that might emerge in one social setting and are carried over into the other (Googins, 1991, p. 9). The carry over effect of work and family roles has considerable positive/negative effects on the role relationships of individuals, couples and families (Mcginley, 2009; Song, Foo, & Uy, 2008; Kinnunen et al., 2006; Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996).

Researchers have explored the bidirectional impact of work, family domains concluding that emotion, experiences, behaviours and stresses may carry over either from work to family or family to work domain, and cause behaviour or strain based conflict for the couples and families. The negative impact of crossover in dual career couples has been variously termed as “role permeability”, “stress contagion”, role strain” and work-family conflict (Marshall & Barnett, 1993; Kinnunen et al., 2006). Furthermore, role conflict has also described by researchers while using conceptual tools including

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“family-to-work”, “work-to-family conflict” work-family interface (Osharoff, 2011) and “inter-role conflict” (Dilworth, 2004; 2007, McGinley, 2009). Studies have found that crossover of these emotions, feelings and experiences further generate various forms of strains including “time based conflict”, “strain-based conflict”, and “behavior-based conflict” (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Time based conflict arises in couples when the time allotted for performing a specific role make it difficult to perform simultaneously role (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985 cited in Schreuder & Theron, 2001). A couple might be experiencing time based stressor when one of the spouse has to reallocate the time for family role which is already given to perform occupational role and vice versa (Strazdins et al., 2011).

Studies have further investigated that role conflict is generally a role pressure, which spillover either from work or family domain and thus reciprocally incompatible (Kalliath, Kalliath, & Singh, 2011; Panda, 2011; Bhowon, 2013). A wide range of studies in various settings has reported negative spillover from work to family and family to work conflict/strain in dual career couples (Silberstein, 1992, p. 144; Dilworth, 2004; Schneider & Waite, 2005; Domsch & Ladwig, 2007; Michel et al., 2011; Carlson et al., 2011; Valli, 2012). In a comparative study, it was found that individuals with dual career have comparatively reported higher work-family conflict than individuals having only a family profile (Cinamon & Rich, 2002). The highest degree of role conflict in dual career couples is attributed to various levels of inter-reliance on family and professional work (Mcginley, 2009). For instance, the interconnectivity of family and work roles make it difficult for the couples perform childcare activities during their office hours (Abele & Wiese, 2008; Dugan, Matthews, & Barnes-Farrell, 2012). Moreover, the couples are inter reliant on each other, therefore strain of one partner may carry-over to the other which trigger negative psychological outcomes in other partner (Westman et al., 2008; Rozanti, Amin, & Amin, 2014; Cooklin et al., 2014).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Studies have found negative and positive outcomes of dual careerism and outlined that work contends with family domain when one has insufficient time and energy to fulfil the demands of work role thus resulting in more dissatisfaction in the family domain and vice versa. Moreover, WFC was found closely related to family outcomes and FWC tend to be closely associated with work domain (Frone et al., 1992; Frone, 2003; Cortese, Colombo, & Ghislieri, 2010). Additionally, researches conducted in various contexts have supported the cross-domain model by reporting that work related stresses and the emotion spout in the family have been found negatively related to satisfaction outside of those domains (Ford, Heinen, & Langkamer, 2007; McElwain, Korabik, & Rosin, 2005).

One other debate has also generated about the cross-domain effect that either work related stresses is more problematic or family related stress negatively affect work performance. Theory of asymmetric permeability posits that occupational boundaries are more strict and clearly demarcated and enforced while family boundaries are comparatively flexible and easily changeable (Pleck, 1977). Consistent with this theory, researchers had argued that individuals might allow work to contend with their family responsibilities than their family responsibilities may be interfered with their work (Viers & Prouty, 2001; Demerouti & Bakker, 2011; Dugan, Matthews, & Barnes-Farrell, 2012).

However, some empirical evidences also suggest that role conflict affects various domains differently. Despite the reciprocal and bidirectional relationship between WFC and FWC, the former has a negative influence on job, whereas the latter was found in no association with job satisfaction (Anafarta, 2011). In a comparative study, a higher WFC was found negatively related to the career satisfaction of both spouses, but family to work pressures had no relationship with job satisfaction (Parasuraman & Greenhans, 1993). Similarly, work based indicators like number of working hours, flexibility during work, and work based conflict is found in conflict with family domain and other selected family related indicators like lack spousal support, time devoted to family activities were found in negative association with each other (Kumar & Kaur, 2012).

Likewise, a study conducted in Malaysia had reported that only FWC was found in negative association with job satisfaction while WFC was observed to have no significant relationship with job satisfaction. Alternatively, positive spillover of work to family roles has some potential outcomes for career satisfaction in comparison to family to work positive spillover (Lee-Peng Ng., Kuar, & Cheng, 2016). However, a recently conducted study has found somewhat different results by outlining that role conflict when experienced by couples in any of the domain results in reduced job satisfaction (Dartey-Baah, 2015). This variation in the results of WFC and career satisfaction may be also attributed to the

influence of some intervening factors. Some studies found that determinants such as social support, general well-being and personality characteristics of dual career couples have also been reported as predictors in the process.

Contrary to the negative spillovers of work related stress on family and family related pressures of work, certain positive spillovers and positive role facilitations have also been documented by some researchers (Ng & Hassan, & Ali, 2014; Magee et al., 2012). They suggest that as WFC emphasizes the dissenting demands, work-family facilitation focuses on the benefits in one domain which positively affect participation in the other (Carlson, Grzywacz, & Zivnuska, 2010). For instance, a study on working women having children were experiencing more family demands and thereby perceiving success in their family and professional career. The authors speculated that this is because of the strict disciplinary lifestyles and a higher social competence based on their higher education qualification and professional experiences which have allowed them to effectively balance their work and family obligations (Valcour & Tolbert, 2003).

Likewise, performing Meta analytical model, researchers have also outlined some positive linkages of work-family and family-work facilitation with career satisfaction (McNall, Nicklin, & Masuda, 2010). For example, a study has reported a higher level of career satisfaction among dual earner couples because the participants perceived that multiple role performance enhances their self-esteem, self-belief, fulfillment and overall life satisfaction (Ruderman et al., 2002). Likewise, female managers have also affirmed that dual role of family and job has positively influenced their careers (Stoner & Hartman, 1990). Furthermore, studies have recognized that there can be a positive spillover of satisfaction and achievement from one domain to the other (Xu, 2009). The positive spillover have been termed as “work-family gain”, “work-family facilitation”, “Positive spillover” (Smit, 2001), “work-family enrichment” (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Carlson et al., 2006), “work-family enhancement” (Ruderman et al., 2002) and “work-family positive spillover” (Hanson, Hammer, & Colton, 2006).

Empirical studies have reported that holding multiple roles promotes the general well-being of marital partners and their mental and physical health (Stevens et al., 2007). It is further found that work related knowledge, experiences, and information allow the couples to extend more tangible support to each other (Halbesleben, 2010). These gains may have positive effects on both spouses and can influence the reported level of marital satisfaction (Haddock & Rattenborg, 2003). In addition, women's employment increases their chances in accessing resources and provides them social status, economic security, increases life satisfaction, and assists in the management of problems (Barnett & Rivers, 1996).

A Meta analytical study has concluded that WFC was a stronger predictor of career satisfaction than family satisfaction and FWC was strongly associated with family satisfaction than career satisfaction (Shockley & Singla, 2011; Fisher, Bulger, & Smith, 2009). Likewise, a study conducted among 284 participants from the service industry in India, it was reported that WFC leads towards declining in job satisfaction (Gozukara & Çolakoglu's, 2015). It is further argued that WFC may cause reduced performance in the receiving domain nevertheless individual may likely blame the originating domain (Shockley & Singla, 2011).

Theoretical Perspectives

Dual career marriages have remained a debatable issue because of its possible positive as well as negative outcomes for individuals, couples, and families. Owing to the complexity, multidimensionality and ever-changing nature of the issue, a single theoretical framework cannot sufficiently cover the perceived cost and benefits of dual career marriages, therefore various theoretical perspectives were presented on the issue. This study demanded a review of various theoretical perspectives to understand the possible negative and positive outcomes of dual career couples in order to provide answers to questions posed in different times and places.

Theory of role accumulation outlines the possible positive outcomes of multiple role performances by arguing that individuals with multiple roles are more likely to get more benefits in terms of privileges, status security and self-fulfillment and enhances their social network (Sieber, 1974; Marks, 1977). Dual career couples are engaged in multiple roles as breadwinners, homemakers and caregivers therefore they will have more advantages in term of status security, self-fulfillment and a larger social network than the single career couples.

One other theoretical explanation about the possible positive outcomes of dual career couples is the theory of homophily presented by Simpson and England's (1981). The theory is based on the

assumption that similarity breeds connection and individuals tend to stay allied with the individuals who are most similar to themselves. The theory posits that people with similar social and cultural background comes more frequently into contacts than dissimilar people, which results in a strong network of social relationships. The theory of homophily has been utilized in various relationships studies. While taking this point further that dual career couples are having more common attributes such as shared worldview experiences, knowledge, education, parallel role and social cognition. These similar characteristics may help the couples to be more augmented in their marital interaction and companionship. In such relationships pattern, wives can easily understand work related problems of their husbands and husbands can understand the challenges of housework.

Beside the perceived positive outcomes of dual career couples, theories have also discussed the negative aspects of multiple role performance from conflicting viewpoints. The theory of role conflict is one of the most significant theoretical tools adopted by researchers to describe the negative outcomes of multiple role performance. This theory posits that diverse role obligations may result in an individual experiencing inter-role conflict as they face difficulty performing each role effectively. They need to spend more time and energy to minimize the incompatible role pressures from each domain. Similarly, the role strain theory (Goode, 1960) seeks to explain that individuals with multiple roles have to assign more importance to certain roles and try to negotiate between the assigned roles to cope with role strain. Similarly, the spillover theory conceptualizes that emotions and behaviors in one setting spillover to negatively affect the other (Cited in Netemeyer, McMurrian, & Boles, 1996).

Likewise, the role differentiation theory presented by Parsons (1955) argues that conjugal role differentiation is critical for marital stability and employed married women are viewed to be involved in an unhealthy competition with their spouses. The theory further explains that conjugal role differentiation involves healthy and reciprocal relations between the occupational and familial spheres. The instrumental, i.e. breadwinning role of man outside home and the wife expressive i.e. Procreative and sustenance functions ensure a well-integrated and balanced relationship in family life. The theory of role differentiation was much popularized in the context of family disruption among the working couples in the middle-class families in 1950 (Aldous, Osmond, & Hick, 1979). Similarly, empirical studies had also documented and supported the notion of the deleterious effects of women's employment (Udry, 1981).

Parson's theory of role differentiation is re-evaluated by Oppenheimer (1977) and stated that parson's role differentiation perspectives overemphasizes the functional necessity of role differentiation which is not an adequate explanation for family institution but elucidate a male superiority. We use the theory as an analytical tool along with other theoretical model to explore whether the problem of role conflict and role differentiation still have any negative consequences in the society where traditional gender norms are still persisting.

Another theoretical perspective that is used to assess the costs and benefits of dual earner relationships is the scarcity and expansion hypothesis. This hypothesis attempts to explain various determinants of multiple role obligations and its effect on the physical and psychological domain (Haddock & Rattenborg, 2003). Scarcity hypotheses posit that every individual has a specific amount of energy to carry out certain roles. As individual consumes his power and energy by conducting some roles, he/she will start to feel emotional and physical exhaustion unless his energies are not replenished (Goode, 1960; Marshall & Bennett, 1993). If the roles exceed the amount of the available resources, certainly individual will compromise on the quality of the role performance or some tasks will remain undone (Goode, 1960). An alternative explanation of the positive outcomes of multiple tasks is explained by the expansion hypothesis (Sieber, 1974) which explains the benefits of multiple role performance in the form of self-fulfillment, financial gains and social recognition often surpass the negative outcomes by enriching marital happiness (Haddock & Rattenborg, 2003). Additionally, women's employment increases their social status, gives them social skills for problem management and to contribute to their social and economic resources in marital relations (Barnett & Rivers, 1996; Gottman, 1999).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This research article is extracted form a PhD study conducted on dual career couples in Peshawar city of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. The mentioned study was carried out while using Mixed Method Research (MMR) within which 22 key study participants were being interviewed

through Semi Structured Interview (SSI) and their lived experiences were being documented in the participant settings. The main purpose behind these SSIs was to generate firsthand knowledge through ethnographic and descriptive accounts.

The study participants were purposively selected while using a flexible and open qualitative approach. We conducted interviews with spouses (either wife or husband), with or without children, with at least one year job experience as a dual careerist. The selected study participants were interviewed in their office settings for which they were primarily informed. Major questions of the interview were: how do you experience life as a dual careerist? How you manage multiple role as a wife, mother, sister and a career professional? How you manage work and family role with your children? Do you think that dual career create any social imbalances or social disequilibrium either in the family or work place? How you manage marital or professional difficulties if arise any?

All the interviewed were documented in the notebook as field notes that were subsequently analyzed while using thematic analysis approach. For this purpose, all the participant narratives were studied repeatedly in order to generate familiarity with the participant vignette. All the interviews were clubbed into themes including “role overload and role conflict”, “couples with children”, “spousal relations and marital communication, and balancing work and family.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Role Overload and Role Conflict

Dual career couples are required to consistently perform multiple roles as a result they experience role pressure, especially when they have to work with a tough schedule on a particular day in a specific week. Work or family related stress becomes frequent because of the dynamic connections between work and family domain. Owing to this dynamic interplay of work and family, work related stresses permeates to family domain and family related stresses carry over and negatively affect occupational role. About a stressful day in the office and its effect on the family domain, one participant narrated:

Sometime, I had to move with a tough schedule and had to cut off family time to go through a tight schedule at my office. It becomes more difficult when I had to stay longer in the office. After a daylong work in the office and domestic tasks at home reduce my chances to give proper time to my kids in the evening.

I feel that I am slightly struggling to look after the things at my home and have to manage things at the office. Keeping eyes on all the things has exhausted my energies. Sometimes, I feel some pressure while going to my workplace and in such case, my time in the office is not that much enjoyable (Source: Field Survey, 2017).

I have to reach my office on time and usually remain worried at my office about some domestic tasks which I had left incomplete at home. Such preoccupation with multiple roles takes away my chance of being happy and joyful at my workplace.

We have shifted to the city since long ago and living in town where we have no family support so we have to settle the things by managing our time to accomplish our multiple tasks (Source: Field Survey, 2017).

We noted that our respondents were having positive perception regarding their marital ties and marital partners, however they also narrated about the challenging aspect of their lives. It was reported that two-career management is difficult because it made them unable to get together on some important events. Those couples working on different workstations have less marital togetherness while couples with similar workstations have also commented that they cannot manage to catch up their partners in the daytime.

The most important thing that I think about dual career family is that work schedule is more difficult to tamper with and family routines are easily adjustable. In our case and I think the same will be for all dual career couples, when work and family roles overlap we often sacrifice the family. For example, if I have to catch up a morning meeting at the office, I have to leave early without seeing off my children and my wife has to drop them off to the school on that day (Source: Field Survey, 2017).

The incompatible demands from either work or family domains make it difficult for working couples to make their leisure time enjoyable. According to the respondent, it is always difficult to ensure a conflict-free life experiences between family responsibility and occupational role. Moving smoothly from one domain to the other could be rarely found in the working couples. A stressed working day at office results in an irritated evening for couples and other family members may also feel the heat of work related stress.

Couples with Children

Every morning is challenging for us after my elder child has started schooling. I have to wrestle with my child to get him ready for the school and sometimes it takes longer and we have to arrange things to start up our day as well. I had observed that I reach the office late after taking my child off to the nearby school. I had to also make some schedule adjustment in my office hours to pick up my baby in the afternoon (Source: Field Survey, 2017)

While I am at work, I required someone's help who willingly look after my newborn baby because he needs great care at this stage. I searched out in my locality but being obsessed with findings the most reasonable person for my baby care and ultimately we got the support of an old lady for looking after my kids therefore now I can move to the workplace without being worried about my child (Source: Field Survey, 2017).

A child needs intensive care for one year after the birth. Baby care service in my workplace is not available and it seems unjustifiable to hand down baby to someone else but my husband thinks differently. I feel already short of time and another child could further complicate the things for us. I have no enough time to spend with my spouse and child; I think it might be difficult to find time to look after another child? We had many deliberations regarding family size, which often ends without reaching any decision (Source: Field Survey, 2017).

The statement clearly indicates that how personal preferences regarding family size can cause disagreement in the couples. The couples can compromise on some small matters like taking dinner and shopping together or family outings, but decision regarding family size and numbers of children is not that much simple to be easily compromised. Majority of the responses we received suggest that couples do not keep the mind open to listen to the point vantage of the other spouse on this issue. Another area of disagreement between working couples is the child schooling matters.

I think, in the first few years, a child must be enrolled at the nearby school and one should not be worried too much about the quality of education. We have to also consider the issue of child travelling to the school and to think that how this will affect our children. For example, it is very toilsome for the child and worrisome for us if he travels over an hour to get to school. In our case, my spouse is very conscious about quality schooling and she wants to enroll our kids few kilometers away from home (Source: Field Survey, 2017).

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After our marriage, we moved to the city and started living in a rented house. Initially, it was easier for us to manage work and family responsibilities, but things were changed when we got our first baby and then the second. Our organization has no childcare facility therefore; we had to manage an alternative childcare measure for our baby. Our home is far away from our workplace therefore we feel inconvenient to leave the children behind with the house cleaner. We decided to take her to the workplace and manage a room for them in the girl's hostel where the house cleaner looks after our children and we began to feel relaxed now (Source: Field Survey, 2017).

Parenthood is challenging for dual career couples because childcare is considered as a full time job, especially the first few months when a baby is newly born. The overloaded working couples find it too difficult to strike a successful balance between work, domesticity and childcare. The case is more complicated when the couples have left their traditional family network and living in the town and each spouse travel to their job destination. In this scenario, the couple has to rely on organizational support or had to hire someone services in the nearby locality. The situation becomes more complicated when the organizational support is not available.

Spousal relations and marital communication

We arrived at the conclusion that couples have trouble in managing multiple tasks consequently; they are encountered by certain stressful conditions. The best way to smoothly go through such circumstances is to have positive communication of the spouses because it helps the spouses to cope with their family and work related stress. It is not only helpful to overcome work related stress, but also a positive predictor of marital quality. Friendly and frequently communication among the spouses depicts that they having a higher marital quality. We found the evidence from the perspective of our few respondents that they had a stressful time at their offices; however, their friendly communication helped them successfully navigate through the stressful time.

I feel lucky for having such an ideal spouse. It is more than what I was expecting about my life partner. My husband is like a friend and teammate for me. He is supportive in household chores and always makes the things a lot easier for me. Such supporting attitude is a real source of satisfaction for me (Source: Field Survey, 2017).

I feel very happy for being married to this spouse. We have been very friendly since day one. The best thing about our relations is that we both have a complete understanding of each other. We move along well together and seldom get distressed with each other. If any undesirable things happen between us, we sort out the things quickly and always avoid prolonging the conflicts (Source: Field Survey, 2017).

Another respondent added about the busy schedule and role overload issue as under

Busy schedule on any day at office minimizes my chances to engage in a friendly communication with my spouse in the evening time. I feel overburdened and I had to stay disengaged with my spouse and children. Therefore, I also miss out time to discuss some family and job related problems with my spouse (Source: Field Survey, 2017).

Our participants reportedly respond complaints regarding the effects of a tight schedule. In this scenario, working couples manage to perform better only in one domain and unable to get time and energy to actively steer through the other domain. Marital quality is mostly associated with a degree of emotional attachments between marital partners and emotional attachment between spouses increases with the increase in their marital communication. When the couples did not make appropriate emotional responses, their marital communication, attachment and the overall marital quality might be reduced.

I have to spend all the energies in the workplace and leaving nothing for my family time. I feel drained to such an extent that I am unable to be further engaged in conversation with my spouse and children. Usually, I feel that busy work schedule in the office does not let me give an active response to my family in the evening (Source: Field Survey, 2017).

I am involved in an argument with my spouse regarding the schooling matter of our 3-year-old child. We think about the enrollment and the type of school he is going to attend. I want that our child must be enrolled earlier, but my spouse disfavor this by arguing that a child must not be sent to the school in the tender age. It is he who takes the final decision because he covers the school fees (Source: Field Survey, 2017).

Balancing work and family

Some couples still follow the traditional gender order and expect to play their traditional role. Such expectations within dual career marriages might create normative dilemma between the couples.

Another important area of dual career families is the family planning especially the numbers of children they have. Our statistical results indicate that majority of dual career families have less than 4 children. Most of the couples have different views and preferences regarding family size and number of children and often the spouses within a marital union also confronting with the issues of family size, birth space, and child schooling matter.

We both have earning capabilities; however, I believe that managing the family budget is my responsibility. Likewise, I do not expect my wife to put her share in the family budget, but I expect that she should solely take on the domestic role. Similarly, my spouse should also consider that she has nothing to do to pool in the family budget and focus to perform better in the family circle (Source: Field Survey, 2017).

Raising a family is a great challenge for the working couples. It was easier for us to manage our careers, but things changed as we got two children in the first five years of our marriage. My spouse wants more children, but I disagree because we cannot manage to bring up more children (Source: Field Survey, 2017).

From the perspective of our study participants, more numbers of children are difficult to raise for working couples. In this connection, female respondents mostly voiced their concern because child-raising activities are associated with women, which mitigate their chances of career growth. Among working couples, parenthood becomes more challenging for women in relation to men because women have to manage their biological clock, rearing functions and caring role in raising the children.

Another respondent narrated about the difficulty related with childcare as under

The most critical thing that is under consideration for us is our family size. It is mostly the women who suffer the most. It becomes difficult for a working mom to be progressive in her career with more numbers of children around her. Working couples especially the women have to opt either a successful career or more number of children (Source: Field Survey, 2017).

Sometime I think that I am uncomfortable because of playing multiple roles. After spending a busy day at workplace, I have to perform domestic chores such as cooking, cleaning and childcare. I think my husband is in a better position than I am because he regularly moves out for a walk, riding and playing and thereby takes no part in domestic chores. Sometime, I want to delegate some activities, but he is not willing to take on any domestic role (Source: Field Survey, 2017).

I know that my main responsibility is to fulfill the needs of my family and I am working hard for that. I do not expect any financial support from my spouse and I only expect that she should perform childcare and other domestic chores. I know she works hard at her job, but there is no compulsion on her from my side to do the job. If she likes to continue her job she may continue, but she will have to perform family related work as well (Source: Field Survey, 2017).

The above narratives suggest that working couples may have more divergent opinion, needs, and expectations regarding a spouse role in domestic tasks. Egalitarian couples are more flexible in this regard who think that housework is to be far more than mere performing of tasks needed to smoothly run the family. Likewise, families with more strict gender role attitudes compartmentalize work and family and ignoring the functional utility of egalitarian gender role in the family.

In case of any role overload issue or stress, I begin thinking that I have some uncomfortable work life experiences just because of my planning to do something special in my life. This thinking boosts up my morale and gives me mental strength to face the challenges that I have to move through (Source: Field Survey, 2017).

Another respondent added that:

We have a friendly communication pattern as every one of us gets the opportunity to speak one's mind. Usually, if we discuss any problem, one of us begins the discussion and the other one try to carefully listen without interrupting the discussion. We do not try to reach any conclusion unless we both express our opinion on that issue. We know how friendly and warm conversation is helpful for strengthening our marital ties and career growth (Source: Field Survey, 2017).

I often take my baby to my office because we have no option to look after the baby at home. I have to care the baby at the office because our organisation does not have a baby care facility. During the duty time, usually I remain thoughtful about my baby and in a few cases; I had to take a break to look after my baby because I think that at this stage she needs my attention. The ultimate solution for this problem is to arrange an alternative source for my baby care (Source: Field Survey, 2017).

The above narratives suggest that dual career couples experience juggling from work to family and family to work. Although the arrival of the baby in the family is a blessing for parents, but it makes work life balance more difficult and intractable. In this case, the couples mostly look for out of home care facilities or refer to hired services to look after their babies.

CONCLUSIONS

It is concluded from the study that multiple role performance and high demands of work and family make it difficult for the couples to maintain a successful balance between family and work domain. The study concludes that work and family domains are more connected in the case of dual career couples therefore stressor experienced in one of the domains might be carry over by any of the spouse to another domain. Further, couples with children experience more issues in striking a balance between family and occupational role because parenting is considered as a fulltime role especially for women in Pakistan. It is further concluded that the role stressors might be more challenging for the couples in Pakistan because the newly established educational institutes are lacking organizational support and policy level measures are yet to be established to support dual careerism. Majority of the couples are navigating through the challenges of dual career roles through their personal coping and emotional competence but these personal level efforts are viewed as insufficient in striking a balance between family and work. It is important for the public sector organizations in Pakistan to realize the potential contribution of these highly educated couples and provide them viable support to dual career couples and families to successfully integrate their family and occupational role.

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