

Work-Family Balance Among Rescue Officers Of 1122: A Sociological Study



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Abstract: *In the postmodern times, fast paced societies have resulted in the issue of balancing multiple roles and responsibilities at an individual level, particularly in terms of work and family. This study is conducted with a special focus on men. Its main purpose is to explore the challenges rescuers face in work-family balance while ensuring their availability 24/7 at their work. Qualitative method was undertaken by conducting semi-structured interviews. Furthermore, 10 respondents were selected through purposive sampling as the study required rescuers who work in the field. Thematic analysis was used by generating networks, codes and themes with the help of ATLAS.ti software. This study demonstrates that there are various factors that influence rescuers' work family balance. Moreover, it is deduced from the study that the rescuers are able to achieve work-family balance in the light of their respective perceptions and value systems, in spite of rescuers encountering some hurdles. This study suggests the conduction of longitudinal studies, cross-cultural, cross-regional and cross-professional analysis to explore variations of altruism and work-family balance across multiple societies, impact of organizational policies on the well-being of the workers and effects of technological communication and remote work on work-family balance.*

Keywords: Rescuers, Work-Family Balance, Challenges. 1122

Introduction

Work-family balance is defined as the equal engagement by an individual in both work and family responsibilities (Grzywacz & Butler, 2007). It is a complex phenomenon involving various ways through which individuals can participate in family and work life. It is categorized by the satisfaction with each domain and the absence of conflict within the premise of both sectors. Therefore, in simpler terms, it refers to a well-integrated work and family life, and the state of being actively engaged in both

domains at an individual level.

The life of an individual is dominated by two domains at large: work and family respectively. Today's fast paced societies have created the problem of balancing multiple roles and responsibilities for individuals, specifically in terms of work and family. Accordingly, this conflict has become a social and institutional problem instead of an individual one. The imbalance between these two domains occurs because of their complex relationship and their functioning in the context of institutions.

However, work-family balance is crucial as it plays a significant role in the life of an individual, his family and organization as well. It affects job satisfaction, efficiency, organizational commitment, productivity and performance (Znidarsic & Bernik, 2021).

Rescuers are available at their job 24/7 to serve humanity. Because of less free time available, they fail to fulfil their family roles and responsibilities, negatively impacting work-family balance. This failure leads to heightened stress levels and decreases job satisfaction among them (Khattak & Qureshi, 2020). In addition to this, family, a fundamental unit of societies, also gets impacted (Lodhi et al., 2021). For instance, fathers' inability to spend quality time with children influences their socialization. It reduces their cognitive abilities, increases aggressiveness in their behavior, fail to deal with stressors involved in schooling and these children are more likely to be indulge in risky behaviors at adolescence (Ellis et al., 2014). Therefore, this study focuses on the challenges encounter by the officers of rescue 1122 in balancing their work and family and the factors that influence work-family balance.

Present time societies have shifted the world's focus from immediate development to sustainable development eventually making the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development, n.d) of paramount importance. The 11th SDG deals with sustainable cities and communities whose one factor involves disaster risk reduction and resilience (United Nations, n.d). As it involves reducing losses in human and economic terms, rescue plays a pivotal role in bringing this goal to life. Rescuers are the main workforce involved in the effective management of calamitous sites and provide their services in evading losses to a larger extent (Hussain & Naz, 2015). This makes rescue 1122 an important organization not only at state level but also defines Pakistan's role in aiding the world to achieve safer and sustainable cities and communities.

In 2004, Rescue 1122 began its services in Lahore as an ambulance service. Throughout time, the service was made available not just in

all 36 districts of the Province of Punjab but even beyond its own borders. Almost 80 million people (about twice the population of California) in Pakistan now have access to a comprehensive system of emergency treatment and safety promotion that includes ambulance, fire, rescue, water rescue, disaster emergency response teams, and safer community program. More than 1.4 million victims of various emergencies have been saved so far by the service (Naseer et al., 2012). According to the recent report of United Nations the first classified team in south Asia is rescue 1122 due to its exceptional emergency services.

Literature Review:

Understanding work-family balance

Work-family balance is a self-explanatory term. However, leaving it as it is create ambiguities regarding its meaning in the minds of readers. For some writers and scholars, the term holds a vague notion that work and family life are somehow integrated and harmonious. In contrast to this, upon close examination, the term holds in itself two definitions. The first meaning is defined as the lack of conflict and interference between work and family roles. The second meaning is in terms of work-family facilitation and is comparatively recent. According to this definition, the term represents the extent to which participation at work can be facilitated by the virtue of experiences, opportunities or skills acquired or developed at home, and vice versa (Frone, 2003). Work-family balance is characterized as the absence of significant conflict between work and non-work demands (Greenblatt, 2002). Additionally, it's important to consider the concept of Work-family enrichment (Greenhaus, 2006).

In addition to this, work-family balance refers to equal engagement in both work and family responsibilities. This definition directly coincides with the balancing metaphor as well, making it the most influential definition available in its literature. However, it fails to highlight whether these diverse forms of engagement are functionally equivalent. Acknowledging these complexities, recent definitions of the terminology 'work-family

balance' emphasizes the notion of equality, with a focus on comparable levels of satisfaction in both domains and the relative absence of conflict between both (Grzywack & Butler, 2007).

Work-Family Challenges

The employees in non-traditional household face significant obstacles in balancing work and family responsibilities (Higgins et al., 1992). While in traditional households family involvement negatively impacts work-family balance satisfaction (Saltzstein et al., 2001). During middle childhood family structure strongly influence children experiences as the connected lives, work and circumstances of parents shapes the living conditions of children. (Cooksey et al., 1997).

Work-Family balance among rescue 1122 personnel

Almost 80% of the participants have observed that their lives have been impacted by the requirements of this job (Madeha et al., 2011). These workers often experience high levels of burnout which leads to emotional exhaustion and contributes to their stress levels (Ahmed et al., 2015). These negative impacts make it significant to treat this stress as it can have cumulative effect on the self-esteem and confidence level which would eventually lead to the erosion of ability to deal with such crises in an efficient manner.

Increased workloads, tight deadlines and a rapid pace induce stress among employees, leads to sleep disturbance, high blood pressure, mental and physical health issues. These challenges in turn give rise to conflicts among work-family obligations (King et al., 2012).

Factors influencing work-family balance

A wide range of factors influence work-family balance in the life of an individual. The first and foremost are the organizational elements which include family-friendly policies, support of leaders and co-workers and the complexity of work activities. This work-family also impacts the work engagement of employees. Organizations should help individuals in attaining work-family balance by formulating, improving and adopting work-family balance

policies and practices to suit employees, and focus on building a family-friendly environment at workplaces. This would increase employee engagement and hence productivity (Znidarsic & Bernik, 2021).

Job Satisfaction and efficiency among rescue 1122 workers

Job satisfaction and employee's efficiency has been identified among the workers of rescue 1122. Rescue services mainly depend on employee's efficiency as a productive and efficient rescue can perform all techniques timely to save the affected and provide correct rescue services according to that particular time and situation. Fake calls regarding emergency situations and the occurrence of disastrous events increases job stress and negatively impacts job satisfaction. These factors have the most significant and strong impact on employee satisfaction. In addition to this, low salaries with respect to their risk oriented and highly demanding job besides extra working hours decreases job satisfaction. To ensure that the employees adopt policies, these policies must be efficient, quick and easy to satisfy them (Rehman, 2014). There is a negative Correlation between job stress classified by insufficient job related information, inconsistent supervision, a lack of authority and decline in job satisfaction (Burke, 1986). This Dissatisfaction act as a primary force for adopting family friendly policies (Saltzstein et al., 2001).

Development in theoretical framework

Developments can be seen in the theoretical framework regarding the terminology of work-family balance. According to the work/family border theory, individuals cross borders on daily basis between work and family. This framework addresses how management and border creation, domain integration and segregation, border-cross participation and relations between cross-borders at work and family influence this balance (Clark, 2000).

The research Gap

Work-family balance in relation to Rescue 1122 has not been studied yet and if it is being done then it does not fall under the researcher's

sources of knowledge, hence, he is unaware of this. Moreover, in Pakistan additional emphasis on the balance between the work and family life is required even after abundance of literature on the said subject. As it is still a new concept in this developing country which is trying to not only grasp it but also get accustomed to the term and its meanings. By doing so, the rights of workers and the challenges they encounter in their daily life can be highlighted so that the authorities can formulate policies that provide two-way favor. As the consideration for the workers can not only ease their burdens but also stimulates growth and development because it enhances the efficiency of the work force making them effective as well.

Theoretical Framework

In the early writings of George Homans, Peter Blau and Richard Emerson, social exchange theory is the most prominent one among the significant theoretical perspectives on social interaction and social structure. Homans was the first sociological theorist who emphasized interpersonal exchanges, particularly focusing on the individual behaviors of actors while interacting with each other (Cook et al., 2013). According to him, in social groups during interactions each and everything can be explained through propositions about individuals as individuals. Social exchange is defined by the Homans as the exchange of any activity either tangible or intangible, more reward with less cost and vice versa, between two parties at least. In this perspective, cost is defined in terms of opportunities left by the actor to perform that specific activity.

While elaborating his theory, he gave five propositions. The first and foremost proposition is success proposition. According to this, those actions which generate positive response are more likely to be repeated. Next is stimulus proposition which states that actions that were rewarded in the past during certain situations will take place in identical situations. Third is value proposition. It specifies that if the result for an action is more valuable for the actor, then he is more likely to perform it again. After this comes the deprivation-satiation proposition. It states that the frequent provision of a reward

lowers its value for an actor. The last but not the least proposition suggests the emotional attitudes of actors towards the consequences of actions. Individuals tend to become angry when they fail to receive the reward that has been anticipated by them.

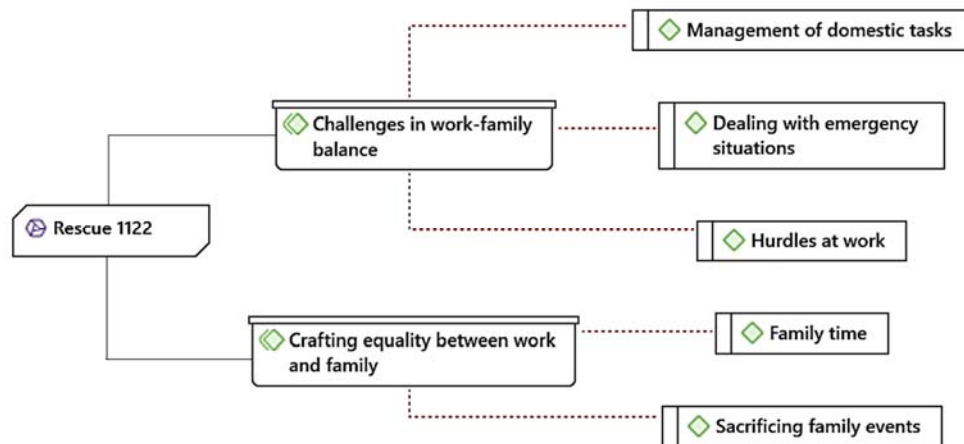
The concept of reward and cost in social exchange theory with the inclusion of above stated five propositions is helpful to analyze the remaining two questions of the study. As they involve experiences of rescuers at disastrous sites and the challenges they encounter in balancing work and family.

Methodology

The study focuses on Rescue 1122, particularly the Head office of Rescue 1122 situated at Chandani Chowk Rawalpindi. A qualitative approach was selected to explore the factors and challenges in work-family balance faced by male rescue officers. Researcher selected purposive sampling to select ten participants with diverse family structures, work experiences and marital statuses. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews which include open-ended questions. They were translated into urdu for further clarity, went under pilot testing and for face validity. Researchers took two weeks to collect the data, which was conducted face to face, recorded, transcribed and analyzed thematically by using Atlas.ti software. Prior to the interview, the informed consent forms were taken from all the participants. Not a single respondent was forced to give the interview.

Results and Discussions

The image presented below shows the network and themes which is generated through ATLAST.ti software which helped the researcher to create themes and networks to represent and further interpret the data.



Theme: Challenges in work family balance

Greenhaus and Allen (2011) said a comprehensive understanding of work family balance needs to be analyzed through an individualized lens by evaluating how well an individual's life values align with the congruence of effectiveness and satisfaction in their work and family roles at a particular moment.

The respondents selected by the researcher were all married and each of them had at least two kids. Most of them live in a joint family system. The longest service period among these respondents is 16 years.

This theme is further categorized into hurdles at work, dealing with emergency situations and management of domestic tasks.

The results found that many rescuers were satisfied with the quality of time they spend both with their family and at work. They have managed to attain a balance between these two significant dimensions of life. Regardless of the rigorous demands of their profession which requires them to work in shifts they have sought out a way to spend quality time with their families while fulfilling their duties at work.

As the work of rescuers is organized in shifts which include morning, afternoon, and night. The morning and afternoon shifts are each 7 hours long, while the night shift spans 10 hours. It helps them to structure their daily life activities such as child care: leaving and

bringing back from school, playing with them, taking those outsides and providing help in their homework. Sharing household responsibilities with wife: bringing groceries, maintenance tasks, attending events etc. This finding is supported by the work family balance should be examined by keeping in mind the alignment of individual personal values with their actual experiences in both work and family domain Valcour (2007).

But few respondents said at the times of major disasters they have to go on operations for many days due to which they sought out this with their other family members as many participants live in joint and extended families. The responsibilities associated with rescuers are then fulfilled by their brothers and fathers, like if their wife needs to go somewhere or if they have to attend a family event then they will take them. One of the rescuers stated;

Mostly we manage our family times and chores as we work in shifts but sometimes in case of an emergency like I'm doing my morning shift which will end at 2 30 pm but an emergency came at 2 15 so maybe it will become 7 pm while reaching back at home. So, in such cases when I'm not able to fulfill my house chores then my brother or my father completes my tasks (R5).

Another commented;

Yes, I manage the time for my wife and children. We need to change the setting of work if work has to be done in daylight like groceries, we'll

shift them at nighttime or if we must go somewhere with family in the daytime then we'll do night duty (R8).

A wide range of factors influence work-family balance in the life of an individual. The first and foremost are the organizational elements which include family-friendly policies, support of leaders and co-workers and the complexity of work activities. In the view of Znidarsic and Bernik (2021) organizations should help individuals in attaining work-family balance by formulating, improving and adopting work-family balance policies and practices to suit employees, and focus on building a family-friendly environment at workplaces. For instance, when an emergency situation arises at a rescuer's home rescue 1122 provides support by granting them emergency leave. However, when an emergency occurs simultaneously both at home and in their assigned duties, rescuers face difficulties in deciding which situation to prioritize. A respondent said;

Yes, it happens many times like my kid has abdominal pain/stomachache and at the same time received an emergency vehicle duty call then it becomes difficult for me to decide which should I respond first, as I am the vehicle driver so in some cases I take my child and rescuer together in ambulance or I'll deal both emergencies by using one ambulance (R2).

Despite the obstacles and risky nature which rescuers encounter in their work they still don't want to leave their job. They are very passionate about their job. Few respondents said they find it challenging to rescue animals, deal with collapsing emergencies and excessive traffic. One of the rescuers stated;

I find challenges in different emergencies like there was an animal rescue in which we had to catch a cobra(snake) Which was very difficult as whenever we went near him, he starts running around or hiding in the bathroom (R2).

Another stated;

We went to Azad Kashmir to rescue people because on Eid a mountain collapsed. So, it was very challenging as we had to walk across the river without any vehicles and the roads were

very dangerous (R4).

One of them put emphasis on that if a person is new to anything he will face hurdles.

Actually, when a person is new to something, even a small task can seem quite big. But gradually, as they enter the field and learn the work, even a big task starts to appear small, so this was the case with me in the start I did work as ambulance driver which was very difficult.

Theme: Crafting Equality between work and family

Equality between work and family holds immense significance not only for a worker but for society as well. Because it helps to build the personality of an individual aiding the broader societal structure. In accordance with the viewpoint of Kapur (2018) family plays a key role in the formation of human society as men, women and children bind in a relationship only through this institution. In addition to this, family serves as the first school because it inculcates norms and values of a particular culture that accommodates in becoming an efficient member of a society.

This theme of crafting equality between work and family is further divided into two categories; sacrificing family events and family time.

It was analyzed that rescuers sacrifice the festivities and national days that occurs annually includes, Eid-ul-Fitr, Eid-ul-Azha, Independence Day, Ashura day etc. They don't spend these days with their families as the traffic on such occasions increased at massive level leads to many emergencies. So, they believe that these situations need them more rather than their families. By prioritizing their work responsibilities, they prefer to let go of their participation with family and at gatherings. They accept these sacrifices as the alternative cost of the bittersweet reward. Rescuers have a strong conviction that saving the life of a human is a reward in itself so it does not matter for them that they have to sacrifice such events and family priorities.

One of the participants said;

In the entire year, there are many events in which

the whole country enjoys a holiday, but we have double duties on such days like Muharram, eids, etc. which we had to sacrifice (R5).

Contrary to this, a rescuer stated;

I have sacrificed family events like my mother was ill, but I didn't go to her because for me duty comes first and serving others comes before everything else. I have also left many marriages and emergencies at home due to work (R7).

In the light of Social Exchange theory by Homans (1961) the rescuers opt to minimize the joy in a sense that they forgo the happiness and fulfillment associated with their children's events like birthdays, sports competitions, school events and other achievements in a children's life. In contrast they maximize the cost which creates imbalance in work and family as they feel frustrated and sad when they are unable to attend their children's events.

I have not attended my son's birthday since last three years because every time I am at emergencies due to which he is very upset form me (R2).

In managing family besides ensuring 24/7 availability at the job, rescuers are able to manage their family time but with some hurdles. For instance, some rescuers alter the timings of their family obligations and adjust their timings with their corresponding duty time.

As one of the respondents stated;

Yes, I manage the time for my wife and children. Actually, we need to change the setting of work. If work has to be done in daylight like groceries, we'll shift it at nighttime or if we have to go somewhere with family in the daytime then we'll do night duty (R8).

However, for some respondents job is their first priority. It does not matter for them that their family needs them. If their job is calling them, they only focus on it irrespective of any situation. A respondent responded;

Honestly speaking for me duty comes first. What's there for family. It is manageable. If I'm not present, they manage it on their own. For me, my job comes first and everything else after it

(R5).

Another respondent stated;

On daily basis I easily manage their time but in case of major emergencies my family needs to compromise because saving the life of someone is the first priority (R4).

Through above discussion, it is evident that rescuers are successful in achieving work-family balance according to their own respective value system. However, there are some hurdles encountered by them in crafting this intricate balance. For instance, they often sacrifice family events and spend comparatively less time with their children. The joint family system also plays a key role in balancing work and family. Rescuers have formulated some strategies through which they ensure that they remain available for their job 24/7 yet fulfilling their family obligations.

Conclusion

The researcher has deduced from this study that rescuers face multiple hurdles in balancing their work and family. In emergency situations occurring simultaneously at work and home, they prefer the one that occurs in their profession.

Rescuers are satisfied with their work and family life, and they believe that they have been able to achieve the balance between these two major domains of life. However, there are some moments in life which create challenges in these domains for them. For instance, they have to sacrifice their family events in emergency situations at work. It also leads to the disruption in the management of household tasks and affects the quality time of rescuers with their children. It has also been identified that in cases of emergency at rescuers' homes, their organization expresses its full support.

Longitudinal studies can be conducted to investigate the changes in the altruistic motivations of rescuers and their work-family balance over an extended period of time. Cross-cultural, cross-regional and cross-professions analysis can be done to explore variations in altruism and work-family balance across different societies, cultures and professions.

Impact of organizational policies, support systems and practices can be examined to investigate role of organizations in workers' wellbeing, eventually leading to a prosperous society. Effects of technological advancements such as technological communication and remote work opportunities can be explored in the domain of work-family balance. Future researchers can investigate the interplay between altruism and other factors including burnout and job satisfaction, job efficiency to explore complex factors influencing altruistic motivations.

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