RESEARCH ARTICLE

Harmonizing Home and School: Exploring the Path to Work-Life Balance and Job Satisfaction among Married Teachers

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Abstract: In Eastern cultures, women bear a burden of familial responsibilities resulting from an uneven distribution of tasks among spouses. This burden is even more pronounced for working women, creating interference between their job responsibilities and their familial obligations, and vice versa. Unfortunately, this situation has been exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic, as evidenced by the World Health Organization's report on the alarming increase in domestic violence cases. Therefore, it has become imperative to thoroughly study the spillover between work and home in order to understand the factors that disrupt both domains. With this in mind, the purpose of this study is to identify the elements of marital satisfaction that are closely related to job satisfaction in the context of work-from-home settings. To achieve this goal, a qualitative exploratory approach is adopted, involving in-depth, one-on-one interviews conducted with seven teachers. The findings of the study indicate that individuals' perceptions play a significant role in shaping the reality of achieving work-life balance particularly among teachers, their strong emotional bond with students often leads to a pro-work attitude. The findings of this study contribute to our understanding of families in the post-COVID era by affirming the existence of employment-related challenges in the work-from-home context and shedding light on their impact on individuals and their families.

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1   Introduction

Job satisfaction has been studied extensively since the inception of organizational psychology. It is an essential indicator of how employees feel towards their work and a predictor of work behaviors such as turnover (Mobley, 1982; Mueller and Price, 1990; Williams and Hazer, 1986), absenteeism (Williams and Hazer, 1986) and organizational citizenship behavior (Williams and Hazer, 1986). Moreover, according to a study published in the Harvard Business Review, job satisfaction is one of the major contributors to employee retention. Research shows that it stems as much from relationships at home as it does from relationships at work and from the job itself (Frone, 2003; Matias et al., 2017).

Previous research suggests that work-life balance (WLB) conflicts occur when the position of a person in the family effects their job role or vice versa (Mueller and Price, 1990; Norre et al., 2006; Williams and Hazer, 1986). A study conducted on 310 Malaysian women showed that these conflicts have a negative relationship with job satisfaction (Williams and Hazer, 1986). Marital satisfaction in particular correlates significantly with job satisfaction in the long run. If the former increases the latter increases as well and this holds true for both men and women (Rogers et al., 2003). Despite the significance of family relationships to job satisfaction, most research so far is associated only to the quality of relationships instead of deeper investigations (Norre et al., 2006).

The COVID-19 pandemic drastically altered the WLB scenario as businesses adopted the Work from Home (WFH) model to carry on their work activities (Memon et al., 2022; Low and Memon, 2022). While some studies indicate a positive relation of WFH on WLB, through increased flexibility (Bellmann and Hübler, 2020; De Klerk et al., 2021; Rudolph and Baltes, 2017), most of the literature points to the deterioration of WLB. Worsened WLB during the pandemic was found to be more sever in women than in men (El Akmal et al., 2021; Javed et al., 2020; Kaur and Sharma, 2020; Rudolph and Baltes, 2017; Uddin, 2021). Moreover, World Health Organization (WHO) has found that the cases of domestic violence on women by their spouses have significantly increased than usual (World Health Organization, 2022).

The purpose of this research is to understand factors pertaining to marital satisfaction that contribute to job satisfaction in WFH. To achieve this aim, the present study contributes to literature in several ways. Firstly, past literature on marital satisfaction has been more general in nature, associated more to finding trends or comparing satisfaction levels in men and women (Norre et al., 2006). This study fills that gap by identifying specific factors in WFH from the aspect of marital satisfaction to improve job satisfaction for both genders. Secondly, there is adequate literature on job satisfaction in WFH (Sirgy and Lee, 2018) but research on marital satisfaction contributing to job satisfaction as a result of an abrupt shift in life by the pandemic is still unknown (Sutarto et al., 2021). This research contributes to the literature on such families in the post-COVID era. Lastly, according to the gender gap report by World Economic Forum (WEF) Pakistan ranks as one of the worst countries for women (Robert Crotti, 2021) and simultaneously, one of the best in increased freelance jobs (Otto Kässi, 2017) which calls for research to understand how domestic violence against women can be reduced with one or both spouses involved in WFH. Findings of this research may benefit human resource managers in devising strategies to improve job satisfaction by incorporating the spousal aspect in organizations either practicing or planning to adopt WFH post-COVID.

2   Literature Review

Job Satisfaction in WFH

The extent to which employees feel fulfilled by their job can be referred to as job satisfaction. Additionally, it is the joyful emotional condition brought on by the professional experience (Bulińska-Stangrecka et al., 2021). Temporarily working from home can improve organizational commitment, the caliber of relationships with leaders, and reduce work-life conflict (Allen et al., 2015). Therefore, the unplanned and transient transition to WFH caused by COVID-19 may initially have enhanced job

satisfaction. Previous research on the effect of WFH on job satisfaction, however, has shown mixed results, such as a decline in the quality of relationships with coworkers (Allen et al., 2015). Job satisfaction is greatly influenced by social contacts at work (Bulińska-Stangrecka et al., 2021). Consequently, social isolation has had a negative effect on job satisfaction in WFH during the COVID-19 pandemic. Social isolation is found to have a detrimental impact on the satisfaction with remote work (Toscano and Zappalà, 2020). Numerous businesses entirely shifted to remote work, allowing all employees to work from home, to contain the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, these businesses exclusively used digital technologies for communication. According to (Bouziri et al., 2020), the risk of social isolation in this situation is higher than it was in pre-pandemic times. Conflicts from family-to-work or from work-to-family are both somewhat related to job satisfaction.

There are two perspectives on these linkages, cross-domain relations (Frone et al., 1992) and matching-domain relations (Amstad and Meier), based on literature review. While the former holds that issues in family life impact work, the latter states that if the issues arise in one domain, then the effect is also felt in that domain. Based on the attribution theory, people tend to follow the matching-domain approach more often. The rationale being that people are likely to blame their circumstances at work, which in turn causes them to have unfavorable feelings toward their employment and job satisfaction (Martinko and Mackey, 2019). While both approaches impact job satisfaction there is a dearth of literature focusing specifically on the family-to-work impact (Hong et al., 2021), which has been undertaken in the present study.

Marital Satisfaction in WFH

Satisfaction in a marriage is a personal perception, strong emotion, and behavior that is influenced by a variety of personal circumstances. The indicator for measuring marital pleasure focuses solely on the quality of relationships in the marital state, as opposed to assessing the personality of each spouse. (Rumondor, 2013) classified marital satisfaction in couples from urban areas along nine dimensions: conversation, role division, agreeableness, transparency, connection, social intimacy, physical, and financial. Despite this, the pandemic poses a substantial threat to marital fulfilment, particularly for married women with increased familial responsibilities (Aoerora, 2020). Spousal support, a type of family support, often consists of enriched activities such as a spouse listening to your job experiences or assisting with domestic tasks (Chan et al., 2020). Support from spouses promotes family-to-work enrichment, implying that those who receive spousal assistance are able to use these resources to mitigate stress (Nagarajan and Parthasarathy, 2016).

On the contrary, Punia and Kamboj (2013), marital conflicts lead to abuse that may vary from verbal to physical, and it is associated to negative outcomes for the spouses involved. The possibility of marital discord happening when working remotely are extra situational constraints that working spouses must cope with (Reid and Crisafulli, 1990). Long-term marital discord may even result in intimate partner violence (Ten Brummelhuis and Bakker, 2012) and these issues have already surfaced during the pandemic in the form of increased cases of violence against women according to the aforementioned WHO statistics. Therefore, it deems necessary that these factors be ascertained immediately to put organizational solutions into effect.

WLB in WFH

Consequences from one domain can spread to another, whether it is family-to-work or work-to-family. Humans have limited cognitive resources, and using those resources in one role makes them unavailable for use in another (Zedeck, 1992). The present study seeks to understand factors that demand employees' cognitive resources in marital relationships, making them unavailable for job responsibilities and lowering job satisfaction. Poorer home outcomes are linked to lower degrees of work-family balance and a lack of support from spouses and employers (Chung et al., 2022). Drawing on from the spillover theory, this research will investigate how spouses can reduce the family to work spillover and how employers can reduce the work to family spillover. Moreover, literature shows that WLB relies on the employees' perceptions (Beauregard and Henry, 2009). While WFH may contribute to increased flexibility, the overlap between work and home activities may result in

people perceiving it in an opposite sense (Palumbo, 2020). Thus, this research will also explore WLB perceptions and compare them with WLB realities.

WFH in the Education Sector

When discussing WLB, context is critical. Teachers enter the industry not merely for a good image in society, but also to make people's lives better. As a result, they frequently encounter obstacles and have a hard time to live up to the expectations of everyone in the classroom (Russo et al., 2016). It will aid educators in developing a long, competitive, and balanced career by examining the ideal balance between work and family. It is difficult to distinguish personal and professional lives for teachers because they play such a crucial part in nation development. WLB is something that is frequently discussed yet can be difficult to implement in the educational sector (Wong and Ko, 2009).

About 74% of the employees in education believe that failing to disconnect from work is the most significant factor contributing to work-life relationship imbalance. WLB is an important aspect in boosting teacher satisfaction. It has been seen that instructors' well-being results in high-quality WLB and even enhanced student achievement (Punia and Kamboj, 2013). Academics must perform a variety of other tasks in along with teaching, like administrative tasks, attending training sessions, mentoring students, trying to lead activities and tasks, internship, evaluations, assessing and participating in faculty development schemes, and so on. Using integrated learning methodologies, academic professionals facilitate knowledge and skills in education (KIM and Business, 2019). The rapidly evolving educational systems of the modern century have had an impact on the role of teaching practitioners, their tasks, and teaching techniques at schools. As a result, in today's world, teaching practitioners are continually presented with a challenge of conflict in between job at work and an equally difficult duty at home (Tahar et al., 2020).

The COVID pandemic pushed teachers to adopt the online mode of teaching which further challenged them by the technological aspects of the new teaching-learning technologies. In addition to that, increased familial responsibilities at home got entangled with their job roles, adding to the burden. In the context of Pakistan, there have been limited studies on WLB in WFH associated to the COVID-19 pandemic (Bashir et al., 2019; Khokhar et al., 2020). Moreover, to the best of my knowledge, none of these studies address marital satisfaction and even if it is discussed, there is a lack of the male perspective. Since marriage is heavily dictated by cultural conventions, it can vary from country to country (Chung et al., 2022). Given the increased domestic violence cases reported by WHO it is of dire need to increase literature on marital satisfaction in the context of Pakistan. The education industry has the third highest number of employees who are women. The first two relate to medical and health care- jobs that require workers to be present on site- thus have little scope for WFH implementation (Chung et al., 2022). Since the study calls for more eastern countries to participate (Uddin, 2021), going ahead with the densely female populated education industry in Pakistan would be contributing to the literature for eastern countries, as recommended.

3   Methods

Research Design

Since limited studies exist where job satisfaction and WLB are described while taking into consideration deep-seated factors in marital satisfaction in the context of Pakistan, a qualitative approach has been taken. It has a social science foundation and tries to investigate the causes of people's behavior and attitudes (Hossain and Rokis, 2014). It will also investigate social and human concerns in a natural perspective (Goulding, 2005). Interviews were conducted in depth, with male and female secondary school teachers, to investigate their lived experiences with WLB concerns.

Unit of analysis

According to a survey conducted by the center of global development in 2021, in Pakistan the edu-

cation industry has the third highest number of employees who are women. The first two relate to medical and health care- jobs that require workers to be present on site- thus have little scope for WFH implementation. Since the study calls for more eastern countries to participate, going ahead with an industry of dense female population with a scope for WFH in an eastern country like Pakistan were considered. Employees in private companies who had an exposure to online teaching were targeted for the study. The identities of the participants were concealed due to the sensitivity of the subject matter. This also ensured that the respondents' confidentiality and anonymity were not violated.

Sampling

Purposive sampling was used in accordance with the criteria that the employees have to be married and have substantial experience of teaching online (Bernard, 2017). Seven, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted and the sample number was chosen using the idea of data saturation, in which data collecting was only halted when it reached the stage of redundancies (Marshall and Rossman, 2014). Initially the strategy was centered around asking married relatives and friends involved in WFH to recommend other married WFH employees who might be interested in joining (Given, 2008). Later, snowball sampling was used whereby each new interviewee was asked to recommend someone else who might be inclined to join. Since marital satisfaction is a personal topic, employees were reluctant to participate the snowball sampling technique proved useful (Noy, 2008). Only one of the seven interviewed teachers is a non-parent while the rest are parents. Moreover, 2 of the participants are males and 5 are females. All of them have reported teaching different subjects that were either science-related or language-related.

Data Collection

A pre-test was done prior to data collection using semi-structured interviews (Sykes, 1990). Participants who agreed to be interviewed received a list of questions through email and/or social media (such as WhatsApp) to allow them to get an idea of what to expect. Using Zoom or phone conversations, interviews were conducted in December 2022 at the time convenient to participants. With the participants' prior agreement, all interviews were audio-recorded. The interviews lasted between 15 and 30 minutes. Ethical standards were upheld during the interview as well.

Data Analysis

The author transcribed the interviews, reviewed them multiple times to discover significant themes, and then transferred them to the Quirkos software to highlight codes and allocate them to the predetermined themes. The data was read multiple times during immersion to build familiarity and sense, and this was preceded by the software-based coding procedure (Weber, 1990). Based on inductive epistemology, the author additionally studied and analyzed the transcripts in order to categories and construct a comprehensive understanding of significant issues to ensure cohesion between the themes (Horowitz and Gerson, 2002). Three themes were identified: WLB perceptions, WLB realities, and organizational solutions for job satisfaction. Moreover, employee-suggested solutions to WLB were also noted.

Research Instrument

The author prepared a semi-structured interview guide that invited participants to express and discuss their ideas and experiences with WLB issues, as well as methods for overcoming such challenges. Semi-structured interviews provided participants the necessary freedom and space and allowed researchers to acquire thorough and context - specific data. Interviews were guided by three research questions. The following were the primary research questions that correspond to the three major themes: WLB perceptions, WLB realities and organizational solutions for job satisfaction, respectively:

(1) How do teachers perceive WLB in WFH?

(2) What are the reasons for spillover between work and family in married teachers?

(3) How can organizations help married employees achieve WLB to improve job satisfaction?

4   Results

A total of 85 codes were generated through the Quirkos analysis of the interview transcripts. This section states the key themes and discusses the underlying codes emerging from the study data in response to the main research questions. To get an understanding of the results, key themes have been assigned to all codes and illustrated in the form of a conceptual map in Figure 1.
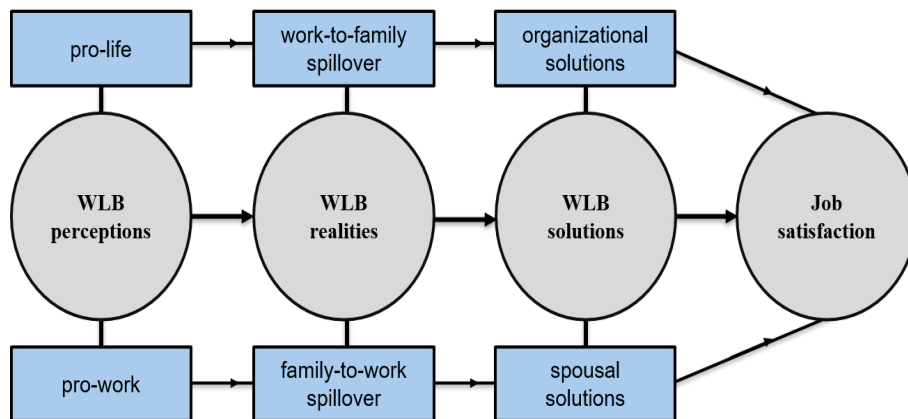

Figure 1: Conceptual Mapping of Thematic Analysis.

WLB Perceptions

Although there are various perspectives on WLB as identified in the codes in Table 1, but the major codes can be divided into two main themes i.e., pro-work and pro-life. Based on the findings employees have highlighted a variation of aspects that describe their ideal WLB. Most of the employees have responded that they are pro-work, which means that they prefer work over non-work activities. For example, one of the teachers shared:

> "I feel I am a bit more conscious and more attached to my students and maybe that's why I tend to my students. But since my kids are grown-ups, I do not require long hours of family time" (Teacher 6)

4 of the codes pertain to a balanced work and non-work life as the ideal situation. Employees stated that even though in reality they do not have a balance, but they hold the perception that WLB must exit, as stated:

> "I feel like I should create a balance. All the schoolwork should be completed in the hours that are set aside for school and with the family we should be a new person. We should not be a teacher then we should be a mother or a wife" (Teacher 1)

Employees have not shown much support for the pro-life scenario. In fact, those who have spoken in support of the pro-life perception have reasoned that the support comes from knowing that a happy non-work life results in a happy work life:

> "... when your life is good, and everything is sorted out and you know that you have to put a barrier between work and life and work will improve" (Teacher 3)

There were other uncommon codes as well such as, only one participant shared that his perception of WLB is not focused on an equal divide among the two domains. Instead, he perceives WLB to

depend on gender. He shared that according to him WLB cannot exist since males have to be more inclined towards work:

> "The ratio of work to on-work activities are never a 50/50 ratio for males at least because they are more focused on earning, for me it is more 65/35" (Teacher 4)

One of the teachers shared that religion dictates her to create WLB so she must be a good teacher, as well as live up to her familial roles:

> "But WLB is necessary because me religion says that there should be a balance that you should give your family as much time as you give to your work" (Teacher 3)

Both parents as well as non-parents were interviewed for this study, but this aspect does not seem to have any impact on their perceptions of WLB. Both have shared WLB issues and neither has associated it with their children. In fact, when specifically questioned if their children could contribute to WLB, a vast majority stated that their children have already suffered enough in WFH:

> "My family is already doing their best; I do not think there is anything more that they can do. My family is more affected by my job-related frustrations. If you are expected to do extra work your family suffers because of your professional life. You do not compromise on professional life since that is your bread and butter, so you scold children in frustration. The family is understanding but it suffers more" (Teacher 6)

WLB Realities

WLB realities were sub-divided into two main themes according to the segregation suggested by (Bouziri et al., 2020) i.e., work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict. Regarding the former, the highest frequency pertains to increased stress from student control in class. Participants have reported students to be "dodging" in their conduct in the online classes. Moreover, student engagement emerged as a challenge that required time to solve and that came at the expense of losing time with family. The following quotations describe the issue:

> "It took me time to adjust to the online system but eventually I did. Students would dodge in the online class. We did not know whether they had learnt and how many were pretending. We did not even know if the children were attentive or not because there was audio only and no video and students would not turn it on. For example, for assignment submissions. It was not effective, and it could have been effective if students learnt with the same responsibility that the teacher shows. It is a good mode of teaching if students also study with the same interest but that was not the case. Also, the attendance was very short and at the end it was only 10-20%" (Teacher 1)

> "Sometimes students do not respond, and it is necessary that they respond so you can ascertain the extent to which they have grasped concepts or the extent to which they are clear about the topic. But students are not behaving that way in the online system. They have lame excuses in the online system, mic is not working, camera is not working" (Teacher 2)

> "It is hectic for me to teach online because it gets hectic to observe the student behavior" (Teacher 3)

> "Student engagement is a very big issue in teaching online. For that I prepare learning activities like video then question and answer and this strategy is called watch, pick, listen and ask. Through this identify if students are present or not and if I see a student is not responding then I would specifically question them. Interesting activities keep them engaged so I do not have to call kids and their parents and ask them to come. If even, then participation is less then I call their parents, so they send the kid to attend class" (Teacher 3)

> "There must be something solid in front of the students. I used to make power point presentations, I used whiteboard, I learnt different apps like Kahoot, quizzes, CCI, Padalet wall and many others; learning them and then guiding students about them, all of that was too hectic for me" (Teacher 7)

The second major spillover from work to family is overburden. Most teachers reported that they felt like they were constantly working even beyond their work hours because of the student-teacher dealings on social media. It has been mentioned that this issue peaked during the pandemic and has not reverted till now. For some teachers the overburden results from the time-consuming paper checking on the laptops, while for others it stemmed from the increased time spent on student engagement. The following quotes depict these factors:

> "I feel that sometimes I am occupied with my job responsibilities so much that my personal and family life suffers" (Teacher 1)

> "I felt overburdened from being in front of the screen all the time and students were out of control" (Teacher 2)

> "…it is overburdened because of all the challenges. You need your net facility to be good, you need your student's net facility to be good" (Teacher 4)

> "My 8 hours job had converted to 16 hours. Even after COVID the idea that the teacher is available always has not reverted. It has settled in the minds of the parents and the administration that the teacher must be online all the time and that is an idea that bothers me" (Teacher 6)

> "Checking on the laptop was a big issue and was more time consuming" (Teacher 2)

> "I would give my family hours to school e.g., paper checking, copy checking, making worksheets" (Teacher 6)

In addition to these major issues, participants also highlighted physical concerns associated with space and noise issues. Some even reported privacy concerns since the video calls at home expose their home to the people. Some issues also emerged based on the subject that the teachers had to teach but these issues do not impact family life. Many have also reported that their job is their bread and butter and while they could request their families to understand that the job was more important, the job could not be compromised for family. These issues have been highlighted in the quotes stated below:

> "The only difficulty that I had was finding a secluded corner in the house where nobody would disturb me. I have children and we are a joint family so under these circumstances finding a room where no one disturbs you is quite impossible" (Teacher 7)

> "At home I find myself screaming at my kids, "be quiet, please be quiet" so I can conduct my class. So, the family gets disturbed" (Teacher 4)

> "At home I find myself screaming at my kids, "be quiet, please be quiet" so I can conduct my class. So, the family gets disturbed" (Teacher 6)

> "I would take my classes in the dining room and since it has a connected kitchen, I had to set an angle that if the recording is in progress my house is not on display" (Teacher 6)

On the other hand, family-to-work conflicts are less frequent than those of work-to-family conflicts. However, familial issues do spillover into the work life as participants have shared. Five distinct marital satisfaction issues were highlighted: misunderstanding among spouses, space concerns, demotivation from spouses, role imbalance and lack of communication among spouses and the quotation for each of these in the respective order is given below:

> "I feel even when I am teaching at home my family members do not really understand how hectic my routine gets" (Teacher 3)

> "Family obviously helps us with the corporation we require. We require isolation when we are teaching at home so the biggest challenge for my kids is to stay away from me for that while and only if my kids corporate with me in this aspect is when I can work from home in a teaching job" (Teacher 4)

> "We were motivated so well by our institute but so demotivated by our families. They would say what is this that you are doing your 6-hour job in 12 hours" (Teacher 7)

> "We were motivated so well by our institute but so demotivated by our families. They would say what is this that you are doing your 6-hour job in 12 hours" (Teacher 2)

"I feel even when I am teaching at home my family members do not really understand how hectic my routine gets until and unless I communicate it to them. Sometimes even if I communicate my work challenges. I feel I must set my limits because no one else will set them for me' (Teacher 3)

WLB Solutions

Employees at large have felt that the imbalance between work and non-work aspects were impacting their job satisfaction:

"...when you are mentally engaged all the time and thinking about your school problems all the time you do not feel fresh. You need to take your mind off these things to feel fresh or to rejuvenate yourself and your mind and you know start with a fresh mind in the morning" (Teacher 6)

To inquire about the last research question, teachers were asked how their organizations could help them achieve WLB to promote job satisfaction. To this many participants were able to come up with solutions like, resource provision, trainings, ensuring cyber security, reduction of workload, grievance handling flexibility work timings, efficient task allocation to avoid time wastage, promote WLB through formal rules to send a clear message to everyone that it is important, compensation for overtime, appreciation, and recognition. The relevant quotes have been shared below:

"They could have provided me with proper online teaching strategies and tools. Instead, us teachers we did an individual effort to learn and explore these tools" (Teacher 1)

"There wasn't even any guidance or any demand and everything was left on the teacher to make efforts T1.

...by listening to you and allows catharsis and by mentally relaxing you" (Teacher 2)

"Administration should plan activities before-hand so they can ask teachers to complete them during work hours" (Teacher 6)

"My previous head had made the rule that after 6 you will not deal with parents or students after 6. If a parent or a student requires the teacher for help, they can do it before 6 because the rest of the time is for the teacher's family. My head made sure that the parents and students also knew this rule. This rule has completely vanished now and of course the administration is to blame for it. I do try to maintain this rule on my own now. So, the administration must put their foot down. They must define rules, set these parameters and let both teachers and parents know that this rule should not be breeched" (Teacher 6)

"Incentives could be in the form of verbal appreciations but that is not going to help in the long run" (Teacher 6)

"...make teachers part of the team and make them realize that if you have done something you are getting the recognition for it as well" (Teacher 6)

"Organizations in other countries have the rule that the teacher gets free at 4 and if a teacher stays back then she is compensated for it. All these international organizations give incentives" (Teacher 6)

"Our organization motivates us that we must cooperate and that raises our expectations that we might get a good raise in our salaries but at the end they say that they cannot do it. That makes us question why we should put in the effort and cooperate with the organization. Were we, their guineapigs? Is a teacher worth nothing? The organization just fools us to work 14 – 15 hours and after that we get nothing. As a result, I resigned to join a different organization willing to pay me goods. The affiliation, the loyalty, the sincerity that I had with my previous organization it was hurt and they did not bother about it" (Teacher 7)

"I was among the best teachers at my school, so I feel like the students that I thought online were online making up issues to get away without paying. This meant that the companies working on commission claiming that they provided an online forum for the teachers were

only using teachers with no proper payments for the teachers and they were only focused on their own commissions. Teachers have suffered" (Teacher 7).

Job Satisfaction

Based on the perceptions of work-life balance (WLB), employees who tend to be pro-life have more often reported spillover from work-to-family, and when asked for solutions, have provided statements that call upon the organizations to lend a helping hand. They believe that the organization should provide more flexible working hours, better work-life balance policies, and more family-friendly benefits. One of the teachers stated:

> "The balance between family life and professional life has been disturbed. But it varies from institute to institute, for example if you ask the same question to a Beaconhouse teacher, she will give you a different answer, if you ask this question to a Pak Turk teacher or to a Roots teacher, they will give a different answer because a teacher's workload and satisfaction depend on the approach of the administration" (Teacher 6).

On the other hand, employees with pro-work perceptions see spillover from family to work and provided solutions requiring spouses and families to be more understanding. They believe that their spouses and families should be more supportive of their work-related commitments and should be more understanding of the time and energy they put into their jobs. This reflects in the following quotes:

> "When your family life is good you are mentally satisfied and you can better perform the work activities" (Teacher 3).
>
> "When your life is good, and everything is sorted out and you know that you have to put a barrier between work and life and work will improve" (Teacher 3).

Under both circumstances, employees have agreed that the solutions will lead to increased job satisfaction. However, it is important to note that to truly obtain satisfaction, the employees must be segregated based on their WLB perceptions. Teachers who are pro-work require solutions from spouses, and teachers who are pro-life require solutions from organizations. Organizational solutions might not be effective on employees with pro-work perceptions, similarly, spousal solutions might not be effective on employees with pro-life perceptions.

It is important for organizations to understand that employees with different perceptions of WLB require different solutions. A one-size-fits-all approach will not be effective. The organization should take a proactive approach to understand the different WLB perceptions of its employees and provide solutions that are tailored to meet the specific needs of everyone. This will not only lead to increased job satisfaction but will also increase employee retention and productivity. To achieve a true work-life balance, it is essential to understand the different perceptions of WLB among employees and provide solutions that are tailored to meet the specific needs of everyone. This approach will not only lead to increased job satisfaction but will also increase employee retention and productivity.

Table 1: Researcher's Findings

Research Inquiry	Illustrative quotes	Main themes	First-order codes	Frequency
Perceptions of teachers about WLB in WFH	'I feel like I should create a balance. All the schoolwork should be completed in the hours that are set aside for school and with the family we should be a new person. We should not be a teacher then we should be a mother or a wife' (Teacher 1)	WLB Perceptions	Gender-based	1
			Pro-work	8
			Pro-life	2
			Balanced	4
			Religious	1
			Financial	1
			Children-based	0
Reality of WLB for teachers	'…A teacher also has a home to tend to, a family to tend to and my house had become a school. But organizations do not realize that they do not pay us enough for this. If I live in a small apartment and my drawing room is my classroom, you cannot expect my family to function properly in that situation. Teachers do not get paid well. We live in 1-2-bedroom homes, our kids sleep there, wake up there, our families are living there and that is also my school – that is torture' (Teacher 7)

'…my husband would say I go to office in the | Work-family spillover | Overburden | 9 |
			Lack of training	1
			Subject-based	4
			Privacy concerns	2
			Lengthy student evaluation	2
			Tougher student control	11
			Noise concerns	2
			Space concerns	2
			Mental Health concerns	1
			Financial	3
			Noise concerns	2

	morning, and you are sitting in front of your laptop, and I come back home, and you are still in front of your laptop, do you even do anything else' (Teacher 7)	Family-to-work spillover	Misunderstanding among spouses	4
			Space concerns	1
			Demotivation from spouses	1
			Role imbalance	1
			Lack of communication among spouses	1
Organizational solutions to boost job satisfaction through WLB	'…my previous head had made the rule that after 6 you will not deal with parents or students after 6. If a parent or a student requires the teacher for help, they can do it before 6 because the rest of the time is for the teacher's family. My head made sure that the parents and students also knew this rule. This rule has completely vanished now and of course the administration is to blame for it. I do try to maintain this rule on my own now. So, the administration must put their foot down. They must define rules, set these parameters and let both teachers and parents know (Teacher 6)	Organizational Solutions	Resource provision	3
			Training	1
			Ensure Cyber security.	1
			Reduce workload	4
			Grievance handling	1
			Flexibility	1
			Efficient task allocation	1
			Promote WLB through formal rules	1
			Compensation for overtime	4
			Appreciation	1
			Recognition	1

5 Discussions

Most of the teachers highlighted that the bond they share with their students compels them to be more inclined toward their work than their non-work activities. Literature suggests that quality connections have an influence on human motivation and competency that urges teachers to hold onto the bond with their students even if it overburdens them (Bergin, 2009). One of the participants highlighted that their organization encourages them to work, and their family demotivates them. The teacher-student relationship makes up for the motivation that is not available from families. While some employees have claimed that the non-work aspect of their life is more valuable, their rationale again supports the work aspect. Participants have stated that a good non-work life is significant to a good work life, which is justified by the spillover theory (Zedeck, 1992). One of the male employees had a different perception in a sense that he believes gender to be the determinant in how WLB is perceived. Numerous studies in the past have studied how men see the ties between job and family life (Cohen, 1988; Collinson and Hearn, 1996; Hatter et al., 2002) but limited literature focused on men. The present study highlights that gender roles create an imbalance between work and life. Furthermore, one of the employees perceived WLB to be more of a religious concern that she desired to abide with. Several studies have established positive relations between an employee's spirituality and job satisfaction (Barnett et al., 1996; Collinson and Hearn, 1996; Milliman et al., 2001). apparent agreement between the organization of many regions, jobs, and goals in life that one targets and their actual manifestation (Syrek et al., 2011).

Employees see their private and professional lives to be in harmony when they perceive themselves thriving in their dual roles. However, findings of this study reveal that the reality of WLB is in consistent with the perceptions. Many of the participants have pro-work perceptions which has resulted in a majority having more work-inclined realities. This is consistent with the cross-domain approach (Frone et al., 1992), instead of the matching domain approach (Amstad and Meier). For most teachers the reality of the marital issues that impact work are in consistence with those proposed by (Rumondor, 2013). However, issues proposed in his research adhere to the face-to-face context only. Findings of this research establish that the marital satisfaction factors that hold true for on-site jobs hold true for WFH jobs as well. Additionally, the study contributes a few more factors that have not been highlighted before. Participants have reported space concerns that did not exist in the on-site jobs. While WFH offers a more relaxed work routine, a small living space at home becomes a hassle for the family, resulting in spillover across both domains. Participants have also mentioned that a lack of understanding of the job demand by their spouses has led to feelings of demotivation. While organizations encourage employees to succeed, spouses create the opposite effect from their lack of understanding. Moreover, noise concerns at home also emerged as a factor for which spouses and children have suffered. All the organizational solutions offered by the employees are also in sync with literature. There are studies that emphasize trainings (Hanaysha et al., 2016), manageable workloads (Lea et al., 2012), grievance handling (Elbaz et al., 2022), flexibility work styles (Origo and Pagani, 2008), compensation for overtime (Beckers et al., 2008), appreciation and recognition (Abdullah et al., 2016) for the employees in order to enhance job satisfaction. The present study contributes to literature on WFH in married employees by pointing out the lack of secure online platforms to prevent privacy violations, which is a concern among spouses. Moreover, it has been suggested that the organizations should gear up cyber-security for their remote employees.

6 Recommendations

The recommendations outlined are aimed at addressing a range of issues related to WLB for employees working from home. Remote work has become increasingly prevalent in recent years due to technological advancements and the global pandemic, but it can also come with a host of challenges that can negatively impact employees' WLB. The solutions proposed in this passage are designed to

address these issues and help organizations support their remote workforce in ways that improve their overall well-being and job satisfaction.

The first recommendation is to strengthen the organization's information and communication technology (ICT) department to improve cybersecurity and address privacy concerns. With more employees working remotely, there is an increased risk of cyber-attacks and data breaches. By investing in stronger cybersecurity measures, organizations can help to protect their employees' personal and professional information and alleviate any concerns they may have about their privacy. Additionally, many remote employees, particularly teachers, have reported issues with outsider interference during their classes, which can cause concerns for their spouses. By strengthening the ICT department, organizations can help to subdue these marital concerns and improve overall job satisfaction for remote employees.

The second recommendation is to provide training to employees to improve their work domain and WLB in WFH. This is based on findings that many employees have reported issues with communication and understanding with their spouses, which can lead to increased stress and a lack of balance between work and home life. By providing training in effective communication, time management, and other relevant skills, organizations can help their employees to better navigate the unique challenges of WFH and improve their overall WLB.

The third recommendation is to implement virtual grievance handling systems to provide employees with an outlet for expressing their marital issues. This is based on the idea that by providing a catharsis for these issues, employees' job satisfaction can be improved. Many employees have reported feeling unsupported or unheard when it comes to the impact of their work on their personal lives, and implementing a virtual grievance system can help to address this and provide a sense of empowerment for employees.

The fourth recommendation is to address financial concerns related to overtime and compensation for WFH. Many employees have reported feeling overburdened by their remote work roles, but not receiving appropriate compensation. Some have suggested that they should be compensated for overtime, while others have advocated for hourly pay in WFH. Additionally, one employee suggested that sometimes verbal recognition and appraising is sufficient compensation for the added effort. It's important for organizations to consider the financial impact of WFH on their employees and adjust their compensation and benefits policies accordingly.

The fifth recommendation is to provide flexible working hours and remote work options: One of the biggest challenges with working from home is the lack of boundaries between work and personal life. Many employees report feeling pressure to be available 24/7, which can lead to burnout and negatively impact their work-life balance. To address this, organizations should consider implementing flexible working hours and remote work options that allow employees to better manage their time and responsibilities. This could include options such as part-time remote work, job sharing, or flexible schedules. By providing employees with more control over their work schedule, organizations can help to reduce the stress and pressure associated with WFH and improve overall job satisfaction. Additionally, it can also help to support employees who have caregiving responsibilities or other non-work-related activities they need to attend to.

The recommendations outlined are designed to address a range of issues related to WLB for employees working remotely. By strengthening cybersecurity and privacy measures, providing training and support, implementing virtual grievance systems, and addressing financial concerns, organizations can help to improve the overall well-being and job satisfaction of their remote workforce. By implementing these solutions, organizations can create a more positive and productive work environment for their employees, which can ultimately lead to increased employee retention and improved overall performance.

Theoretical contributions

The present study contributes to the literature on WLB and marital satisfaction in the context of WFH by delving deeper into the specific challenges and concerns faced by remote employees and their

families. By focusing on specific WFH parameters related to marital happiness, the study provides a more nuanced understanding of the factors that impact WLB and job satisfaction for both genders compared to past research that has been more generic (Norre et al., 2006).

One of the key findings of the study focuses on addressing challenges emerging because of an abrupt shift to the online mode of education during the pandemic. While there is literature in the past that is focused on improving job satisfaction in WFH (Sirgy and Lee, 2018), research still lacks for the pandemic time and after (Sutarto et al., 2021). The research highlights the importance of addressing privacy concerns among spouses, which can have a significant impact on marital satisfaction and ultimately job satisfaction. The study provides specific recommendations, such as strengthening cyber security systems, to address these concerns. This highlights the need for organizations to take a proactive approach in addressing the unique challenges of WFH, particularly in terms of privacy and security.

The study also finds that remote employees may experience increased demotivation from their spouses in the isolated work environment, which can have a negative impact on job performance. This particularly has been an issue in Eastern cultures. The World Economic Forum's gender gap report states that Pakistan ranks poorly in terms of opportunities for women, but at the same time, it has a high number of freelance jobs. The present research adds to the minimal literature available in this area by focusing on issues arising from the organizational as well as the spousal end.

Furthermore, the study adds to the understanding of how these factors can affect the overall WLB of remote employees, which is consistent with the findings of others such as Bouziri et al. (2020) and Kuznetsova et al. (2021) that have highlighted the issues of WLB and its impact on job performance during the pandemic. These studies have shown that the pandemic has placed added pressure on employees to balance their work and personal responsibilities and has highlighted the need for organizations to address these challenges to support the well-being of their employees.

Managerial Implications

With widespread technology and the Internet of things (IoT) in the present time, employees have seen opportunities in working remote for increased flexibility. The pandemic has fueled the scenario. In fact, the emerging issue of "Great Resignation" studied rigorously after the COVID-19 pandemic (Cohen, 2021) highlights that top talent is critical to organizational performance (Ambrosius, 2018). However, employee retention has always been challenging for employers and the pandemic has acted as a "catalyst", drastically increasing the number of resignations (Liu-Lastres et al., 2022). It is high time to address these job satisfaction issues (Shan and Tang, 2020).

While many organizations have tried the hybrid system of work during the pandemic to maintain social distancing, even in the post-pandemic times 4-days-per-week work systems are being considered for the strategic benefits to organizations, and improvement in job satisfaction and flexibility for employees (Kubo et al., 2021). This research highlights the aggravated marital satisfaction factors in WFH and further suggests improvements such as stronger cyber-security for online platforms. Suggestions such as, resource provisions, guidance and trainings, workload reduction, grievance handling flexibility work timings and efficient task allocation, formal WLB rules, compensation for overtime, appreciation, and recognition, if put into effect can make WFH more effective for married employees and will enable employers to reap desired benefits wit reduced constraints.

Limitations and Future Research

Although the study made contributions to the literature on marital satisfaction in WFH employees in the post-COVID-19 ear, but there are some limitations that can be addressed in the future. Firstly, although both the male and female perspectives were considered but only 2 males were interviewed. Studies in the future should include more male employees and their struggles. For future studies it is recommended that the variables of encouragement by spouses be studied to examine the impact on job satisfaction. Secondly, the study has only been conducted on teachers in private schools. In the future, teachers in the public sector should also be interviewed. Thirdly, the study used an interpretative technique, which is exploratory (Rojon et al., 2012). Since the study used a small sample size,

the sole qualitative design utilized may result in only preliminary conclusions. Future quantitative research using hypothesis testing with bigger sample sizes is required to ensure that the study findings are generalizable. The suggested variable of spouse encouragement, space concerns and noise issues at home can be studied quantitively with respect to marital satisfaction. The relationship between improved cyber security and privacy concerns in WFH requires generalization through larger samples.

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