Impact of Role Identity Salience between Inter-role Conflict, Domestic and Professional Outcomes

*Sahira Zaman, PhD
Department of Gender Studies, University of the Punjab, Pakistan
Anis-ul-Haq, PhD
Department of Psychology, National University of Modern Languages
(NUML) Islamabad, Pakistan

The current research explored the impact of role identity salience [Work, Parental, and Family] between inter-role conflict, marital adjustment (domestic), and work performance (professional) outcomes. It was postulated that inter-role conflict would negatively predict marital adjustment and work performance. Work identity salience would positively predict work performance and negatively predict marital adjustment. Parental and family identity saliences would positively predict marital adjustment whereas negatively predict work performance. All identity saliences would moderate the relationship between inter-role conflict and outcomes. A purposive sampling method was employed to select 340 employees from different manufacturing industries. Hierarchical linear regression analysis reported that high inter-role conflict negatively predicts marital adjustment and work performance. Moderation analyses showed parental identity salience exacerbated the effect of inter-role conflict on marital adjustment and work performance. Moreover, family identity salience also significantly negatively moderated inter-role conflict and work performance. However, work identity salience did not affect both dependent variables.
Keywords: Inter-role Conflict, Role Salience, Work performance, Marital adjustment

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Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to: Sahira Zaman, PhD Department of Gender Studies, University of the Punjab, Pakistan, Email: sahira_zb@hotmail.com and Anis-ul-Haq, PhD, Department of Psychology, National University of Modern Languages (NUML) Islamabad, Pakistan.

Inter-role conflict (IRC) refers to the role pressures mutually incompatible to maintain work and family life (Panatik et al., 2011). It is a topic of interest for researchers for many decades (French et al., 2018) and studied with a variety of its antecedents and consequences (Allan et al., 2020). Though multiple roles inevitably lead to conflict and stress (De Alwis & Hernwall, 2021) but identity role saliencies can influence the consequences of IRC (Allan et al., 2020). Identity role salience is the importance that a person gives to a position they perform, e.g., work, family, and parental roles (Greer & Egan, 2012). Identity role salience depicts the alternatives and preferences of individuals during performing numerous life responsibilities (Molina, 2021). The outcomes of these choices differ for people depending upon their adherence to identity role salience. (Shockely et al., 2017). The value of a role is one primary reason to select between work, parental, and family life realms (Perrewe & Hochwarter, 2001).

So, the main objective of this research is to identify which identity role salience has more influence on the domestic (here onwards mentioned as a marital adjustment) and professional (here onwards mentioned as work performance) outcomes of inter-role conflict.

Inter-role conflict (IRC) is a damaging aspect of work or family life in which engagement of one role makes it difficult to perform in the other role, e.g., work to family or family to work (Haines et al., 2019). It is a fact that IRC negatively shaped the work and non-work life of employees, i.e., work performance and marital adjustment (Beutell, 2013; Lapierre et al., 2018). Work performance (WP) is the level of output an employee gives compared to their peers (Zaman et al., 2014). Marital adjustment (MA) is a merger of gratification, a sense of unity, a level of agreement, and an expression of love and affection between couples living together (Farero et al., 2019). Marriage (or cohabitation) is a valued condition of a person's life (Huffman et al., 2013).

It was argued that inter-role conflict, work performance, and marital adjustment could not explain a simple cause-and-effect relationship. Role identity salience is the critical variable that can widely influence the outcomes of IRC in different ways. Role identity salience is referred to as the degree to which one role is central to a person's self-

concept and depicted in his/her role involvement (Noor, 2004). IRC is a decision-making problem among different life choices and becomes a psychological investment (Poelmans et al., 2013). Involvement in one domain (Grzywacz et al., 2010) and ignoring the other result from the employee's role identity preference and other multiple stresses associated with it (Allan et al., 2020). These stresses can ascribe to the value and commitment, which account for a dilemma to partake in either role (Powell & Greenhause, 2012) and are linked with social identity theory.

Social identity theory laid a theoretical base for work and family roles (Greenhause & Powell, 2017). It elucidated that people develop their role identity saliencies based on their communal groups (Meyer et al., 2006). These role identity saliencies are also called role centrality (Lapierre et al., 2018) which influence the work/family roles positively or negatively (Ayree et al., 2005). Role identity salience is a growing area of research in the literature on work/family domains (Allan et al., 2020). Three role identity salience domains of an employee's life were included in the present research, which include work identity salience, parental identity salience, and family identity salience.

Bird and Schnurman-Crook (2005) reported that work identity salience (WIS) develops when individuals relate themselves to one work's core characteristics and convert them to defining characteristics for them. Lu et al. (2016) stated that family identity salience (FIS) exists when internalizing the expected values of different family roles. Whereas Lu et al. (2016) also reported that parental identity salience (PIS) exists when an individual internalizes the responsibilities related to parental role (e.g., childcare). Ng and Feldman (2008) stated that literature does not separate the family and parental areas of an individual's life; however, Raheem and Rafique (2019) differentiate between the parental role as an independent life domain and do not combine it with other nuptial, household roles or in erstwhile life realms. Similarly, Ng and Feldman (2008) reported that family identities linked with parental and family responsibilities decreased involvement in work roles. Thereby, in the life of a married employee, child rearing is the core area, and they strongly perceived their obligations in this domain. That is why we investigate parental role salience and family role salience independently in the present research.

Work, parental, and family salient role identities are found as independent of each other; i.e., individuals may have all these identities as salient simultaneously (Mathews et al., 2012). Netemeyer et al. (2004) argued that the consequences of conflict between these identities' salient roles are harmful to functioning in all family, parental, and work domains. According to him, when these salient roles clash with each other, it is probable that people invest more resources into the role which is more salient upon the cost of the role whose identity is relatively less salient and drop the participation in another role consciously or unconsciously (Greenhause & Powell, 2012). Applying this to work, family, and parental role situations, workers feel negative spillover when one prominent identity becomes in conflict with another prominent role identity and brings about adverse effects on a more prominent role identity (Netemeyer et al., 2004).

Graham and Dixon (2014) argued that employees with multiple salient role identities find it challenging to accomplish multiple roles because of limited time, energy, and resources. However, it still requires examining whether the employee's role preferences interact with situations and shape their work-family experiences with outcomes, especially in the industrial sector. In the industrial sector, employees' onsite presence during work hours is essential because of the nature of their work. Working on machines does not give liberty to take work at home or do flexible hours. So, there is a limited chance for employees to manage both tasks at the same time. Thus, employees at manufacturing concerns are duty-bound to choose between their core preferences of identity. Therefore, this research anticipated that the distinctive life role identity saliences, i.e., work, parental, and family of an employee's life, influence the connection between inter-role conflict on work performance (professional) and marital adjustment (domestic) outcomes.

Following are the assumptions of the present study based on the above-mentioned theoretical background of inter-role conflict, marital adjustment, work performance and role identity salience.

1. Inter-role conflict will negatively predict marital adjustment and work performance.

2. Work Identity role salience will positively predict work performance; however, it will negatively predict marital adjustment.

3. Parental and family identity saliences will positively predict marital adjustment; however, they will negatively predict work performance.

4. Role identity saliences (work, parental, and family) will moderate inter-role conflict, work performance, and marital adjustment.

Method

Sample

A quantitative survey research design was employed to execute the present research—a purposive sampling technique was used to collect data from 340 employees from different manufacturing industries in Pakistan in Karachi. The researchers contacted participants through the human resource departments of the selected factories situated in two industrial zones of Karachi. The inclusion criteria for the participants were; a) married employees, b) have children, c) both spouses worked in formal work settings. The exclusion criteria were; a) unmarried employees, b) married employees with single spouse earnings, and c) married employees with both spouses employed in a formal setting but have no children. We distributed questionnaires officially with HR personnel's help and received them back with an 86% response rate—the data was collected from both men (50%) and women (50%) employees. The age range for the present sample was 21-59 years (Mean age = 34.20 years & $SD = 6.10$ years). 61% of the participants had only secondary or high school education, and the rest had graduation or higher education. Almost 91% of respondents had up to five dependent children at home.

Measurements

Role Identity Salience Scale (RIS-S) originally developed by (Amatea et al., 1986) and adapted in the Urdu language by (Zaman et al., 2014) comprised of 30 items and three dimensions of role identity salience. Work identity salience (WIS) (9 items), Family Identity salience (FIS) (13 items), and Parental identity salience (PIS) (8 items). A sample item is (*It is important to me to feel I am an effective parent*). Five-point Likert-type scale response pattern ranging from (Agree=5) to (Disagree=1). Scores on

high and low dimensions indicated the level of identity salience of that role.

Inter-role Conflict Scale (IRC-S) developed in the Urdu language by (Zaman et al., 2014) consisted of 15 items. A sample item (English translation) is (*My work keeps me from doing my best for my family*). Likert type five-point rating scale used (always=5) to (never=1). High or low scores indicated the level of inter-role conflict of respondents.

The Marital Adjustment Scale (MA-S) by Spanier (1976) (adapted from the Urdu language version by Naseer (2000) was used in the present research. The scale is a composite degree of marital adjustment and is rated on Likert type seven-point scale where (7=always) and (1=never). High or low scoring indicated respondents' adjustment in their marital relationship. The scale measures the level of agreement and disagreement between couples on different life and relationship issues. A sample item from the scale is (*Indicate your level of agreement with your partner on handling finances*).

The Work Performance Scale (WP-S) consisted of 8 items developed by (Zaman et al., 2014) and used in the present research. The scale comprised of two equal forms; one self-rated, and the second employees' immediate supervisors rated. The efficiency of employees is compared to their on-the-job work on many work-related behaviours. The sample item for the employee's form is (*How do you rate yourself in terms of quality of your performance regarding the management of time, planning, and management of expenses*). The sample item from the supervisor's rating is (*How do you rate (ABC employee) in terms of quality of his/her performance regarding the management of time, planning, and management of expenses*). The response pattern ranges from 5 (excellent) to 1 (bad) on both forms. The final scores of both forms combined and their Mean are considered as the work performance scores of that participant. High and low scores on the scale indicated the level of work performance of the respondent.

Procedure

Ethical approval was obtained from Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad's Advance Studies and Research Board (AS&RB) for current

research. The principal researcher contacted four manufacturing industries in Karachi city, which is the economic capital of Pakistan. Data was collected with the help of human resource coordinators of these organizations. We informed verbally of all directives and the purpose of the study to the respondents. We mentioned all instructions, inclusion criteria, and objectives of the study on the cover letter of each set of protocols. We collected back the questionnaires after two weeks of distribution. We utilized Podsakoff and Organ (1986) method to deal with common method variance (CMV) by separating the data collection time for independent and dependent variables with two weeks intervals. The anonymity of responses was assured on all levels of conducting and reporting this research data.

The data were analyzed through SPSS version 20. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) and Multiple Regression Analysis were employed for data analyses, and interaction terms were created after the mean-centering of the variables for moderation analyses. Graphs were plotted by using Jose's (2008) software online.

Results

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics, Alpha Reliabilities, and Correlations for Study Variables (N= 340)

	M	SD	IRC	WIS	PIS	FIS	MA	WP
IRC	44.16	10.94	**(.89)**	-.16[**]	-.56[**]	-.08	-.26[**]	-.21[**]
WIS	37.63	4.63		**(.78)**	.29[**]	.57[**]	.08	-.15[**]
PIS	23.36	7.59			**(.84)**	.28[**]	.21[**]	.12[*]
FIS	53.18	6.42				**(.82)**	.18[**]	-.04
MA	133.04	18.74					**(.83)**	.26[**]
WP	30.34	4.13						**(.91)**

Note. IRC = Inter-role conflict, WIS = Work identity salience, PIS = Parental Identity salience, FIS = Family identity salience, MA = Marital-adjustment, WP = Work-performance.

Table 1 shows that the inter-role conflict has a significant negative correlation with all criterion variables. The bold numbers in parenthesis show Cronbach Alpha reliability for all study variables, ranging from .78 to .91, and are satisfactory.

Table 2

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis predicting and Moderating Marital-adjustment and Work-performance from Inter-role conflict (IRC), Work identity salience (WIS), Parent identity salience (PIS), and Family identity salience (FIS) (N= 340)

	Predictors	Marital-adjustment		Work-performance	
		ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2	β
Step 1		.09***		.24***	
	Control Variables [a]				
Step 2		.06***		.04***	
	IRC		-.14*		-.20**
	WIS		-.02		-.12*
	PIS		.03		.01
	FIS		.13		.06
Step 3		.03**		.02**	
	IRC x WIS		.02		.02
	IRC x PIS		-.15**		.01*
	IRC x FIS		-.11		-.11*
Total R^2		.19**		.30**	

Note: [a] Control variables included Education level of employees, Gender and total number of children. *p*=ns, *$p \leq .05$, ***$p \leq .001$

Table 2 shows marital adjustment (DV1). Control variables in Step I elucidated a significant level of variance as indicated $F(3,335)=10.88$ ($p \leq .001$) and in step II results showed that predictors IRC ($t=-2.22$, $p = .027$), WIS ($t = -.35$, $p = .728$), PIS ($t = .50$, $p = .616$) and FIS ($t=1.94$, $p =.053$) gave a significant increase in the explained variance $F(7,331)= 8.56$,($p \leq .001$). The interaction term (IRC x PIS) in step 3 also clarified a significant increase in variance $F(10,328)=7.56$,($p \leq .001$) and explained a controlling effect ($t =-3.05$, $p = .002$) on marital adjustment.

Table 2 also shows work performance (DV2). Control variables in step 1 described significant amount of variance $F(3,335)=35.41$,($p \leq .001$), and in step 2 results further showed that predictors; IRC($t=-3.39$, $p \leq.001$), WIS ($t = -1.97$, $p = .049$), PIS ($t = .07$, $p = .940$), FIS ($t =.10$, $p =.319$) depicted a significant increase in the elucidated variance $F(7, 331)=18.5$, ($p \leq .001$). Interaction terms (IRC x PIS) ($t = 2.54$, $p = .012$) and (IRC x FIS) ($t = -2.01$, $p = .045$) in step 3 explained the significant increase in variance $F (10, 328) =14.32$, $p \leq .001$ and described moderating effect on work performance.

Findings in Table 2 signify that inter-role conflict negatively predicts the work performance and marital adjustment of employees. Work identity salience also negatively predicts work performance. The inter-role conflict and parental identity salience interact with each other and significantly influence the marital adjustment of employees. Moreover, inter-role conflict interacts with parental and family identity saliencies and significantly affects the work performance of respondents.
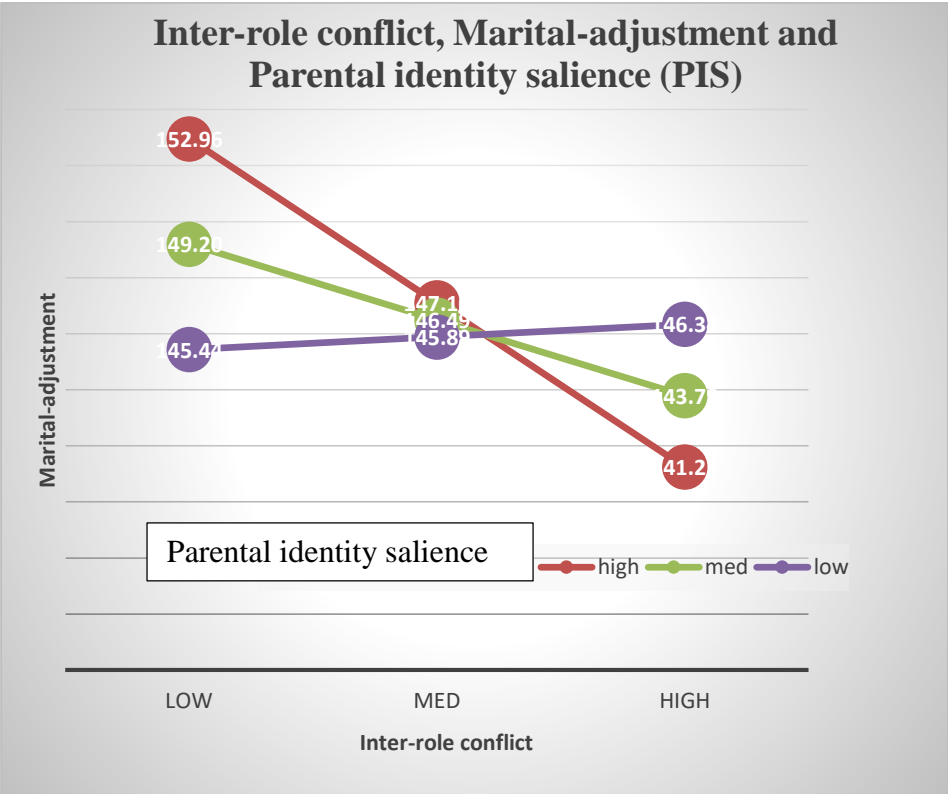
Figure 1

Figure 1 indicates that marital adjustment is at the lowest level when inter-role conflict and parental role salience are high.
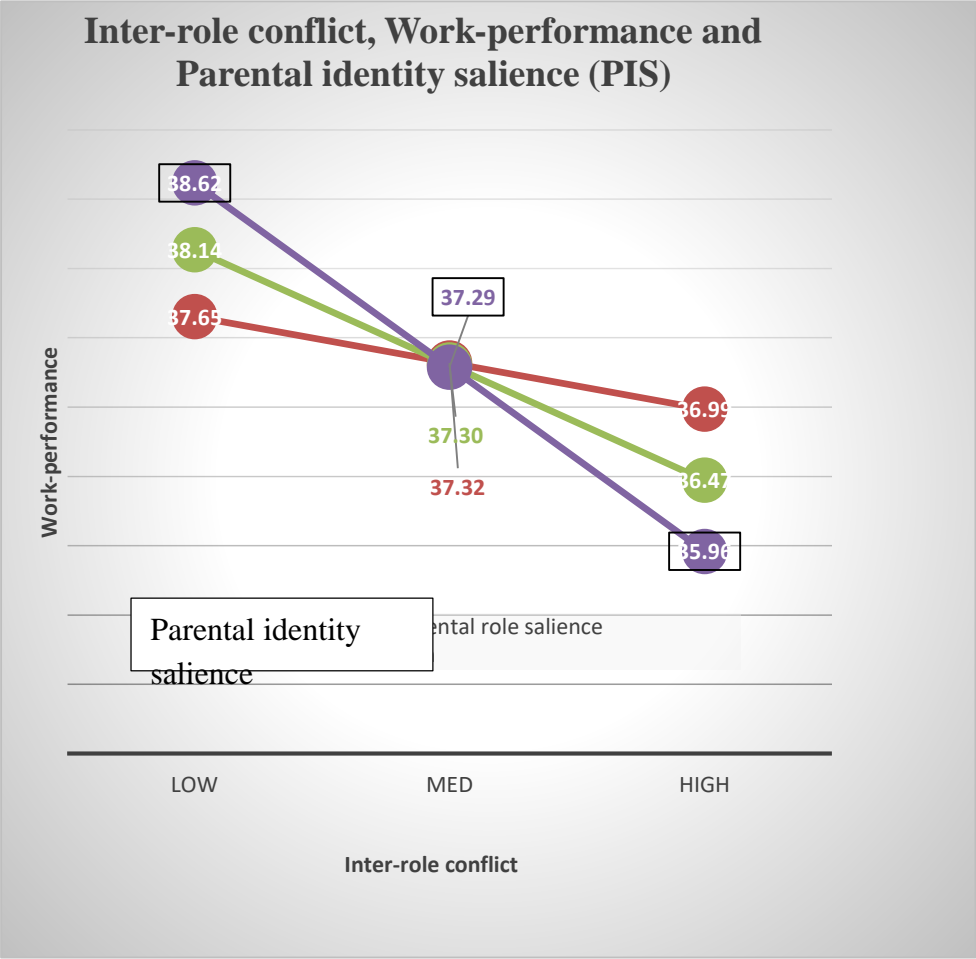
Figure 2

Figure 2 indicates that high parental role salience exacerbates the effect of inter-role conflict on work performance.
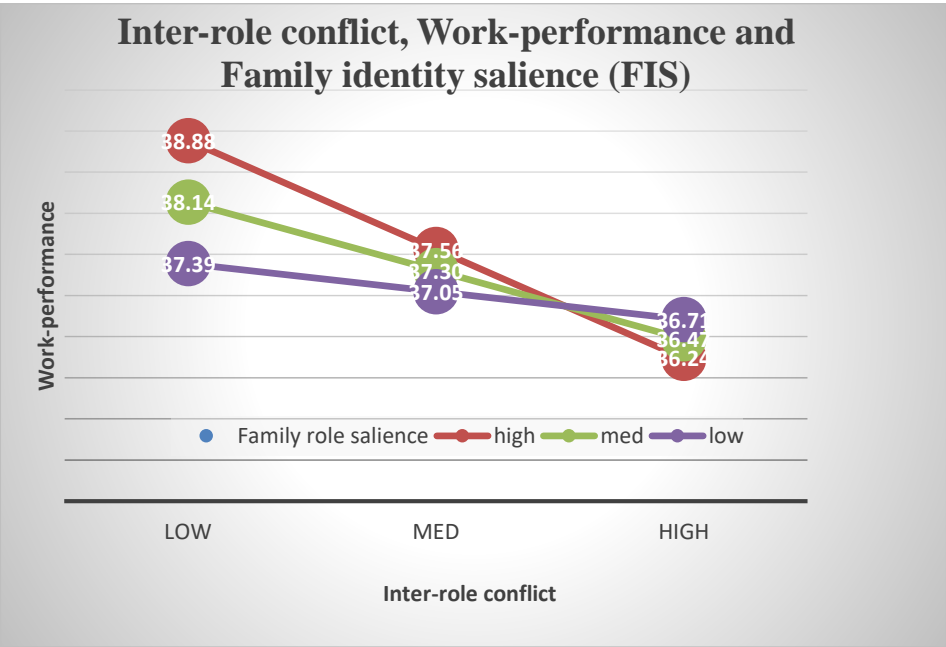
Figure 3

Figure 3 shows that family role salience lowers the work performed under the condition of high inter-role conflict.

Discussion

The present study investigated the moderating impacts of different role identity saliencies of employees between inter-role conflict (IRC) and its professional and domestic outcomes. The analyses of the data revealed that IRC negatively affected both outcomes for employees of the industrial sector. Work Identity salience decreases work performance. The primary assumption of this study was that the role identity salience would have moderating effects on the outcomes of IRC. So, the empirical findings of this research revealed that parental identity salience and family identity salience interacted with the IRC and influenced the marital adjustment and work performance of employees.

Results described parental role identity salience moderated the negative impact between IRC and marital adjustment. This interaction showed that marital adjustment is higher when parental identity salience is higher and inter-role conflict is lower. Findings pointed out that the marital adjustment of the employees is lower under the conditions of higher inter-

role conflict and lower parental identity salience (Figure 1). It means parental identity enhances marital adjustment because parenting activities, e.g., childcare, coaching children, and taking care of them in general, are related to marital and parental domains. This relationship towards children served to increase marital adjustment where there is a low conflict between roles. Parenting is a central part of a married employee's life in collectivist cultures like Pakistan (Qadir et al., 2005). Parents are responsible for satisfying and accomplishing every need of their children (Babu et al., 2017). They are solely responsible for addressing every financial and other requirement of their children, and no compensation or help is provided to them by the state or government like in many other countries (Kim & Choi, 2014). Thus, as a parent means a lifetime responsibility towards children by fulfilling their parental responsibilities, and it becomes a core identity of married employees with children in Pakistani culture. That is why higher parental identity salience illustrates a strong moderator between conflicting inter-roles and marital adjustment.

The findings of the present research (as seen in figure 2) proposed that parental identity salience meaningfully interacts with inter-role conflict affecting work performance. The inter-role conflict had unfavourable effects on work performance (Zaman et al., 2014), but the current study added in the literature that when parental identity salience interacted with inter-role conflict, it reduced the harmful impacts of conflict on the employees' work performance. In a developing country, every need of children, from necessities (i.e., food, water, health, shelter, and education) to all other daily living needs are parents' responsibility (Kim & Choi, 2014). Therefore, high parental identity aligns with cultural expectations, which compelled parents to work hard at their workstations for higher performance to earn enough for their children.

Although, the results indicated that the employees' work performance would be at its highest in the condition where lower inter-role conflict and lower parental identity salience are present compared to medium or high inter-role conflict and parental identity salience. The present research also indicates that employees with low parental identity salience may spend more time at the workplace, and it can also turn into high work performance and lower IRC. It should be kept under

consideration that participants of this research were employees from manufacturing concerns where they can work extra hours (overtime). So, parental responsibilities are likely to put them more into dealing with inter-role conflict and improve work performance. A close reading of these results in figure 2 also stated that higher parenting role identity increases the performance of employees even in very high inter-role conflict conditions. This novel finding supported the idea that parents are the exclusive sponsors for every financial need of their children in developing countries like Pakistan, making them strive hard for better performance in their work even in very high negative inter-role conflict situations. This finding is worth further investigation in similar contexts.

Family identity salience also moderated the association of inter-role conflict and work performance. As seen in figure 3, work performance is higher under lower inter-role conflict with higher family identity salience. When the role conflict is higher, family identity salience helped to increase work performance. As discussed earlier, parental, family and marital life are essential domains of one's life in cultures that put group interests ahead of an individual's interests. These results also validated the perception elaborated by Allen et al., (2020) that work is something done for a family member's welfare in relationship-oriented societies and not something for their interest. So, the empirical findings of this research recounted that work performance strongly relates to inter-role conflict and parental and family identities. So, with higher family identity salience with higher inter-role conflict employees cannot find time and energy to resolve their stress at work, which unfavourably affects their work performance. Nevertheless, it is also evident that work performance is at the highest level when there is high family identity salience and low inter-role conflict (Figure 3).

This discovery corroborates the support from (Carlson et al., 2009), who reported that people with higher family-role identity balance work and family by developing borders between domains leading towards positive impacts on professional and domestic outcomes. These findings also gather support from Brummelhuis and Bakker (2012) that marriage is characteristic of an individual's family context and Vanassche et al., (2013) reported that marriage provides resources of potential value to one's work

life and married employees with family enjoy greater happiness in work life by fulfilling family needs. Upholding the current findings, all respondents were from industrial sector organizations and had an opportunity to work extra time to earn extra money. So, the employee use this extra money for the welfare of the family and children. Thus, if employees possess high family identity salience, they are likely to minimize the inter-role conflict between work and family by putting more blood, sweat, and tears to enhance work performance.

Conclusion

It was concluded that employees encounter conflicting situations in their work and family life domains, and they are more likely to choose a situation in which they find a more prominent identity. Looking from the lens of present findings, employees in developing collectivist countries support their families and children in all domains of life, including financial and social domains. These responsibilities inculcate in their characters high parental and family identity saliencies. These saliencies shape their responses towards inter-role conflict and its professional and domestic outcomes. Hitherto, the surprising non-significant results of work identity salience as a moderator between any outcome variables indicate that only the family and the offspring are the driving force for work and not the work itself in relationship-oriented societies. This conclusion opens the venue for further investigations, that when and how the work will be necessary for employees to define their personality characteristics in such relationship-oriented cultures.

Implications and limitations of the study

A fundamental niche in work-family interaction studies revolves around the poor understating of regulating and controlling the impact of roles identity saliences between the inter-role conflict and outcomes. This research has implications for the theory and practice of work-family domains. It provided a base knowledge for organizations to establish family-friendly policies in collectivist cultures to make employees more satisfied with their household conditions and subsequently encourage them to put extra effort into work. It elucidated that role centrality is vital in

shaping attitudes towards work, parental, and family domains and influencing employees' performance in all three areas. It also laid a baseline to build programs for work-family counsellors and human resource managers in similar contexts to lower the impacts of conflicting roles of employees. Crafting a more agreeable link between work, parental, and family domains and reflecting upon the importance of role identity salience of employees in their major life domains are significant findings for this research.

Nevertheless, there are some limitations regarding the findings of the present study. It was a quantitative survey design research. The only use of structured questionnaires for collecting information serves as a main limitation of the present research. The data is limited to a distinct type of organization. Moreover, gender role stereotypes may have likely interacted with respondents' relative importance of work, family, and parental identity saliences. It may have shaped their experiences. That is why it is also a significant limitation of the present study and calls for future investigations in this regard.

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