

## **Papers on Social Representations**

### **Early View**

Peer Reviewed Online Journal

ISSN 1021-5573

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[<https://psr.iscte-iul.com/>]

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.7982489

## **THE ROLE OF HR PROFESSIONALS IN CAREER-FAMILY BALANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL OUTCOMES: A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS**

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**Abstract:** Changing demographics and social factors induce a diverse workforce which creates the issue of career-family balance in the organizations. The organizations strive to enhance the outcomes of the workforces in the workplace for it is essential to be competitive in the business. At this juncture, it is presumed that HR professionals play a vital role at the organizational level to help the employees in accomplishing the outcomes. The present study is conducted by collecting data from 128 employees, to study the correlation between the career-family balance, organizational outcomes, and the HR professional's roles in the context of project-based construction companies. Organizational outcomes are measured through three dimensions, i.e. Job satisfaction, organizational commitment and Staying intentions of the employees.

**Keywords:** Career-life balance, Change Agent, Employee advocacy, HR Professionals roles, Organizational outcomes.

### **Introduction:**

Mankind has the power to transform everything, but one which is out of his control is the time, which is neither created nor destroyed. Hence it is essential for humans to allocate the most valuable resource, the time among the organizational and personal needs. Thus, the career-family balance is a vital aspect for all. The competitive environment of the organization demands more time to learn, adapt and perform. Whereas, a person needs quality family time to relax, refocus and rejuvenate themselves. Hence balancing between organizational demands and personal renewal is becoming paramount. Satisfied employees will be committed to the organization and will focus to stay in the company for a lengthier period will in turn results in the productive labour force which is crucial for any organization to meet out the cut-throat competition.

Human resource professionals in any organization play a crucial role as an administrative expert, employee advocate, change agent and strategic partner in guaranteeing that the human resources are employed optimally in achieving the organizational goals thus improving productivity. Hence

the present study is essential to identify and analyse the relationship between the HR professional's roles, career-family balance plus organizational outcomes in the contemporary business organisations.

### **A. Career-Family Balance**

The need to balance the conflicting commitments of society and organizations is increasing day by day due to the extremely competitive setting. Hence, the career-family balance is acquiring prominence in the organization.

Career-family balance is the stability accomplished between an employee's principal organizational demands and their private life. The loads of an employee's job should not submerge the individual's ability to have a fulfilling private existence external to the corporate atmosphere. Many working definitions including work-life, work-life conflict, organization's view on work-life conflict, job holder's view on work-life conflict have been proposed by Lockwood (2003).

Career-family balance affects the attitude of the employees towards personal life and organization. The organizations need to preserve highly professional employees since their commitment and devotion are desired for the productivity of the company, and hence career-family balance is important to the organizations (Azeem & Akhtar,2014).

The relationship between career-family balance and other organizational effects such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and staying intentions are studied by many authors. A study by Boswell & Olson Buchanan (2007) shows that career-family balance encourages job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Brough et al.(2014) stated that job satisfaction, family fulfilment, mental anxiety, and turnover intents are the very significant direct outcomes of the career-family balance. A study revealed that unpredictable working schedules such as limited advance notice, last time changes lead to greater career-family conflicts (Henly & Lambert, 2014). Career-family balance is the main concern for the employees who wish to leave the organization than job satisfaction. (Sibbald et al., 2003).

i. **Time Management:** The competitive work ecosystem demands the employees to update themselves by learning, adapting and performing which in turn leads to spending more time in the organizations by the employees. Spending time with family and friends, to fulfil the necessities of the family, taking the self-time to rejuvenate themselves, to have a healthy social life are all getting affected due to the lack of time. Wright et al., (2014) stated that the use of devices such as mobile phones outside the normal working hours for office purposes affects the career-family balance. It shows that communication technologies lead to extended official timings which may affect the quality time to be spent with the family. Time-spatial elasticity is not as personalfriendly, in contrast, it may cause the workers to spend more time on the job than anticipated (Peters, den Dulk, & van der Lippe, 2009).

ii. **Personal Needs:** The ever-demanding work atmosphere causes individuals to concentrate more on the work and hence they are missing the demands of the spouse, kids, and friends. Their social life is also getting affected. Apart from working overtime, the time spatial-flexibility causes the workers to reflect about job during their family and leisure times which disturbs the personal and social life of the workers (Peters et al, 2009)

iii. **Organizational Support:** Lockwood (2003), stated that the organizations are concerned about the career-family balancing issues of the employees and came out with many Employee Assistance Programs (EPAs) to help the employees to come out of the stress created due to the balancing career and family. Organizations believed that maintaining the career-family balance is essential for employees which in turn impacts the quality of work performed by the employees. Felstead, Jewson, Phizacklea, & Walters (2002) stated that family-friendly policies of the organization provide organizational commitment and in-turn contribute to the career-family balance of the employees. Thus, it is important to the organizations to provide family-friendly policies such as shortened work schedules, flexibility in work timings, work from home options, etc to increase the career-family balance and preferred organizational outcomes.

It is difficult for the workers to escape from the work stress physically and mentally in the jobs demanding high involvement (Russel et al., 2009). This is in contrast with the findings from the other authors which supports that the family-friendly policy such as work from home provides career-family balance to the employees. Morganson, Major, Oborn, Verive, & Heelan (2010) argues that clientbased employees report lesser career-family balance and job satisfaction compared to the employees working in the parent organization, which shows that organizations should keep the client-based employees in mind while formulating the policies for the career-family balance of the employees. Saltzstein, Ting, & Saltzstein (2001) states that family friendly policies need not provide job satisfaction to all employees in a uniform pattern as each family system is unique in nature and needs. Career-family balance is the strongest predictor of job satisfaction whereas familyfriendly policies along with organizational understanding have a straight influence on job satisfaction. Organizations need to focus on career-family balance interventions such as training, Flexi timings and behavioral counseling to improve the career-family balance and employee productivity (Kanwar, Singh, & Kodwani , 2009)

**B. Organizational Outcomes:** The organizational outcomes include job satisfaction, organizational commitment, turnover intentions, employee engagement, employee productivity, quality of work-life, etc. There are many studies which show the positive linkage between the career-family balance and organizational outcomes (Sang, Ison, & Dainty(2009); Kanwar et al., (2009); Gallie et al., (2001); & Sang et al., (2009). In contrast to this many authors also found out the negative consequence between career-family balance and organizational outcomes (Saltzstein, Ting, & Saltzstein(2001) & Parkes & Langford, (2008).

**i. Job Satisfaction:** Job satisfaction is a psychosomatic result to the work needs. It is defined by what degree the job results satisfy or surpass prospects. The features of job satisfaction include the job itself, salary, promotion, prospects, guidance, and coworkers. Sang, Ison, & Dainty (2009) stated that architects expressed dissatisfaction in their work mainly due to organizational aspects rather than the inherent job characteristics itself. A survey of general practitioners disclosed that 25 percent of civil engineers are not satisfied with their job. From the period of 1998 to 2001 the percentage of turnover intentions due to job satisfaction increased from 14% to 22%. The lack of career-family balance leads to a reduction in job satisfaction which also produces other negative job actions such as nonattendance, diminished achievement and turnover (Families and work institute 1998). A study conducted by Saltzstein, Ting, & Saltzstein(2001) showed that family-friendly policies need not provide work satisfaction to all employees in a uniform pattern as each family system is unique in nature and needs. Career-family balance is the strongest predictor of job satisfaction whereas family favourable policies along with organizational understanding have a direct impact on job satisfaction. Increased work-life conflicts lead to lessened job satisfaction and vice versa (Wright et al., 2014).

**ii. Organizational commitment:** Organizational commitment is the willingness of an employee to stay as a member and make efforts for the organization and emotionally attached to it and believes in the values and norms of the organization (Kim , 2014). High commitment theory advocates that the policies and practices of the organization will impact the commitment of the employees towards the organization. Authors working in this practice argued that policies and practices produce interest in work systems, employee- management relationships and in turn helps in organizational commitment (Gallie et al.,2001). Organizations can improve the organizational commitment of the employees by understanding their career-family conflicts and offers work flexibility to balance these competing demands of the employees (Osterman ,1995). A study conducted by Kim (2014) among Korean workers revealed that career-family balance increases affective commitment towards the organization which helps employees in the effective in-role performance.

**iii. Staying Intention:** Wright et al., (2014) in their study found out that the perceptions of the employees for using communication technologies, such as whether it helps to connect with the workplace or interferes with the free time predicts the other organizational consequences such as burnout, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions. Generalized results state that half of the architects in the UK struggle to maintain a career-family balance and one in three architects is looking for a switch in their jobs (Sang et al., 2009). This indicates that career-family balance is an important cause of the turnover intentions in the organization. Career family balance is the main worry for the employees who wish to leave the organization than job satisfaction (Sibbald et al. , 2003). In contrast to the above findings, a study conducted among 16000 Australian employees by Parkes & Langford (2008) showed that career-family balance is least connected to the staying intention.

**C. HR Professionals' Roles:** To overcome the 'marginality of the personnel function' HR professionals must adapt to the new organizational roles. They must face challenges and make

changes to the work assignment to add value to the organization (Arachchige & Weerasinghe , 2012). Out of the four roles described Ulrich (1997), three roles i.e. Employee advocate, change agent and strategic partner roles are used for this study.

**i. Employee Advocate:** On assessing the practice of the managers towards the interest of the employees, they conclude that the organization represents and support their interest and this judgment can be called employee advocacy (Akgunduz & Sanli , 2017). The relations between an employee and the organization must follow a win-win situation, to have a constructive relationship with the organization. Innovative organizations follow employee advocacy practices. Employee advocacy is affected when the manager supports the employees. The supported employees believe that the manager is trust in his potentials and capabilities and is willing to put his extra effort for a longer period to achieve organizational goals which improve workplace productivity (Yeh , 2014). Rynes (2004) argued that organizations that consider the contributions of their employees are treasured and valued are the ones that adapt employee advocacy, on the contrary, the organizations which consider their employees as worthless will not follow or adapt the employee advocacy. Such organizations that treasure the contributions of the employees, practices employee advocate increases the job satisfaction of their employees and reduces turnover intentions. A study conducted by Akgunduz & Sanli, (2017) among the hotel employees in Turkey found out that employee advocacy have a constructive consequence on job embeddedness which shows that employer who values the interest of the employees increases the optimistic approach of the employees about the organization. Whereas the study does not show the negative effect of employee advocacy on turnover intention which implies that the managers cannot prevent the employee's willingness to depart the organization though they are inclined towards the employee interest.

**ii. Change Agent:** Wright and Snell (1998) suggested that the dynamically changing organizations must develop a mechanism with which employees must be consulted regarding their needs and desired behaviors in the organization. This argument states that HR professionals must have a shared understanding of the employees to act a good change agent in the organization. (Kim, 2014) The organizational sense-making process should be performed effectively by the HR professionals by including the line managers and the employees in the process of change management. As the change agent, the HR professionals not only induces the effective changes but also protects the employees from the negative consequences of the adverse transformations (Long, Wan Ismail, & Amin, 2013). Ulrich (1997) the role of the change agent is helping in the smooth transitions in the personnel area during the changes in the organization. Also, in addition to the transition, they should suggest the best practices for change based on the best market practices.

**(iii) Strategic partner:** The ability to transform the business policies to HR policies and the capability of the HR professionals to take part in the strategic decision-making process comprises of strategic partner role of HR professionals (Arachchige & Weerasinghe, 2012). Aligning the business policies with HR policy, implementing strategies and becoming a partner in policy

making comprises the role of the HR professional as a strategic partner (Ulrich,1997). A study by Bhatnagar, (2007) among 640 Indian managers reveals that there is a positive association between the strategic partnership role of the HR professionals and the organizational commitment.

### **Conclusion:**

The concern of the HR profession for a better workplace is to solve work-life balance concerns and create a fantastic place to work. Work life balance concerns must be approached from several perspectives, such as mentoring, counselling and teaching employees to deal with problems as they emerge. It has been proven that strong work life balance programmes lead to reduced stress and enhanced workplace performance, loyalty and motivation. In the absence of employee commitment, employee's intent to quit or even act to leave increases, lowering overall organizational performance. When people are happy in their jobs, they are more likely to be committed to their company. Employees that are satisfied and devoted are more eager to undergo training and are more interested in advancement chances. Work life policies help to retain talented people by increasing their dedication to their company, which minimises attrition and absenteeism. The availability of work life balance policies minimises employee absenteeism, which is a cost advantage to a business.

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