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“Self-Compassion and Work-Family Interference across Family System among Women School Teachers: A Cross-sectional Study”

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KEY WORDS

Family System,
Self-Compassion,
Work/Family
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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted with the aim to find out the relationship between self-compassion and work/family interference among women school teachers across the family system. Data was collected from rural and urban areas. It was hypothesized that there would be a negative relationship between self-compassion and work/family interference. The sample consisted of (N=300) women school teachers (n=150 from urban area and n=150 from rural). A cross-sectional research design along with a non-probability purposive sampling technique was used to collect data from participants, by using two tools i.e. Self-Compassion Scale (SCS) (Batool & Jabeen, 2016) and Work/Family Interference Scale (WFI) (Hafsa & Jabeen, 2017). The results revealed that there was a significant negative relationship between self-compassion and work/family interference and along with this, work/family interference was evident more in a joint family system, compared to the nuclear family system.

Introduction

Family and work are the two different segments in an individual's life and each segment runs a sole fact from which to investigate significant abilities of human behavior (Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005). Previously, it was believed that work and family were separate entities. Kanter (1977) had a strong belief or myth about the separate units of family and work. Work and family are managed according to their own rules and considered distinctly. However, the split world argument has recently been replaced by a new way of thinking in which family and work dealings are seen as collaboration and mutual (Demerouti & Geurts, 2004). For instance, problems arising from the work area affect the family domains, and family problems are found to have a strong impact on working life (Huang et al, 2004). Studies on work and family have shown that conflicts between work and family have a negative impact on a person's working life, family life, and on the general well-being (Allen et al, 2000). The conflict between work and family is the result of too many tasks at hand and the time constraints that individuals face when trying to accomplish family and work responsibilities (Ciabattari, 2007). While this conflict can occur in both directions, or in other words from work to family and from family to work (Boles et al., 2001).

From work to family and from family to work conflicts arise in three forms, which are termed as time-based, strain-based and behavior-based conflicts. The first type of conflict is time-based conflict, which arises when the time is devoted to fill the responsibilities of one

domain and omit the other domains' responsibilities (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Strain-based conflict is the second form of conflict under discussion that occurs when burden caused by one role prevent the fulfillment of role requirements in the other domain (Netemeyer et al., 1996). Fatigue, tension, anxiety, and irritability are examples of strain-based conflict (Premeaux et al., 2007). The third kind of conflict is behavior-based, which arises when patterns of behavior within one role are not consistent with expectations of a person's behavior within another role (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

Being a human has limited capacity when facing conflicts in work or family life which leads one to experience stress. There are some psychological approaches which can be used to deal with emotional sufferings caused due to conflicts in family and work life. Some of these approaches are unconditionally positive in regard to self-empathy, self-concept, positive thinking and finally self-compassion. One study suggests that compassion is a new feature that is recognized as a challenge for determination (Goetz, Keltner & Thomas, 2010). Compassion means the awareness and the sense of concern for another person. It is a feeling of intense kindness and sorrowfulness for the other person who is in a state of misery (Eisenberg, 2002).

After understanding the concept of compassion, we need to talk about self-compassion which means the same love, care, respect belongingness, and attachments that we have for ourselves that we need to give another person in times of difficulties (Neff, 2003a). Self-compassion has three sub-factors; the first sub-factor is self-kindness vs self-judgment, which means that you treat yourself with respect,

love, and care at the time of suffering instead of being judgmental or evaluative. The second sub-factor is commonly known as humanity vs isolation, which means that you distinguish sufferings and inadequacy as a common practice in human beings rather than being isolated. And the last sub-factor is mindfulness vs over-identification and it means that perceiving one’s practices in a balanced viewpoint, rather than suppressing, avoiding, disregarding, or exaggerating them (Neff, 2011). Self-compassion has a handy association with emotional regulation at the time of suffering. Self-compassion supports people to be emotionally strong, and also be able to handle stresses which arises in daily life situations (Brion et al., 2014; Jativa & Cerezo, 2014; Leary et al., 2007; Sbarra et al., 2012).

Hypotheses of Study

It was hypothesized that

- There would be a negative relationship between self-compassion and work/family interference.
- There would be a negative relationship between factors of self-compassion and work/family interference.
- Work/family interference would be more with those participants who are living in joint family system than compared to nuclear family system.
- There would be a significant area of differences in work-family interferences.

Research Design/Technique

A cross-sectional research design along with a non-probability purposive

sampling technique was used to collect data from the women school teachers.

Sample

The sample was collected from women Government school teachers, who are in both rural and urban areas. The sample was divided into two categories, 150 women from the rural area and 150 from the urban area.

Measures

Demographic Performa.

It consists of basic information of the participants including age, area, and marital status.

Self-compassion.

Self-compassion (SCS) is an indigenous scale. It was developed by (Batool & Jabeen, 2016) and consists of 27 items. The participants were asked to rate on 4 points Likert scale that consisted of the options (never, rarely, sometime, and often). Self-compassion includes three sub-factors which include mindfulness has a reliability index of .85, self-kindness has a reliability index of .73 and spirituality has a reliability index of .73. The total reliability index of self-compassion scale is .93.

Work-Family Interference.

To measure the teacher’s interference of work and family-related “Work-Family Interference” (WFI) (Hafsa & Jabeen, 2017) scale was used and it consists of 27 items. The participants were asked to rate on 4 points Likert scale,

which consisted of the options (never, rarely, sometime, and often). The higher score on the option shows higher Work-Family Interference and lower score shows lower Work-Family Interference. The scale included four different dimensions, i.e. positive work-family interference, positive family-work interference and negative work-family interference, negative family-work interference. The reliability of the work-family interference index scale is .90.

Results

Table 1

Pearson Correlation, Mean and Standard Deviation on Self-Compassion and Work-Family Interference and Family-Work Interference (N = 300)

Variable	1	2	3
1.Self-compassion	---	-.20*	-.16*
2.Work-family Interference	---	---	.58***
3.Family-work Interference	---	---	---
<i>M</i>	64.81	11.52	6.60
<i>SD</i>	10.26	4.91	4.33

The findings indicated that self-compassion has negatively correlated with work-family interference and family-work interference.

Table 2

Pearson Correlation, Mean and Standard Deviation on Factors of Self-Compassion and Work-Family Interference and Family-Work Interference (N = 300)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1.Mindfulness	---	.70**	.69**	-.21*	-.19*
ss	*	*	*		

2.Self-kindnes	---	---	.41**	-.09	-.03
			*		
3.Spirituality	---	---	---	-	-
				.26*	.36**
				*	*
4.Negative Work-family Interference	---	---	---	---	.58**
					*
5.Negative Family-work Interference	---	---	---	---	---
<i>M</i>	30.80	17.99	16.01	11.52	6.60
<i>SD</i>	5.09	4.38	2.25	4.91	4.33

The findings indicated that factors of self-compassion i.e. mindfulness and spirituality have negatively correlated with negative work-family interferences and negative family-work interferences.

Table 3

Independent sample t-test for Family System and Work-Family Interference, Family-Work Interference (N = 300)

Variables	Family system	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i> <	95%		Cohen's <i>d</i>
						<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>	
Work-family Interference	Nuclear	9.74	3.70	14.65	.001***	8.42	6.43	1.95
	Joint	17.17	3.90					
Family-work Interference	Nuclear	5.79	3.99	6.18	.001***	4.49	2.32	0.81
	Joint	9.19	4.37					

The results indicated that the family system has significant differences in negative work-family interference and family-work interference.

Discussion

A huge amount of literature on work and family domains indicated that the experience of sufferings in these two

domains were not something new. People always had to take up the difficult task of managing their family responsibilities and keep their employment as well. Social science is the domain where work is done to identify the work and family-related difficulties (Pitt-Catsouphes et al., 2006). When an individual invests more time either in work or family domain then there is always a good likelihood of work and family interference (Duxbury & Higgins, 2003; Parasuraman & Greenhaus, 1997). When an individual's role is overlapped in managing work and family responsibilities, it leads to conflict between work and family domains.

There are four important findings in this study: (1) Self-compassion has negatively correlated with work-family interference and family-work interference, (2) The factors of self-compassion i.e. mindfulness, self-kindness, and spirituality are negatively correlated with work-family interference and family-work interference, (3) Work-family interference has significant differences in the family system (joint/nuclear) and (4) Work-family interference is not found to have significant differences in any specific area, be it in rural or urban.

It was hypothesized that in the current study that self-compassion would be negatively correlated with family-work interference and work-family interference. The results of this study have shown that self-compassion is negatively correlated with family-work interference and work-family interference. A previous research by Hidayati (2015) has shown similar results with this study.

Furthermore, the current study identified that mindfulness has a significant negative correlation with work-

family interference. These are people who maintained a balanced viewpoint by neither suppressing nor exaggerating emotions, painful thoughts and also simultaneously clearly identifying and recognizing, without any interference of family to work and work to family. Wong and Mak (2013) suggest that people who experience a higher level of mindfulness carry the ability to observe feelings, emotions, and thoughts, instead of over-identifying with them.

Besides, the current study hypothesized that work-family interference is likely to take place more in a joint family system than a nuclear one. Furthermore, the family system has a very important role in giving rise to the work-family interference among women school teachers. Teachers living in the joint family system may have to fulfill responsibilities towards their extended family members. For example, this burden of responsibilities of extended families leaves the teachers in a situation where they are not able to focus on their work properly and which eventually leads to conflict between family and work (Martin & Dowson, 2009). On the other hand, people living in the nuclear family system are more polite and flexible among themselves, even while facing difficulties and inadequacies that are related to work and family because they learn to protect and pursue self, family needs, work, interest, and this reduces the experience of interpersonal problems (Williams et al., 2005).

Limitations and Recommendation

In this study, the data was collected only from government women school teachers. It is hoped that in future studies, data will be collected from both genders,

men and women. Besides, the participants from both government and private institutions should be considered.

Conflict of Interest

The researcher did not identify any conflict of interest among the participants in this study.

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Nasar Muhammad et al; “Self-Compassion and Work-Family Interference across Family System among Women School Teachers: A Cross-sectional Study”

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