



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE, ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT

CONTENTS

| Sr. No. | TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S) | Page No. |
|---------|--|----------|
| 1. | LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND VISION 2020 IN NIGERIA <i>OLOWE, OLUSEGUN</i> | 1 |
| 2. | IMPACT OF SELECTED ISSUES ON WORK-FAMILY BALANCE: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM PRIVATE COMMERCIAL BANKS OF BANGLADESH <i>AYESHA TABASSUM, JASMINE JAIM & TASNUVA RAHMAN</i> | 5 |
| 3. | A STUDY ON TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE MODEL FOR QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION <i>HARINI METHUKU & HATIM R HUSSEIN</i> | 9 |
| 4. | FISCAL POLICY AND ECONOMIC GROWTH IN PAKISTAN <i>ZEESHAN AHMED</i> | 14 |
| 5. | A NON-PARAMETRIC APPROACH TO FINANCIAL INCLUSION ANALYSIS THROUGH POSTAL NETWORK IN INDIA <i>NITIN KUMAR</i> | 19 |
| 6. | SECURITIZATION AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH REAL ESTATE GROWTH – AN ANALYSIS <i>VIVEK JOSHI</i> | 25 |
| 7. | EXPLORING HRM PRACTICES IN SMEs <i>PUJA BHATT & DR. S. CHINNAM REDDY</i> | 32 |
| 8. | ELECTRICITY EXCHANGE IN INDIA: A STUDY OF INDIAN ENERGY EXCHANGE <i>DR. Y. M. DALVADI & SUNIL S TRIVEDI</i> | 42 |
| 9. | SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIAL UNITS: PAST AND PRESENT PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS <i>DR. K. VETRIVEL & DR. S. IYYAMPILLAI</i> | 48 |
| 10. | 'MEDICAL TOURISM' – THE NEW TREND OF REVENUE GENERATION: IMPACTS ON INDIAN ECONOMY AND THE GLOBAL MARKET RESPONSE <i>DR. S. P. RATH, DR. BISWAJIT DAS, HEMANT GOKHALE & RUSHAD KAVINA</i> | 61 |
| 11. | A STUDY ON DECIDING FACTORS OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN VIRUDHUNAGAR DISTRICT <i>C. MANOHARAN & DR. M. JEYAKUMARAN</i> | 70 |
| 12. | EARNINGS ANNOUNCEMENTS: DO THEY LEAD TO EFFICIENCY? <i>SANTOSH KUMAR, TAVISHI & DR. RAJU. G</i> | 74 |
| 13. | CLIMATE CHANGE, ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION EFFORTS IN THE TRIBAL AREAS OF INDIA <i>DR. S. THIRUNAVUKKARASU</i> | 78 |
| 14. | A STUDY ON THE DETERMINANTS OF EXPORT DEMAND OF INDIA AND KERALA <i>DR. L. ANITHA</i> | 82 |
| 15. | INDIA'S FUTURE CONSUMPTION OF COAL RESOURCES & INDONESIA AS A POTENTIAL PROCUREMENT DESTINATION <i>DR. CH. VENKATAIAH & SANTHOSH B. S.</i> | 87 |
| 16. | AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE TRADE-OFF AND PECKING ORDER HYPOTHESES ON INDIAN AUTOMOBILE FIRMS <i>DR. A. VIJAYAKUMAR</i> | 94 |
| 17. | SHG - BANK LINKAGE – A HELPING HAND TO THE NEEDY POOR <i>DR. A. S. SHIRALASHETTI & D. D. KULKARNI</i> | 101 |
| 18. | ANALYSING SOCIO DEMOGRAPHIC EFFECT ON CONSUMER'S POST PURCHASE BEHAVIOUR: A STUDY ABOUT HOME APPALIANCES <i>DR. DHARMENDRA KUMAR</i> | 105 |
| 19. | ETHICAL HUMAN RESOURCES WITH SUSTAINABLE RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS LEADING TO EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT <i>R. MANJU SHREE</i> | 110 |
| 20. | JUDGING THE SHORT TERM SOLVENCY OF SELECTED INDIAN AUTOMOBILE SECTOR COMPANIES <i>BHAVIK M. PANCHASARA, KUMARGAURAV GHELA, SAGAR GHETIA & ASHISH CHUDASAMA</i> | 114 |
| 21. | INSOLVENCY RISK OF SELECTED INDIAN COMMERCIAL BANKS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS <i>SANTI GOPAL MAJI, SOMA DEY & ARVIND KR. JHA</i> | 120 |
| 22. | SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF ENTERPRISES IN A GLOBALISED INDIAN ECONOMY - AN ANALYSIS <i>DR. KUMUDHA RATHNA</i> | 125 |
| 23. | CSR PRACTICES AND RATINGS IN INDIAN BANKING SECTOR <i>JAYASHREE PATIL-DAKE & NEETA AURANGABADKAR-POLE</i> | 129 |
| 24. | POVERTY, INEQUALITY AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH IN RURAL INDIA: AN ANALYSIS <i>DR. JAMIL AHMAD</i> | 134 |
| 25. | EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN THROUGH MICRO FINANCE IN THE UNION TERRITORY OF PUDUCHERRY <i>B. ELUMALAI & P. MUTHUMURUGAN</i> | 139 |
| | REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK | 143 |

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IMPACT OF SELECTED ISSUES ON WORK-FAMILY BALANCE: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM PRIVATE COMMERCIAL BANKS OF BANGLADESH

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ABSTRACT

In the light of the rapid change of the nature of organizations as well as the roles of male and female in the organization has given rise to the importance of work-family balance. Some organizational issues play crucial roles in balancing work and family life. The long work hours or the support from supervisors and co-workers are few examples. Besides, some personal issues can also be considered in this regard. In general, it has been already found that females are facing more work-family balancing problems than males. In addition, for parents who work, achieving a balance between work and family commitments is highly desirable for all family members. Therefore, this paper is to explore the impact of some selected issues on the work-family balance of the employees in the banking sector of Bangladesh.

KEYWORDS

Work-family balance, bank, Bangladesh, gender.

INTRODUCTION

Recently, balancing work and family responsibilities has become a key issue for employers, governments and families across the world. Work-family balance reflects the orientation of an individual across different life roles, an inter-role phenomenon (Marks and MacDermid, 1996); a work family conflict arises when an individual has to perform multiple roles that require time, energy and commitment (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985). However, in the past, work-family balance has been considered a women's issue; recent studies indicate that men are as likely as women to have difficulty in managing work-family demands (Hill et al., 1997; Levine and Pittinsky, 1997; Milkie and Peltola, 1999).

There are several factors that influence work-family balance significantly. Studies (Major et al., 2002, Frone et al., 1997) have found that long work hour can have a prominent impact on balancing work and family. On the contrary, social support provided by supervisor and co-workers can mediate work-family balance (Seiger and Wiese, 2009, Carlson and Perrewé, 1999, Cohen and Wills 1985). However, leaving these organizational aspects, some personal issues can also play important roles in influencing the work-family balance. Several studies (Greenhaus and Powell, 2006, Higgins et al., 1994, Gutek et al., 1991, Voydanoff 1988) have identified that women reported that work-family balancing is considered as difficult for them and employees with children have also faced difficulty in balancing family with work (Lyness and Kropf, 2005, Voydanoff, 2005, Greenhaus and Beutell 1985). Moreover, previous research has shown that work-family conflict leads to various negative outcomes, including job dissatisfaction (Gordon, et al., 2007, Boles, et al., 2001, Hill et al., 2004).

From the context of Bangladesh, financial sector reform in the country started in 1976 with privatization of the banks (Ahmad and Khanal, 2007) and a rapid expansion of private banks has taken place from the mid nineties till present (Rahman, et al., 2006). At present, there are 49 commercial banks of which 30 are private commercial banks. The banking sector employs a significant number of employees - more than 1,10,000 people (Ahmad and Khanal, 2007). However, long working hours, excessive work pressure and handling demanding and unique customers in banks has become a take-for-granted phenomenon in the banking sector. Therefore, this study aims to explore the factors that have influence on the work-family balance of the employees of private commercial banks.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study purports to explore the factors that have direct influence on employee work-family balance in the private commercial banks of Bangladesh. This study considers long working hour, social support, gender of the employees and parental status of the employees to explore the work-family balance. By understanding this perspective, the bank management can derive ways to improve employee work-family balance. By conducting this study, the findings should help both management and employees of the banks to understand work-family balance in context of Bangladesh. Specifically the four objectives are,

- To identify how long working hour is related with work-family balance.
- To find out whether supervisor's support and co-worker's support help the employees to balance their work and family.
- To investigate whether work-family balance varies significantly in terms of gender of the employees.
- To know whether employees with children face greater difficulty in terms of work-family balance.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

LONG WORK HOUR AND WORK-FAMILY BALANCE

Kanter (1977) noted that job-related time demands are among the most obvious ways that work life affects family life. According to Hobfoll (1989), spending more time at work equals an increase in financial resources but it reduces the time for personal or family roles. Specifically, long work hour can negatively

influence the work-family balance of those, who have greater number of family roles (Grandey et. al., 2007). More specifically, Shamir (1983) reported that working more than 9 hours a day can lead to much greater conflict between work and non-work aspects of life. Consistent with this notion, the number of hours spent at work has been shown to envisage work-family conflict (Frone, et.al., 1997, Major, Klein and Ehrhart 2002, Netemeyer, et.al., 1996, Thompson and Prttas 2005). Along with these researchers several prior researches have demonstrated the impact of work time and work involvement on work-family conflict (Eagle, et. al., 1998, Judge, et. al., 1994). In contrast, individuals experienced the highest level of work-to-family conflict and stress, who were more engaged in work than family. Thus reducing work time can facilitate work-family balance (Grandey, et. al., 2007, Hill, Hawkins, Ferris and Weitzman 2001). As the banking employees need to stay at the office for a long time, the current study aims to explore the relationship between long work hour and work-family balance. The prediction is,

Hypothesis 1 (H1_a): There is a significant negative correlation between long work hour and work-family balance among the employees of private commercial banks in Bangladesh.

SOCIAL SUPPORT AND WORK-FAMILY BALANCE

Social support from different sources has been shown to be associated with work-family conflicts in several researches (Carlson and Perrewé 1999, Cohen and Wills 1985). It appears that social support reduces work-family conflict or it can reduce role conflict and role ambiguity that lead to work-family conflict, such as (Daalen, et.al., 2006). Seiger and Wiese (2009) further mentioned that support from supervisors or co-workers may be involved in the stressors at work that cause work-family conflicts. According to Beehr, et.al., (2000), co-worker support can work positively when the employees are miserable situation and disturbed at their workplace. So Frone, et.al., (1997) concluded that support by supervisor and co-workers can reduce work distress and work overload, which in turn eases work-family conflicts. Fisher (1985) also showed that social support from supervisor and co-workers was negatively correlated with stress. Besides, Carlson and Perrewé (1999) examined the relation of social support and work-family conflict and they mentioned social support as "protective function", which describes a coping mechanism: "People with strong social support should be less likely to perceive stress for work-family balance". Therefore, the study aims to examine the relationship between social support, specifically supervisor and co-worker support, and work-family balance. Thus, the prediction is,

Hypothesis 2 (H2_a): There is a significant positive correlation between support from manager and work-family balance among the employees of private commercial banks in Bangladesh.

Hypothesis 3 (H3_a): There is a significant positive correlation between support from co-workers and work-family balance among the employees of private commercial banks in Bangladesh.

GENDER AND WORK-FAMILY BALANCE

Most work-family research takes possible gender differences under consideration (Greenhaus and Powell 2006). Gender may influence the ability of balance work and family in a number of different ways (Higgins, et.al., 1994). Gender differences in work-family studies are often attributed to traditional gender-role norms, that describes "women as to be expected to take care of the household and men to be the breadwinners" (Brummelhuis, et.al., 2008). But this assumption is no longer viable (Higgins, Duxbury & Lee 1994) as the number of dual-earner families is growing and more modern gender-role norms is prevailing, where it is ascertained that with both men and women both are found as important to participate in family life and work (Cinamon and Rich, 2002). Some studies found that family characteristics have a stronger negative effect on female employees work outcomes than on male employees (Keene and Reynolds, 2005; Dilworth, 2004; Duxbury and Higgins, 1991; Gutek, et.al., 1991; Voydanoff, 1988). Thus the current study wants to determine the impact of gender difference on work-family balance. The prediction is,

Hypothesis 4 (H4_a): Female employees of private commercial banks in Bangladesh face greater difficulty in terms of work-family balance than male employees.

CHILDREN AND WORK-FAMILY BALANCE

Achieving a balance between work and family commitments is highly enviable among the working parents. It is found that a good work-family balance not only can contribute to better health, educational and social outcomes for children but also can increase the opportunities available for women in the workforce, and help men to spend more time with their families (Gornick and Meyers, 2003). Thus it is linked to higher levels of satisfaction with parental relationships (Headey, et.al., 2006).

It is found that increasing demand on work-family balance can arise from pressure of the children to participate in family-role extensively (Greenhaus and Beutell 1985). Dual earner couples with no children reported greater work-family balance than the parents (Tausig and Fenwick 2001). Thus employees who are living with children are negatively related to work-family balance as they face extensive amount of work-family conflict (Lyness and Kropf 2005). Brummelhuis, et.al., (2008) mentioned that the presence of young children is positively related to emotional exhaustion that mainly leads to work-family conflict. In fact having children means it increases the number of family roles, which creates further inter-role conflict (Greenhaus and Beutell 1985, Kahn, et.al., 1964). Thus it can be said that family roles are positively correlated with work family conflict (Allen 2001, Netemeyer et al. 1996, Thompson and Prttas 2005). Consistent with these ideas the present study purports to explore the influence of children on work-family balance. Thus the prediction is,

Hypothesis 5 (H5_a): Employees with children face greater difficulty in terms of work-family balance than employees without children in the private commercial banks of Bangladesh.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The sample of this present study consists of the employees who are working in the private commercial banks of Dhaka, Bangladesh. The sampling technique adopted is simple random sampling. Both male and female employees of the banks are considered for survey into equal number. In total, 80 questionnaires are distributed among the employees of four private commercial banks through drop and collect method, out of which 60 are finally included in the study for data analysis. The rests are rejected due to incompleteness, errors, ambiguity, etc.

The questionnaire used in the survey consisted of two sections. The first section is designed to measure the perception of bank employees on work-family balance issues where as the last section was the demographic information of respondents namely; gender, age, marital status, number of children, education level, income level, position, years of service in the banking service.

At first, the internal consistency method is adopted for ensuring reliability of the data. Descriptive statistics are calculated to describe the main characteristics of the subjects and the distribution of subjects according to the intensity of work-family balance experienced. Correlation coefficients are computed to examine the relationships between work-family balance, its determinants. A series of regression analyses is employed to test the hypotheses of the study.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

HYPOTHESES TESTING

According to the correlational analysis results, it is found that there is significant relationship between long work hour and work-family balance ($r = -0.28$, $p < 0.05$). It shows an increase in long working hour leads to a decrease in work-family balance (see Table 1). This result supports H1_a, stating correlation between long work hour and work-family balance. There is a significant relationship between work-family balance and support from manager ($r = 0.37$, $p < 0.01$).

TABLE 1: CORRELATION BETWEEN WORK-FAMILY BALANCE AND EACH DETERMINANT

| Variable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|-------------------------|---------|-------|-------|---|------|--------------------|
| Work-family balance | - | | | | 3.08 | 0.84 |
| Long work hour | 0.015** | - | | | 3.76 | 1.47 |
| Support from manager | 0.002* | 0.255 | - | | 2.75 | 1.12 |
| Support from colleagues | 0.000* | 0.101 | 0.005 | - | 2.65 | 1.27 |

Note: * $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$

The result indicates an increase in support from managers can lead to an increase in work-family balance, supporting the H2a. The result also reveals a significant correlation between support from colleagues and work-family balance ($r = 0.19, p < 0.01$), which indicates that an increase in support from colleagues can lead to an increase in work-family balance. Thus this result supports H3a.

A series of independent sample t-tests are used to find the difference in perceptions of male and female employees regarding work-family balance. From the result, it is explored that there is no significant difference between the male and female employees perception regarding work-family balance ($p > 0.05$) (see Table 2). The result also reveals no significant difference between male and female employees regarding long work hour, support from manager, and support from colleagues (for all the cases $p > 0.05$). Thus it does not support H4a that indicates female employees do not face greater difficulty in terms of work-family balance than male employees in the private commercial banks of Bangladesh.

TABLE 2: INDEPENDENT SAMPLE T-TEST RESULT TO DETERMINE BETWEEN MALE AND FEMALE EMPLOYEES

| Variable | Mean | Mean | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|-------------------------|--------|------|-------|----|-----------------|
| Long work hour | Male | 3.53 | -1.22 | 58 | 0.22 |
| | Female | 4.00 | | | |
| Support from manager | Male | 2.67 | -0.56 | 58 | 0.57 |
| | Female | 2.83 | | | |
| Support from colleagues | Male | 2.83 | 1.11 | 58 | 0.26 |
| | Female | 2.47 | | | |
| Work-family balance | Male | 3.13 | 0.45 | 58 | 0.65 |
| | Female | 3.03 | | | |

The t-test result also reveals that there is no significant difference between employees with children and employees without children ($p > 0.05$) (see Table 3). The result also reveals no significant difference between employees with children and employees without children regarding long work hour, support from manager, and support from colleagues (for all the cases $p > 0.05$). So it does not support H5a, which indicates employees with children do not face greater difficulty in terms of work-family balance than employees without children in the private commercial banks of Bangladesh.

TABLE 3: INDEPENDENT SAMPLE T-TEST RESULT TO DETERMINE BETWEEN EMPLOYEES WITH CHILDREN AND WITHOUT CHILDREN

| Variable | Mean | Mean | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|------|-------|----|-----------------|
| Long work hour | Employee with children | 3.42 | -1.24 | 58 | 0.22 |
| | Employee without children | 3.93 | | | |
| Support from manager | Employee with children | 2.53 | -1.05 | 58 | 0.30 |
| | Employee without children | 2.85 | | | |
| Support from colleagues | Employee with children | 2.84 | 0.79 | 58 | 0.43 |
| | Employee without children | 2.56 | | | |
| Work-family balance | Employee with children | 3.21 | 0.78 | 58 | 0.43 |
| | Employee without children | 3.02 | | | |

The results of regression analysis presented in Table 4 examine the relationship of work-family balance with its determinant factors. The results indicate that long work hour can reduce the work-family balance opportunity ($\beta = -0.27, p < 0.05$). Support from manager ($\beta = 0.79, p < 0.01$) and support from colleagues ($\beta = 0.31, p < 0.05$) can directly facilitate work-family balance by increasing work-family balance scope.

TABLE 4: REGRESSION ANALYSIS RESULT OF WORK-FAMILY BALANCE WITH EACH PREDICTOR

| Criterion Variable | Predictor Variable | Beta (β) | R square | Adjusted R square | Sig. (p-value) |
|---------------------|-------------------------|------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|
| Work-family balance | Long work hour | -0.27 | 0.13 | 0.10 | 0.03** |
| Work-family balance | Support from manager | 0.31 | 0.22 | 0.18 | 0.02** |
| Work-family balance | Support from colleagues | 0.79 | 0.65 | 0.63 | 0.00* |

Note: * $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$

DISCUSSION

This study examined the correlation between work-family balance and its several predictors. The results reveal a negative relationship of between long work hour and work-family balance (supporting H1a). Besides, the study results also suggest an existing positive relationship between support from supervisor and support from colleagues (supporting H2a and H3a). These findings are consistent with the previous findings. However, the results indicate no significant difference among the perception of male and female employees regarding work-family balance (not supporting H4a) that is female employees do not face difficulty in terms of work-family balance. This result is consistent with the findings of Brummelhuis et al. (2008), Frone, Russell and Cooper (1992), and Grzywacz and Marks (2000) who found regardless of gender-role norms, female face the similar level difficulty in balancing work and family. This finding can be well explained by the studies of Cinamon and Rich's (2002) and Daalen, et al., (2006). These authors ascertained that nowadays, the number of dual-earner families is growing and more modern gender-role norms prevail, with both men and women finding it important to participate in family life and work. Finally, the study results explore no significant difference among the perception of employees with children and employees without children regarding work-family balance (not supporting H5a). This finding is a bit inconsistent with the findings of the previous researches (Brummelhuis et al. 2008, Tausig and Fenwick 2001), which explored that presence of children can negatively influence the work-family balance of the employees, as it can increase work-family conflict substantially. It may happen that the employees without children possess other family roles, rather than being parents, i.e. role of son/daughter, brother/sister, etc. That's why all the employees are assuming similar amount of family responsibilities, regardless of their parental-role norms.

CONCLUSION

A proper work-family balance can eventually contribute for the job satisfaction. The organization can also be benefited from it. Therefore, the policy makers will have to be concerned regarding this issue. Particularly, social support from supervisors and co-workers can be improved to balance the work and family life of the employees of the bank.

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