CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Discussion and conclusion

The majority of research on work-family conflict has been conducted on various occupational sectors like IT/ITES, BPOs, healthcare, academics, banking and finance. But very few studies on work-family conflict have been conducted on defence sector in India. In India there is a general perception among people that employees of defence CPSEs, state and central government usually have balanced life. Results of this study shows that even in defence CPSEs, officers work for longer hours, face tight deadlines, weekend work and work pressures. Respondents are selected irrespective of their marital or parenthood status. The researcher has included singles in the research along with married respondents as even singles face other difficulties in life and do not receive enough family support (Young, 1999; Grant-Vallone and Donaldson 2001; Waumsley et al., 2010). The researcher meant with the word ‘Family’ as inclusion of spouse, children, parents, siblings, grandparents, in-laws or any combination of these. The managerial level is chosen for this study as employees at this level face more of conflict due to long working hours and work demand (Hogarth, Hasluck and Pierre, 2000; Krings et al., 2009).

In the present study working hours per week is defined as follows: standard (48 - 50 hours/week), long (51 - 60 hours/week) and very long (> 60 hours/week). Sleep hours is defined as 7 – 8 hours per day. Optimum family time is defined as 21 – 30 hours per week. From the data provided by the respondents it was found that officers in three defence CPSEs worked for an average of 51 – 55 hours per week that is considered as long working hours. The officers slept for an average of 6 – 7 hours per day that is near to normal and spent an average of 11 – 20 hours per week that is below normal. From the general information sought from the respondents it is
concluded that 52.66% of officers suffer from diseases mainly backache, frequent headache, obesity, muscular pain and stress.

As per Aggarwal (2012) there is a need for flexible work arrangements even in PSUs. But as work in defence CPSEs is related to specific skills and machinery, working from home option or teleworking are not possible. In defence CPSEs there are three shift changes each day. The term ‘shift work’ includes work schedules in which employees change or rotate shifts. Officers frequently use company measure in the form of flexitime (Making use of different work shifts as per their convenience) and job sharing (work related activities and responsibilities are accomplished by subordinate or immediate boss in case of absence of any officer) to balance work and family. But making use of flexitime and job sharing totally depends on having a good reputation with bosses and ability to get work done by people. Officers face hassles mainly from outstation duties, fatigue due to prolonged standing duration and early punch in time apart from long working hours. Stress emanating from work intrudes into personal domain making meeting family responsibilities difficult.

The present study aims to study variation of WFB as per life-stage (denoted by age) and total experience. Reasons for taking this hypothesis are as follows: First, literature shows that age and total experience are an important aspects affecting work-family balance of an employee. Second, results will show that WFB is a concern for people at all life-stages and is not restricted to marital and/or parenthood statuses.

The result obtained after analysis showed that WFB depends on life-stage (age). This result supports the findings of Higgins, Duxbury and Lee (1994); Grandey and CROPANZANO (1999) and Darcy et al. (2012), which stated that work-family balance varies as per age. In the present study WFB was negatively related to age. This means that as an individual gains age, her/her balance between work and family gets disturbed. The reason for this result may be due to increase in work and family responsibilities as age increases. At 20 – 29 age groups, respondents would be either single or married without children, so meeting family obligations won’t be a crucial aspect. At 30 – 39 age groups, respondents would be finding difficult to meet family obligations as work responsibilities increases. At 40 – 49 age groups, promotion becomes performance based with increased responsibilities at work. Respondents become carrier-oriented
and give up their best to outperform to get early promotion. At 50 – 60 age groups, a person nears retirement and become free of family obligations as children would be either grown up or would have become independent. A person gets relaxed at this stage.

On the other hand WFB does not depend on total experience. This could be possible only if a person faces same amount of targets and pressures from the time he/she joins the organization till that person retires. His/her role remains the same always irrespective of experience or circumstances.

The current study aims to investigate the impact of commuting time on work or personal domains or both. Reasons for taking this hypothesis are as follows: First, generally the studies on work-family balance in any sector do not take into consideration the impact that commuting can cause. Second, perception of people towards services offered by public or private agencies have been studied, but rare evidence found on study of perception of people towards commuting time.

The result obtained after analysis showed that commuting time affects personal domains but not work domain. Personal domain that was expressed in terms of sleep hours and family time was affected due to longer commuting time. This means that an individual is forced to shorten the time spent on sleep and family to meet other work responsibilities. The commuting time was not affecting work domain i.e., even after longer commuting time, work responsibilities are met. Both married and single officers experienced the same impact of commuting time on personal arena. Thus the proposed hypothesis that commuting time impacts work or personal arenas is supported by the result. Other studies by Hill et al, (2001); Miryala and Chiluka, (2012), showed that hours spent on travelling is in addition to work hours and add to work worries. But in the present study commuting time and work roles are independent to each other.

The officers are staying at an average distance of 7.63 kms and are spending an average of 39.23 minutes on commuting daily. The average commuting time of respondents is 10 minutes more than the average of an Indian commuter i.e., 29 minutes. 21% of the respondents travel to and fro for more than one hour daily. The officers prefer to stay in own houses though far away
rather than company quarters. Officers staying far away are ready to utilize company’s transportation facility.

Regarding perception of respondents towards commuting time, the officers perceive commuting time to affect work or personal activities. Officers of these companies consider spending an average of 39.23 minutes daily on commuting to be a time consumer. But still the respondents do not take concrete steps to solve this issue. They do not want to cut down commuting time to balance work and personal domains and also abstain from staying in company quarters that are generally situated within a radius of 5 kms from company’s premises. The officers who reside in company quarters were generally unmarried officers who related to Bangalore due to job prospects or married without children whose spouse was not working and not having resident in Bangalore or parents whose child was not going to school and spouse also not working. The reasons for these unexpected findings could be manifold. First, when officers reside in company quarters, their HRA is deducted that is almost equivalent to rent paid. Instead of HRA deduction, officers opt for purchasing accommodation in far flung areas at a cheaper rates and paying EMIs. Second, companies like HAL and BEML are located at the centre of Bangalore that is considered a crowded place and few people may not like to reside in crowded, polluted areas. Third, most of the respondents look for better schools and other amenities for their families rather than longer commuting time. In Bangalore, most of the international schools are located at outskirts of Bangalore. Fourth, these defence CPSEs offers the benefit of housing co-operative society to their employees. The main objective of the housing society is to form residential layouts and allot sites to its members at a cheaper rate. These societies are generally situated at a farther place, ranging from 7 kms to 25 kms.

The current study aims to study work-family conflict and family-work conflict among officers of a defence manufacturing company in Bangalore. Reasons for taking this hypothesis are as follows: First, in India there is a general perception among people that employees of defence CPSEs, state and central government usually have balanced life. Second, the study also aims to find whether spousal support and self management moderates the relationship between work demands and work-family conflict. In literature the beneficial nature of spousal support and self management is studied as separate entities but not as a moderator or mediator.
In the current study, both work-family conflict and family-work conflict were prevalent among the officers of defence CPSEs and both WFC and FWC were highly correlated. The findings of the study contradicted the conclusion of Pleck, (1977); Greenhaus and Beutell, (1985); Frone, Russell and Cooper, 1992 and Gutek et al., 1991. they stated that the experience of work-family conflict is more prevalent than family-work conflict. Work interference into family domain is to a greater extent than family is allowed to interfere into work domain. Additional work hours result in subtraction of family hours from the total hours thus resulting in more work-family conflict (White, et al., 2003).

Work demands in the form of hours worked per week, working on weekends/holidays, carrying work to home and time of commuting were the strongest predictor of work-family conflict and are an important factor in exacerbating WFC. In this study work demands were positively related to WFC and confirmed the studies done by Burke and Greenglass (1999); Voydanoff, (1988); Duxbury and Higgins (2003); Hammer, et al. (2005); Yildirim and Aycan (2008).

With regard to home roles, being married was not associated with higher levels of FWC. The insignificant relationship of marital status with conflict suggest that in defence CPSEs in India being married does not result in more role demands for officers (Cohen and Liani, 2009). Children under the age of 5 were related to higher levels of FWC. This finding was in coherence with the findings of Quick et al., (2004); Cinamon and Rich, (2002); Eby et al., (2005); Mjoli et al. (2013). The lack of significant relationship between the number of children and FWC contradicted previous findings that there exists stronger relationship between the two (Grandey and Cropanzano, 1999; Valcour, 2007). Number of dependents was significantly related to both WFC and FWC. This signifies that increase in the number of children or elderly persons lead to more competition for resources at home.

The present study hypothesized that support type in the form of self management and spousal support would be related to lower levels of work-family conflict. Self management was found to be related to lower levels of WFC. This finding was in coherence with the findings of
Nomaguchi and Bianchi (2004); Rice, Frone and McFarlin (1992) which states that person’s overall quality of life is determined by sum of the domains of life: work, family, community, religion or leisure. Spousal support was not related to WFC.

The present study also aims to relate internal locus of control with work-family balance and to find the relationship among WFB, LOC and WFC. Reasons for taking this hypothesis are as follows: First, defence CPSEs while recruiting candidates conduct written exam on a national level followed by medical test and interviews. But they do not include personality test in their recruitment curriculum that is the prime requirement in today’s scenario. Second, there are numerous studies pertaining to locus of control and work-family balance as independent entities, however empirical research on work-family balance related to locus of control is limited.

Findings of the study found that internality was related to WFB in a positive manner. This means that internality has lot to do with WFB in defence CPSEs and a person with internal LOC is better able to manage work and family. This result supported the findings of Klonowicz (2001); Fiori et al., (2006); Hamarta et al., (2013) and Ng, Sorensen and Eby (2006).

WFB was directly linked to WFC in a negative manner. This means that when roles are not prioritized as per the urgency, then work-family conflict arises (Aryee, Srinivas and Tan 2005; Grzywacz, Carlson, and Zivnuska, 2009). WFC and LOC were totally dependent on each other, with locus of control related negatively to WFC. This means that internals are capable of coping with stressful events and work anxiety while externals are vulnerable to workplace stress (Spector, 1982: 492; Spector and O’Connell, 1994: 8; Muhonen and Torkelson, 2004; Khan et al., 2012; and Rashid and Talib, 2013: 737). Internal locus of control is found to moderate the effects of conflict (Parkes, 1994; Noor, 2006). WFB, WFC and LOC were all interdependent on other as per findings.

Inspite of various limitations, the present study has the potential to contribute to the body of literature as well as the defence sector by identifying the most crucial factors that are impacting work-family balance, work-family conflict and locus of control of officers in Bangalore. Generally work pressures, tight deadlines and outstation duties contribute to WFC.
The findings directs to the need for equal distribution of work among officers and to fill the gap between current manpower and future manpower requirements. There should be some motivational aspects for officers like team outing for lunch or dinner on completion of targets, paid sabbaticals and company paid club membership. In addition training programs should be organized for superiors to enhance their assistance and compassion in dealing with problems of conflict of junior officers.
5.2 Recommendations

In the present study, the following recommendations are 

1) There should be uniform distribution of work among officers. Some officers slog for an average of 10 – 12 hours daily, while others stick to standard eight hours job.

2) People having more overloads should not use their personal transportation to come to company. A person can plan the work activities while travelling in company or public transportation.

3) People staying far (10 kms or more) should make use of company transportation for commuting. The benefits of using company transportation are discussed below.

   • Least time taken, as vehicle adopts shortest route between company and pick-up points.
   • Less expenditure involved as compared to other modes of commuting
   • Comfortable journey as people get seats to sit and even sleep while travelling.
   • People get time to relax and plan ahead their activities.

Disadvantages of using personal transportation

   • People can experience fatigue due to driving, especially during heavy traffic period.
   • More expenditure involved on fuel
   • Planning or relaxation not possible.

4) In case of working couples, the family should stay where the wife is working or where the kid’s schools are located.

5) There is shortage of manpower in defence CPSEs at junior and middle level. Recruitment and selection does not take place whenever required.
6) A person should not push beyond one’s capability. If a person is unwell and mentally or physically exhausted, then he/she will not be good at anything.

7) Make some works in life non-negotiable by marking in a calendar. For e.g., going for picnic/tour with family or spending time with kids.

8) Setting priorities in work as well as in family certainly helps in a major way.

9) Effective time management in the form of delegation, both at work place and home helps.

**5.3 Future research**

1) Research can be conducted department wise in an organization i.e. quality, sales & marketing, production, finance and HR.

2) Comparative study can be conducted on PSUs or private sector that would give insight into cultural differences, gender distribution and work settings.

3) The differences between the findings in the present study and findings in western cultures need to be explored further.

4) Since support type in the form of spousal support and self management play no moderating role between work demands and work-family conflict in the present study, future research would examine the same in other occupation or sector. Future research can also examine direct effect of support type on work-family conflict.