Executive Summary

Demographic changes have had a catalytic effect on the number of people participating in multiple roles and juggling them as they go through various life functions. Two of the major domains where these roles are based are work and family.

This study draws on Person-environment fit theory to understand to what extent congruence between an individual and her/his environment affects her/his experience of work-family interface. Through this, the study seeks to capture the cognitive appraisal process by which work and family experiences can exacerbate work-family conflict (WFC) and enhance work-family enrichment (WFE). This study is an attempt to respond to calls by researchers to look at the process of cognitive appraisal and congruence which have largely been ignored in work-family literature. These processes could help understand why given the same situation and environmental contexts, individuals might differ in their work-family experiences.

Congruence, measured at two levels — congruence and incongruence — has been taken as the independent variable in the study. The different measures of work-family conflict and work-family enrichment have been taken as the dependent variables. Responses in the study were drawn from software professionals working in IT organizations.

It was found that the incongruent individuals reported significantly higher levels of work-family conflict on all the dimensions of conflict as compared to the congruent individuals. In contrast, when it came to work-family enrichment, congruent individuals reported significantly higher levels of enrichment on all the dimensions as compared to incongruent individuals. By capturing the role of cognitive appraisal on work-family interface, the study contributes theoretically and empirically to the extant literature on work and family. As organizations across sectors are taking steps to promote work-life harmony, the finding that congruence leads to greater work-family enrichment and incongruence leads to greater work-family conflict has important practical implications for the formulation of work-family policies.
Work and family are two central domains in an employee's life. Recently researchers have sought to explain the numerous ways in which work and family roles interact with each other (Barnett, 1998; Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Lambert, 1990; Repetti, 1987). Despite the growing multidisciplinary research, our understanding of work-family relationship remains limited in a number of ways (Barnett, 1996). For example, work-family literature developed as an outgrowth of the stress literature. Although cognitive appraisal is a well-known concept in the stress literature, it is conspicuous by its absence in work-family studies. This leaves scope for more research in the area.

According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), cognitive appraisal is a subjective evaluation of environment against internal standards such as desires, values or goals. Cognitive appraisal can help throw light on why the same situation is perceived to be stressful by some and benign by some. This may further our understanding on why despite almost similar workloads, unpredictable schedules, and care-giving responsibilities at home, some employees have higher work-family conflicts or richer work-family experiences. Similarly, no matter how family-friendly organizational work-family policies may be, the level of work-family conflict or enrichment experienced by individuals within the same context is quite divergent. In this paper, the construct of congruence and incongruence captures the process of cognitive appraisal.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Work-Family Interface

The dominant view of the work-family interface has focused on negative aspects of combining work and family (Carlson & Grzywacz, 2008; Poelmans, O’Driscoll, & Beham, 2005). Research has been generously overloaded with the deleterious effects of combining work and family on individual well-being as the background theme (Barnett, 1998; Frone, 2003; Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999). Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) were instrumental in shaping Work Family Conflict (WFC) research by defining it as “a type of inter-role conflict in which the role demands stemming from one domain (work or family) are incompatible with role demands stemming from another domain” (work or family). Their work was also significant in demarcating the dimensions of conflict as being time-based, strain-based, and behaviour-based. These are widely regarded as being the standard dimensions of conflict and have been incorporated to measure conflict as in the scale of Carlson, Kacmar, and Williams (2000).

In tune with the emerging trend in psychology where the focus is on positive psychology, in recent reviews, work-family researchers have posed the request for a more balanced approach that gives credit to the positive effects of combining work and family roles (Barnett, 1998; Frone, 2003; Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999). As a response, in recent times, a plethora of constructs have been used to examine the positive relationships between work and family lives such as positive spillover (Grzywacz & Marks, 2000; Hanson, Colton, & Hammer, 2003; Voydanoff, 2001), enrichment (Kirchmeyer, 1992; Rothbard, 2001), and facilitation (Frone, 2003). This paper would stay with the construct of work-family enrichment (WFE). WFE takes place when involvement in one domain of work or family leads to acquisition of resources that can be applied in the other domain. Work-family enrichment has been conceptualized as a multi-dimensional and bi-directional construct (Carlson, Kacmar, Wayne, & Gryzywacz, 2006). Most notably work-to-family enrichment has three dimensions, namely work to family capital, work to family affect, and work to family development. Similarly, family-to-work enrichment has three dimensions, namely family to work development, family to work affect and family to work efficiency. However, unlike work-family conflict, studies on antecedents and consequences of work-family enrichment are less in the enrichment literature (Wayne, Randel, & Stevens, 2006). This can be attributed to the fact that it is even now an emerging area where researchers are still attempting to understand the construct. Therefore, this study on the role of cognitive appraisal in predicting work-family enrichment can advance the literature on work-family enrichment.

Cognitive Appraisal

Cognitive appraisal has been defined by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) as a subjective evaluation of environment against internal standards such as desires, values or goals. Extending the same idea a little further, MacDermid and Harvey (2008) define cognitive appraisal as the assessment of demands and the availability of resources to deal with them. Demands may be understood as heavy workloads, unpredictable schedules, and heavy care-giving responsibilities. Similarly, resources may point to financial supplies, social support, and personal traits that
help individuals to cope with stressors. MacDermid and Harvey (2008) further explicate that primarily an individual may appraise the degree to which a demand is a threat and secondarily appraise whether sufficient resources can be mobilized to meet the demand. As a result of these appraisals, psychological stress occurs when an individual concludes that available resources are not sufficient to meet the demand (Ortony, Clore, & Collins, 1988).

The role of cognitive appraisal in work-family conflict runs subtly as an undertone in the Demand-Control theory of Karasek (1979). According to this theory, persons who perceive high levels of control over situations may be less likely to appraise a demand as a threat to their well-being. Such persons believe that they can overcome any hurdle. The perception of control is a result of secondary appraisal of availability of resources. A favourable appraisal may lead to an increased perception of control and the feeling of being able to meet the demands successfully. As a result, cognitive appraisal can be used to understand differential perception of work-family situations. Some models of work and family have used individual differences (e.g. Eckenrode & Gore, 1990; Frone, Russel, & Cooper, 1992; Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999), sometimes even role differences (e.g. Greenhaus & Powell, 2006) to account for these variations. However, these models may not be sufficient to capture the differential aspect of subjective evaluation. This subjective comparison of perceived work-family experiences to internal standards is captured more by the process of cognitive appraisal (Edwards, 1992; Edwards & Rothbard, 1999; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). But very few studies look at the role of appraisal in the production of work-family conflict and work-family enrichment (MacDermid & Harvey, 2008; Edwards & Rothbard, 2005). The paper therefore expects to fill this gap in literature.

Cognitive Appraisal and Congruence

Though cognitive appraisal is a central process of most stress theories, its reflection is strongest in the person-environment fit literature. Person-environment fit is defined as congruence between the individual and the environment (Edwards, Caplan, & Harrison, 1998). For the purpose of this study, environment would refer to work and family settings. Person-environment fit involves a comparison of personal desires and the environmental supplies. This comparison is essentially a process of cognitive appraisal which matches one’s current state with the desired state (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This comparison leads to a perception of congruence or incongruence between the person and the environment. Congruence results when there is a match in the comparison between self and environment. Thus, if an individual perceives that the work or home environment is the way she/he desires, then it leads to a state of congruence. This generates positive affect and behaviours (Chatman, 1989). On the other hand, if the values are perceived to be different, i.e. the individual perceives a mismatch between her/his desires at either work or home environment, then incongruence results, resulting in negative affect (Chatman, 1989). The basic contention of the person-environment fit theory is that misfit between person and environment will lead to stress whereas a fit between person and environment would enhance well-being.

For the purpose of the study, the subjective need-supplies congruence would be focused on. This is consistent with previous work-family research which has dealt with work-family interface as experienced by the person. It also corresponds to the models of congruence as taken up in previous work-family studies (e.g. Edwards & Rothbard, 1999; 2005). With the notable exception of Edwards and Rothbard (1999), processes like cognitive appraisal and congruence have been largely ignored in the work-family literature. These processes could help understand better why given the same situation and environmental contexts, individuals might differ in their work-family experiences.

The other unexplored area the study seeks to delve into is to examine the effects of work-family incongruence on work-family interface. That is, would incongruence increase work-family conflict and congruence increase work-family enrichment. Though the link between incongruence and stress has been established, link between work-family conflict, as a specific form of stress and incongruence still needs to be established. While Edwards and Rothbard (1999) did take up the congruence lens to examine experiences in the work-family domain, they only looked at the measures of well-being. It was not applied to models of work-family conflict and work-family enrichment. Additional potential consequences of congruence therefore had not been explored.

Therefore, the objective of this paper is to examine the role
of congruence-incongruence on work-family conflict and work-family enrichment.

HYPOTHESES

Work-family conflict can happen due to three different factors: time-based conflict, strain-based conflict, and behaviour-based conflict. Each of these factors is described in detail later. Time-based conflict is due to the time spent discharging responsibilities of one domain that make it physically and/or cognitively difficult to fulfil the responsibilities of another domain. Strain-based conflict results when tension or anxiety from one domain affects performance in the other domain. Behaviour-based conflict arises when a person experiences behavioural incompatibilities among the different roles. According to the person-environment fit theory, subjective incongruence in the domains of work and family may lead to strains and illness (French, Caplan, & Harrison, 1982). While there could be psychological strain such as anxiety, dissatisfaction, sadness, anger, hostility etc., it may even take the form of high blood pressure, poor physical health, etc. It is therefore likely that incongruence may increase levels of strain-based conflict. This strain, as Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) suggest, may decrease abilities in the incongruent domain. Time-based conflict is also likely to increase as the increased levels of strain may cause more time to be taken for task completion because ruminating over the discrepancy may consume a lot of psychological energy. This would leave less time available to fulfil demands of the other domain (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), leading to time-based conflict. It may also happen in the reverse manner that longer time taken to complete tasks in the absence of desired environmental supplies might lead to more strain-based conflict. Behaviour-based conflict may also increase in the presence of incongruence as this belief of incongruence might make the individual behave differently than desired.

The following hypothesis is therefore proposed to be tested:

\[ H_1: \] The incongruent individual will tend to have greater work-family conflict (time-based, strain-based, and behaviour-based) than the congruent individual.

As the person-environment fit theory indicates, experiences of congruence in the domains of work and family would increase levels of satisfaction and positive affect. As Edwards and Rothbard (1999) reveal, increased congruence may increase well-being. With increased well-being and affect, it is likely that positive experiences in a role may increase. Consequently, the transfer of positive experiences and affect might also increase leading to increased enrichment. Work-family enrichment, as Greenhaus and Powell (2006) suggest, may occur through the affective path. MacDermid, Seery, and Weiss (2002) further substantiate that emotion plays an important role in triggering the kind of work-family interface. A positive affect therefore may trigger positive interdependencies between work and family. As explained earlier, work to family enrichment has three dimensions: development, affect, capital, and efficiency. The following specific hypothesis is therefore stated with respect to work-family enrichment as a result of congruence:

\[ H_2: \] The congruent individual will tend to have greater work-family enrichment (development, affect, capital, and efficiency) than the incongruent individual.

METHODOLOGY

Design

This is a causal study with congruence (two levels - congruence and incongruence) as the independent variable. The different measures of work-family conflict and work-family enrichment are the dependent variables. The different measures of work-family conflict used in the study are time-based conflict, strain-based conflict, and behaviour-based conflict. These dimensions can occur in two directions - from work to family or family to work. Time-based work to family conflict is said to occur when the time spent on discharging responsibilities at work makes it difficult to discharge responsibilities of work. Strain-based work to family conflict is said to occur when tension, anxiety, fatigue, or depression produced in work roles affects performance at family. Behaviour-based work to family conflict occurs when behaviours required at work get transferred to family and produce incongruity at family. Time-based family to work conflict is said to occur when the time spent on discharging responsibilities at work makes it difficult to discharge responsibilities at family. Strain-based family to work conflict is said to occur when tension, anxiety, fatigue, or depression produced in work roles affects performance at family. Behaviour-based family to work conflict occurs when behaviours...
required at family get transferred to work and produce incongruity at work.

Work-family enrichment was studied from two directions: from work to family and family to work. Work to family enrichment had three dimensions: development, affect, and capital. Work to family development is said to occur when there is acquisition of skills or perspectives at work which helps an individual in her dealings at family. Work to family affect is said to occur when involvement in work promotes a positive emotion or attitude at work which helps the individual to become a better family member. Work to family capital is said to occur when involvement in work promotes levels of psychosocial resources such as sense of security and personal fulfilment at work that help the individual to become a better family member. In the reverse direction, family to work enrichment had three dimensions: affect, development, and efficiency. Family to work development is said to occur when involvement in family leads to acquisition of skills or perspectives at family which helps an individual in her dealings at work. Family to work affect is said to occur when a positive emotional state generated at family helps the individual in her performance at work. Family to work efficiency is when involvement in family gives rise to a sense of focus or urgency that helps the individual in her performance at work.

RESEARCH CONTEXT

The characteristics and nature of work in the IT sector present unique challenges that may affect the work-family interface (Valk & Srinivasan, 2011). The project based nature of work may present distinctive effects. This environmental uncertainty is further combined with consequent pressures to work for long hours (Scholarios & Marks, 2004; Sethi, King, & Quick, 2004). For example, studies have reported prevalence of work overload, role ambiguity, and role conflict among the IT professionals (Goldstein & Rockart, 1984; Sethi, Barrier, & King, 1999). The nature of resources required and salience of resources in this context would therefore be different from other contexts. Additionally, there is indication that inability to manage personal and work life is one of the oft-cited comments in the Employee Assistance Programmes provided in the various IT organizations (Hindu Business Line, 2006).

SAMPLE

Data was collected from 299 employees working in IT organizations in Bengaluru, Bhubaneswar, Hyderabad, Gurgaon, and Kolkata. There were 176 male and 123 female respondents and 87 unmarried and 212 married respondents. Of all the respondents, 35.8 percent were junior employees, 50.8 percent were middle management employees, and 13.4 percent were senior management employees. The respondents ranged in age from 23 to 58 years.

Measures

The cognitive appraisal process is captured through a congruence-incongruence measure. Congruence-incongruence is measured through the Resource Priority and Availability Measure (Padhi, 2012). The first part of the measure appraises the respondents’ priority of resources at work and then at family separately. In the second part, the availability of the resources at work and family is gauged separately for each domain. Congruence is tested by the degree of match between resource priority and availability in the respective setting. The test of resource priority has 15 items as resources desired at work and 15 items as resources desired at family which are to be ranked by the respondent through the group and rank card sorting task. Resource availability measure solicits opinions about availability of resources at work and family in two separate sections clearly mentioning whether it is the work or the family domain through a five-point Likert scale. Each of the resource items is followed by a five-point scale ranging from “abundantly present” to “not at all present”. Work-family conflict is measured through Work Family Conflict Scale of Carlson, Kacmar, and Williams (2000). Work-family enrichment is measured through the Work Family Enrichment Scale of Carlson, Kacmar, Wayne, and Gryzywacz (2006).

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

To compare the effects of congruence and incongruence on the different indicators of work-family conflict and enrichment, analysis of variance was resorted to. An analysis of variance performed on the time-based work to family conflict scores and strain-based work to family and behaviour-based work to family scores reveals that the effect of congruence vs. incongruence is significant (Table 1). Work to family conflict is the summated conflict produced as a result of time-based work to family con-
conflict, strain-based work to family conflict, and behaviour-based work to family conflict. Analysis of variance performed on the work to family conflict scores reveals that the effect of congruence vs. incongruence is significant with $F(1, 293) = 27.342$, $p = 0.009$. The mean work to family conflict scores was significantly higher for incongruent individuals ($M = 17.9$) than for congruent individuals ($M = 14.7$).

In the reverse direction, family to work conflict has been studied in time-based, strain-based, and behaviour-based terms. The time-based family to work conflict, strain-based family to work conflict, and behaviour-based family to work conflict scores varied significantly with congruence vs. incongruence (Table 1). Analysis of variance performed on the family to work conflict scores reveals that the effect of congruence vs. incongruence is significant with $F(1, 293) = 32.784$, $p = 0.000$. The mean family to work conflict scores were significantly higher for incongruent individuals ($M = 14.2$) than for congruent individuals ($M = 11.0$). Overall work-family conflict is the summation of conflict produced from work to family and from family to work. The effect of congruence vs. incongruence is significant for overall work to family conflict with $F(1, 293) = 37.723$, $p = 0.000$. The mean overall work-family conflict scores were significantly higher for incongruent individuals ($M = 32.2$) than for congruent individuals ($M = 25.6$).

Analysis of variance performed on work to family development scores, work to family affect scores, and work to family capital reveals that the effect of congruence vs. incongruence is significant in all the three cases (Table 2). Work to family enrichment is the combined enrichment produced as a result of work to family development, work to family affect, and work to family capital. Work to family enrichment varied significantly with congruence vs.

### Table 1: Summary of ANOVA on Different Dimensions of Work-Family Conflict

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$F$ statistic</th>
<th>$M$ Inco</th>
<th>$M$ Con</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall work family conflict</td>
<td>37.723*</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>Incongruent perceive greater overall work family conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work to family conflict</td>
<td>27.342*</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>Incongruent perceive greater work to family conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family to work conflict</td>
<td>32.784*</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>Incongruent perceive greater family to work conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time-based work to family conflict</td>
<td>29.772*</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>Incongruent perceive greater time-based work to family conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time-based family to work conflict</td>
<td>12.314*</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Incongruent perceive greater time-based family to work conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strain-based work to family conflict</td>
<td>20.324*</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>Incongruent perceive greater strain-based work to family conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strain-based family to work conflict</td>
<td>11.438*</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Incongruent perceive greater strain-based family to work conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour-based work to family conflict</td>
<td>31.226*</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Incongruent perceive greater behaviour-based work to family conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour-based family to work conflict</td>
<td>6.311*</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>Incongruent perceive greater behaviour-based family to work conflict</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** $M$ Inco refers to mean of incongruent employees on the variable in question; $M$ Con refers to mean of congruent employees on the variable in question.

$p < 0.01$

### Table 2: Summary of ANOVA on Different Dimensions of Work-Family Enrichment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternate Hypothesis</th>
<th>$F$ statistic</th>
<th>$M$ Con</th>
<th>$M$ Inco</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall work family enrichment</td>
<td>46.469**</td>
<td>51.8</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>Congruent perceive greater overall work family enrichment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work to family enrichment</td>
<td>14.792**</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>Congruent perceive greater work to family enrichment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family to work enrichment</td>
<td>10.937**</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>Congruent perceive greater family to work enrichment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work to family development</td>
<td>6.523*</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>Congruent perceive greater work to family development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work to family affect</td>
<td>11.360*</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>Congruent perceive greater work to family affect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work to family capital</td>
<td>17.950**</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>Congruent perceive greater work to family capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family to work development</td>
<td>7.789**</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>Congruent perceive greater family to work development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family to work affect</td>
<td>7.564</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>Congruent perceive greater family to work affect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work efficiency</td>
<td>8.553*</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>Congruent perceive greater family to work efficiency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** $M$ Con refers to mean of congruent employees on the variable in question; $M$ Inco refers to mean of incongruent employees on the variable in question.

$p < 0.05$

$**p < 0.01$
incongruence with $F(1, 293) = 14.792, p = 0.01$. The mean of work to family enrichment scores is significantly higher for congruent individuals ($M = 24.4$) than for incongruent individuals ($M = 21.7$).

In the reverse direction of family to work enrichment, the following results were found. Analysis of variance performed on the three dimensions reveals that the effect of congruence vs. incongruence is significant. Family to work enrichment is the combined enrichment produced as result of family to work development, family to work affect, and family to work efficiency. Analysis of variance performed on family to work enrichment scores reveals that the effect of congruence vs. incongruence is significant with $F(1, 295) = 10.937, p = 0.00$. The mean of family to work enrichment scores is significantly higher for congruent individuals ($M = 24.8$) than for incongruent individuals ($M = 22.7$). Overall work-family enrichment is the overall enrichment produced from work to family and from family to work. The overall work-family enrichment scores varied significantly in terms of congruence vs incongruence with $F(1, 293) = 46.469, p = 0.000$. The mean of overall work-family enrichment scores is significantly higher for congruent employees ($M = 51.8$) than for incongruent employees ($M = 44.4$).

On the basis of the above findings, the first hypothesis that the incongruent individual will tend to have greater work-family conflict (time-based, strain-based and behaviour-based) than the congruent individual tends to be accepted.

On the basis of the above findings, the second hypothesis that the congruent individual will tend to have greater work-family enrichment (development, affect, capital, and efficiency) than the incongruent individual also tends to be accepted.

**DISCUSSION**

Results of the analysis of variance reveal that the incongruent individuals have significantly greater work-family conflict on all the dimensions and in both the directions from work to family and family to work than the congruent individuals. A possible explanation for this phenomenon can be found in the generation of negative emotions and process of self-regulation. A discrepancy between what the individuals’ desire and what they get may give rise to negative emotions. These negative emotions generated in a setting might be making the roles seem stressful and intensifying the perception of conflict (Bruck & Allen, 2003). When a person becomes self-focused, she/he may ruminate or dwell on problems in a role and become self-absorbed. This would leave her/him less available for discharging responsibilities in other roles. Also ruminating may lead to being pre-occupied with the discrepancy in one domain even when she/he is in the other domain. This may lead to strain and would increase strain spillover across domains. This study also found that incongruent individuals reported higher levels of strain spillover. Brooding may also make a person interpersonally unavailable and less sensitive to others and therefore increase behaviour-based conflict. The incongruent individuals in the study reported higher levels of behaviour-based conflict. On the other hand, exercising self-control to manage the discrepancy may lead to energy loss (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Muraven, & Tice, 1998) and this may lead to emotional fatigue. As the proponents of work-family conflict contend, conflict is perceived due to conflicting role demands on strained energy resources. Drawing on the limited energy resource puts more strain on the already stretched resource and increases work-family conflict.

In contrast, the congruent employees reported significantly greater work-family enrichment on all the dimensions of enrichment and in both the directions. A possible explanation for this phenomenon can be found in the generation of positive emotions in congruent employees and the Broaden and Build theory (Fredrickson, 1998) of positive emotions. The perception of congruence of resources among employees would generate positive evaluations of the environment giving rise to positive emotions. These positive emotions are associated with an outward focus of attention which may increase interpersonal availability and receptivity to pick up more skills. And, as the experiences in a role become better, the chances that they improve the quality of life in other roles increase. Thus, the employee would generate a positive upward spiral that would impact numerous roles that he/she plays both at work and at home.

It is thereby revealed that the process of cognitive appraisal of the work and family contexts and its subjective evaluation with an individual’s internal standards affects the individual’s work-family experience. The experiences comprise both positive and negative interfaces, more specifically, work-family conflict and work-family enrichment.
CONCLUSIONS

By examining the role of congruence-incongruence on work-family enrichment and work-family conflict, the paper contributes theoretically and empirically to the literature by capturing the role of cognitive appraisal on work-family interface, which has largely been ignored. It also contributes to the emerging paradigm of person-environment fit and work-family interface. But the study has only looked at the experiences of software professionals in the IT sector. Therefore, in future, this study needs to be replicated across different organizations to be able to generalize the results.

Despite its limitations, the study provides some interesting findings which cannot be ignored. The finding that congruence leads to greater work-family enrichment in conjunction with the finding that incongruence leads to greater work-family conflict has implications for the formulation of work-family policies in organizations. HR managers, in collaboration and consultation with line managers, need to focus on increasing congruence and mitigating incongruence. Today, organizations across sectors are making their efforts to promote work-life harmony. In doing so, the focus is on family-friendly policies. However, managers need to also note that the general work environment itself may be a predictor of work-life harmony. Therefore even small adjustments in the work environment may cause major differences to the work-family interface of the employee. Congruence may be facilitated by enlisting expectations of employees formally or informally. This may then be used as a pointer towards the kind of intervention that may be needed to increase congruence. Moreover, the one-size-fits-all kind of policies may not have the positive impact that organizations may desire. There is a need to customize work-family policies to meet individual expectations. Only then would it be possible to provide a family-friendly work space that allows employees to integrate work and family effectively and be fully engaged and productive.

REFERENCES


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Call for Papers

Vikalpa: The Journal for Decision Makers, a quarterly publication of the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, India, primarily addresses people engaged in the practice of management. It seeks to communicate management knowledge generated by academic thinking and reflection to practitioners and policy makers in the private, public, governmental and civil society sectors. We invite contributions that serve this purpose by presenting new concepts, fresh conclusions from research, lessons from practice, and insights into management excellence. Vikalpa's scope extends to all areas of management such as general management, marketing, finance, organizational behaviour, and human resources, operations, etc. Vikalpa features articles on various sectors like industry, agriculture, banking, international trade, urban and rural development, public systems, and information systems.

Please refer to the Guidelines for Authors, presented elsewhere in this issue, for details of the features under which articles can be submitted: PERSPECTIVES, RESEARCH, INTERFACES, NOTES AND COMMENTARIES.

Vikalpa also invites contributions to its MANAGEMENT CASE feature

Every issue of Vikalpa carries a management case, and its analyses. A case is a description of a real-life situation, that may (a) include problems, solutions attempted, results and conclusions (research cases) or (b) conclude with a decision-point or dilemma faced by the organization or some of its members. Management cases that are based on information directly collected by the writer from the organization are preferred; however, cases based largely on secondary data that is publicly available, may also be considered. In the latter kind of cases, particular attention must be paid to adequate and appropriate citing of sources, and the norms of correct academic writing must be followed. A case submitted to Vikalpa must be well-researched and documented and must present a faithful view of the organization’s problems, actions and decisions. Its quality will be evaluated on the basis of the following:

• Identification of significant problems/situations/issues/processes
• Adequacy and quality of information and data
• Realism and effectiveness
• Completeness, complexity, and focus
• Potential to illustrate ideas, concepts or processes
• Citation of secondary sources
• Organization, readability, and style of presentation

A management case submitted to Vikalpa must be accompanied by a Teaching Note, which is in the nature of an ‘instructor’s manual’ that facilitates the use of the case in a classroom situation. The length of the case, excluding any exhibits or appendices, should be about 3,000 words.

Please send your submissions to:
Editor, Vikalpa
Indian Institute of Management, Vastrapur, Ahmedabad 380 015, India

You may also send your submissions at: vikalpa@iimahd.ernet.in