WORK AND HOME: THE INTERACTIONS BETWEEN TWO DOMAINS IN LIFE OF WORKING PEOPLE IN KYRGYZSTAN

Olga Yarova
American University of Central Asia, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
yarova_o@auca.kg

Abstract
Similarly to other countries, working people in Kyrgyzstan experience a dramatic increase in the interrelationship between two domains of home and work, due to changes in the family structure, enhanced demands in the workplace and child-raising practices, an increasing number of women in the workforce in the last several decades, etc. The goal of the study was to explore the most common types of work/home interactions among working people in Kyrgyzstan, gender differences in the interactions between two domains, the demographic characteristics of the group that experiences the highest level of work-family conflict, and types of social support in organization and family life that is most helpful in reducing negative work-home interactions. The research compared interactions between home and work among males and females, governmental, nongovernmental and commercial organizations, married and single employees. The findings revealed that both social support at home and organizational support at workplace relate to work-home interactions. The study showed that both male and female employees in Kyrgyzstan evaluate positive work-home and home-work interactions significantly higher than negative interactions and no gender differences were revealed in the level of assessment of positive and negative interactions between work and home.

Keywords: positive work-home interactions, positive home-work interactions, negative work-home interactions, negative home-work interactions, gender, social support, work home culture

Introduction
Employees as border crossers between the two domains of work and home

Research on the interrelationship between the two domains of home and work has dramatically increased in the last several decades due to changes in family structure, enhanced demands in the workplace and child-raising practices, and an increasing number of women in the workforce. Nowadays these two spheres of life (work and home) are not seen as independent from each other as they were before [1]. In contrast, the boundaries between them become more and more blurred as at work now it is not unusual for employees to receive phone calls from home, think about family concerns, and decorate their work spaces with reminders from home. At the same time, they often bring their unfinished work home, check work emails and receive phone calls from work while fulfilling their family responsibilities [1]. These are a few examples of the main mechanisms that link work and home: spillover from home to work, compensation, segmentation, resource drain, congruence and work-family conflict [2].

Positive and negative interactions between the two domains

While investigating the relationship between the domains of home and work, early research was focused on negative interactions, in particular work-family conflict [3]. These research developed from the role strain theory that hypothesizes that interactions between work and home very often have negative aspects. Firstly, working people have to divide time, resources and energy between family and work. Secondly, tension, anxiety and irritability created during participation in one domain may be transferred to the other domain. And finally, expectations for behavior and attitude at home and work are often incompatible: competitiveness, rationality and assertiveness may be expected in the workplace, which differ from home expectations of openness and sensitivity [4]. Moreover, problems in one domain (home) induce negative feelings and thoughts about them in another domain (work) and do not allow to function effectively [5].

At the same time, a number of studies have shown that there is positive spillover between the two domains [6]. The spillover may be affective or instrumental by its nature. The affective spillover includes...
positive emotions and moods that employee bring from home to work and vice versa, and the instrumental involves the resources that are transferred from one domain to another (This positive influence of work-family confluence is based on another theory on work-home interaction called the role enhancement hypothesis [6]. This theory suggests that energy, insights and skills people develop in one domain facilitate functioning in another domain. Thus, the fulfilling of multiple roles is not necessarily associated with role strain and exhaustion but is strongly related to energy accumulation, higher self-esteem, greater well-being and enhanced performance among workers.

Based on these two theories, Geurts and colleagues [7] proposed a 4-component model of work-home interaction. This model differentiates work-home interactions on the direction of influence (influence from work on private life and vice versa) and the quality of influence (positive and negative) and offers four types of interaction. Negative Work-Home Interactions (NWHI) include negative reactions developed at work that hinder functioning at home. Negative Home-Work Interactions (NHWI) are negative experience or conflicts at home that hinder functioning at work. Positive Work-Home Interactions (PHWI) are positive experience or new skills learned at work that improve functioning at home. And finally Positive Home-Work Interactions (PWHI) are defined as positive experience or new information learned at home enhance functioning at work.

**Gender and work-home interactions**

The research on gender differences in the experiences of work-home interactions is quite inconsistent. A number of empirical studies revealed that there are no gender differences in negative spillover from work to home and vice versa [4]. Other research found that females experience higher levels of strain-based work-family conflict WFC compared to males. The authors suggested that the results were due to female workers not being as valued in the workforce as male workers and therefore they had to put more efforts into proving their professional competence, resulting in greater work-family conflict [8].

However, fewer studies have been conducted on gender differences in positive work home interaction. Some research has found that mothers experience greater work-family gain, but also greater work-family strain compared to fathers [9]. Similarly, Grzywacz and Marks found slightly higher level of positive spillover from work to home among women than men [4].

Gender has been explored as a moderator of the relationship between work-family conflict and psychological distress. Research showed that for men, family to work conflict predicted anxiety and depression, and for women these symptoms were related to work to family spillover [10].

Several studies demonstrated that it is not gender that relates to work-home interactions but the values and attitudes that people have. Values and priorities that people hold are more related to the experiences of work-home or home-work conflict than gender [10]. Those who value work more may experience higher levels of family-to-work spillover, whereas those who value family to a greater degree are more likely to experience higher work-to-family spillover. Similarly, if both man and women hold less traditional attitudes about gender roles, it decreases negative spillover between the two domains and increases the gains received from combining home and family roles [9].

**Particularities of work and home domains in contemporary Kyrgyzstan**

During Soviet times the participation of both men and women in the workforce was welcomed by the state and the principles of gender equality and female emancipation were promoted and encouraged among citizens of Kyrgyzstan. Prior to the arrival of communism, this Central Asian country had very strong traditions of gender segregation, clear and rigid gender roles, and female compliance and dependence on husbands, so the new Soviet principles came across as unfamiliar and often were enforced in a violent way.

The main outcome of female emancipation in Central Asia was the development of new work domains in public health, education, and culture which began to be filled by female employees [11]. At the same time such emancipation reinforced gender discrimination as the new work positions open to women received less compensation and less prestige compared to the traditional male occupations.

The positive results of female emancipation during Soviet times can be seen in contemporary statistics. Nowadays there are more women than men with higher education (201,800 female and 186,000 male) and college education (163,000; 123,000, accordingly) in Kyrgyzstan [12]. The number of women in the workforce, although lower than the number of men in general, is constantly increasing (from 798,700 in 2002 to 924,300 in 2009) [12]. Moreover, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Kyrgyz women appeared to be more adaptive to the new sociopolitical structures; they were better able to learn new skills, find
employment in the new country and provide for their families compared to men. Thus gender roles in the workplace were shaped by new economic circumstances of instability, crisis and the need for both men and women to contribute to the family budget.

Some transformations in family structures, gender roles and relationships took place in the family domain as well in 1990s. Unfortunately, the home domain appeared less flexible and resistant to changing traditional gender roles. After the collapse of Soviet Union, there was a renaissance of traditional culture, and an idealization of old customs as a way to improve the national spirit in Central Asia. Women again had to take up the mantle of family above all, and women’s destiny became associated with bearing offspring and submission to husbands [13].

There are several reasons why the relationship between Kyrgyz man and woman were developed according to the domination-submission principle for several centuries. First of all physical force and physical work were the main of conditions of survival among Central Asian people whose traditional occupations were hunting, cattle-breeding and farming. Woman who was often weakened by pregnancy and childbearing depended on her husband and her family and was forced to submit in order to survive. Another reason for the development of male dominance was Islamic religion which quite rigidly and strictly regulates the behavior of men and women, enhances gender hierarchy and promotes the female worship and obedience to her husband [13].

The interactions between home and work domain for Kyrgyz women are complex. On the one hand a woman is often expected to be active, take initiative and be independent in the workplace due to the Soviet influence, and on the other hand they are expected to be submissive, hardworking and fulfill all household responsibilities at home due to cultural traditions. These double standards of behavior may make women’s lives more stressful than men’s, affect psychological and physical health and may negatively influence family life.

Therefore, in the present study we hypothesized women would report higher levels of negative work-home (WH) and home-work (HW) interactions compared to men.

At the same time according to the Role Enhancement Hypothesis [6], we expected that for both men and women involvement in work life as well as having time for family, friends and hobbies would be important. Playing multiple roles and being able to fulfill oneself in both home and work spheres, according to this theory, would bring much more positive outcomes than negative. For Kyrgyz women having a career is important because it provides independence, identity, and an increase in confidence and life satisfaction. In line with the research mentioned above we hypothesized that both women and men would report higher levels of positive WH and HW in interactions than negative.

Social support at home and work-home interactions

Social support is defined as comfort, assistance and information that individual receive from other people or groups. House identified four types of social support – informational, instrumental, emotional and appraisal [14]. In this study, we explored only emotional support which is defined as understanding, sympathy, love and trust [15]. There are many different sources from which an individual may receive social support. And although it may be difficult to identify all sources that provide caring and love this research is an attempt to cover three sources of support an employee may receive in the home domain: support from family, friends and significant other and may relate to the four types of work-home interactions.

Studies on the relationship between work-home interference and non-related work support show inconsistent results. Some research shows that social support reduces work-family conflict either directly or serves as a mediating variable to buffer against the positive relationship between job stressors (for example, role conflict and role ambiguity) and work-family conflict [8]. However, in research conducted by [16], no relationship was found between negative WH, negative HW and positive HW interactions and support from spouse, friends and children, but there was a positive correlation between positive HW spillover and support from these three sources. Also, Adams et al. found that family instrumental and emotional support were both associated with lower levels of family and work interference [17]. Therefore, we hypothesized that the higher level of social support from family, friends and significant would be related to lower negative HW interactions and higher positive HW interactions among employees.

Work-home culture and work-home interactions

Studies in organizational psychology have shown a relationship between work-home interference and the social support employees receive at work from colleagues and supervisors. At the same time
organizational culture which is defined as a system of beliefs and values developed and communicated by managers to employees is the variable that may affect the support provided by the organization, the employees’ decision to reduce workload because of the family issues and the nature of work family relations. In particular, supportive work-home relationships appear to be related to higher job satisfaction and commitment, lower levels of physical complaints and willingness to use work family arrangements [18].

Work-home culture is defined as shared assumptions and values regarding organizational support in relation to employees’ integration of family and work lives [19]. Dikkers et al. found that if employees perceived WH culture as supportive and less obstructive they reported lower negative WH interactions, and there was a positive correlation between WH culture-support and positive WH and HW interactions [18].

This study considered such dimensions of WH culture as organizational support, supervisor’s support, colleagues’ support, time demands and career consequences separately in attempt to identify which dimension was more related to the four types of WH interference. To test this relationship, we hypothesized that the greater the level of organizational support from colleagues and supervisors, the higher the level of positive WH and lower the level of WH interactions among employees. In addition, the amount of time demanded and career consequences will be positively associated with higher level of negative WH spillover and lower levels of positive WH spillover.

Materials and methods

Participants and procedure

In order to define which individual differences are related to negative and positive work-home interactions the sample for the study was a convenience but included diversity in terms of gender, marital and parenting statuses, place of work, income, and education. The participants (N=252) were drawn from a variety of commercial organizations (122 participants), international non-profitable organizations (66) and governmental institutions (64 participants). Among the participants that constituted the commercial group were employees of several banks, microcredit companies, small businesses etc. The governmental institutions included ministries and national agencies. In total, 52% were single and 48% married, 64% were females and 36% were males.

In the first phase of the research the questionnaire was sent to the representatives of different NGOs, international organizations, business structures and governmental institutions with the help of online survey software questionpro.com. However, among all the recipients only 30 people returned the survey. In the second phase of the data collection the snow ball method was used. After consulting with representatives of organizations, the questionnaires and informed consent forms were distributed among the participants and then collected a few days after all surveys were filled out.

Measures

Work-home interaction was studied with the “Survey Work-home Interaction NijmeGen – SWING” [7], which reliably measures four distinct types of work-home interaction. The questionnaire was back-to-back translated into Russian and validated among respondents in Kyrgyzstan. Negative WHI was measured with 9 items (α = 0.87, e.g., You are irritable at home because your work is demanding?); positive WHI consisted of 6 items (α = 0.72 e.g., You fulfill your domestic obligations better because of the things you have learned on your job?); negative HWI consisted of 6 items (α = 0.84, e.g., You arrive late at work because of domestic obligations?); positive HWI were measured by 6 items (α = 0.85, e.g., “You have greater self-confidence at work because you have your home life well organized?”). Items were measured on a 4-point Likert scale from 0 “never” to 3 “always” with higher score reflecting higher levels of work-home interactions.

WH culture was measured with a scale developed by Dikkers et al. [18]. The 18 items scale assessed five components of work-home culture: organizational support (5 items, for instance, “In this organization it is considered important that, beyond their work, employees have sufficient time left for their private life”), colleagues’ support (4 items, e.g. “My colleagues help me out when I am (temporarily) preoccupied with my care responsibilities”), supervisor’s support (3 items which are equivalent to colleagues’ support items), career consequences (4 items, e.g. “To turn down a promotion for private reasons will harm one’s career progress in this organization”), time demand (3 items, for example “In order to be taken seriously in this organization, employees should work long days and be available all of the time”). Subjects were asked to
respond using 5-point Likert scale with values ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree) with higher scores demonstrating higher level of support, time demands and negative career consequences.

Social support from family, friends and significant other was measured by the Russian back-translated version of Multidimensional scale of perceived social support [20]. This is a self-report measure that consists of 12 items on a 5-point Likert type scale, with high scores indicating higher levels of social support.

Individual differences were assessed with the help of a 14-item questionnaire that contained questions about gender, marital status, number of children, age, education, type of organization, position, income, years of experience, number of time spent at work every day and number of time a partner spends at work every day.

Results

Descriptive statistics

In the general sample the scores on positive interactions between work and home domains were average with positive HW (M=11.4) exceeding WH spillover (M=9.4). The levels of negative interactions were rather low with the level of negative WHI (M=4.2) similar to the level of negative HWI (M=4.4). These results show that the employees in Kyrgyzstan perceive positive spillover higher than negative spillover.

T-test

Comparing means analysis did not reveal significant gender differences in four types of WH interactions. There was almost no difference in the level of negative WH and HW interactions among men and women. Females scored a little bit higher on positive WH (M=10.10) and positive HW (M=11.79) interactions than men (M=8.75 and M=10.49 respectively). However, the T-test analysis showed that this difference was not statistically significant.

In the general sample comparing means of four types of interactions did not reveal differences among single and married employees. Nevertheless, the findings demonstrated that although married (M=4.45) and single (M=4.51) females have almost the same level of negative HWI, married men (M=5.25) have significantly higher level of negative HW spillover than single men (M=3.05), single and married women.

T-test also showed that in the level of four types of WH interactions is different in international, governmental and business organizations. The results demonstrated that in international organizations the level of NWH, NWH and PWH interactions is significantly higher than in state and commercial agencies. The lowest level of negative HW and WH spillover was found among employees of commercial organizations.

Correlation

Work-home interactions and demographic characteristics

No correlation was found among four types of work-home interactions and age, income, years in organization, years in marriage, time spent at work. A significant positive correlation was found between negative WH spillover and number of children (r=.16, p<0.01) and education level (r=.27, p<0.01). Negative HW spillover also was positively correlated with the number of children (r=.25, p<0.01) and negatively with education(r=-.15, p<0.01). Number of children had also weak correlation with positive WH (r=.24, p<0.01) and positive HW (r=.18, p<0.01) spillover.

Work-home interactions and social support

The research findings showed that the more support employees receive from their families and significant others the higher the level of positive HW spillover and lower level of negative HW spillover. However, the correlation between positive WH spillover and social support from family members (r=.20, p<0.01) and significant others (r=.15, p<0.01) is weak, as is the relationship between negative HWI and family support (r=.18, p<0.01) and significant other support (r=.24, p<0.01). The support from friends was not related to the four types of interactions between work and home domain.
Work-home interactions and work-home culture

Organizational support was weakly correlated with all four types of WH interactions. The association between negative WH spillover ($r=0.21, p<0.01$), negative HW spillover ($r=0.20, p<0.01$) and organizational support was negative. Respectively, the association between positive WH ($r=0.23, p<0.01$), positive HW ($r=0.13, p<0.01$) spillover and organizational support was positive. Support from colleagues had insignificant negative correlation with negative WH ($r=0.14, p<0.01$) and negative HW ($r=0.14, p<0.01$) interactions. No association was revealed between four types of interactions and supervisor’s support, career consequences and time demands.

Discussion

Hypothesis 1, which suggested that women experience higher levels of negative WH and HW interactions compared to men was not supported. There was no statistically significant difference between men and women on the four types of WH interactions. Moreover, female scored slightly higher on both types of work-home interactions. In traditional Kyrgyz society in spite of the overload in fulfilling the “second shift” obligations in the home, employment allows women to have a more autonomous sense of self and have experiences and achievements that are considered much more valuable by society than those related to housework and child care.

The results supported hypothesis 2 which states that both men and women will experience higher level of positive WH and HW interactions than negative. The level of positive interactions among workers in Kyrgyzstan was average in comparison to other studies, and almost twice double the means for levels of negative spillover. These results differ from findings of the original study conducted in Netherland in which the levels of four interactions were generally low and the levels of negative WH were the same as the levels of positive WHI [7]. Our findings are consistent with the role enhancement hypothesis which states that the fulfillment of multiple roles is not always associated only with stress and conflict, but also brings benefits and energy that a person may use in another domain [6] cited by [4]. We considered it important to assess not only disadvantages of multiple roles but also benefits that the home domain may bring to the work and vice versa.

In the home domain we found that support from family and significant other were related to a higher level of positive HW interactions and a lower level of negative HW interactions. These findings support hypothesis 3 and show how support from the home domain appears to be associated with less work-family conflict [8].

Hypothesis 5 about the relationship between work-home culture and work-home interactions was partially supported. The findings show that organizations that respond to employees’ needs to balance work and family life, value employees’ personal life and leave time for it, are reported to have lower levels of negative WHI and greater levels of WHI. According to work/border theory organizations can change the domains and boundaries to increase work/family balance [1]. It is easy to change borders by introducing flexible hours and flexible work place, but it is much more difficult to change the organization’s culture and values. In rethinking work-home corporate culture, organizations might take into consideration the findings of the current research that organizational support in general, the support from colleagues in balancing two domains are more related to work home interaction than support from supervisor, and work home culture-hindrance like time demand and career consequence.

Our study has several limitations. The first limitation of the study is that the sample was not representative. It was difficult to conduct a study only with employees from several organizations because the majority of companies in Kyrgyzstan are small in size and not open to academic research projects.

The second limitation is connected to the conceptualization of the positive and negative interactions between the two domains. According to the authors of the questionnaire SWING, positive WH/HW interactions could be expanded to the items covering sense of fulfillment, security, etc. [7].

The third limitation is related to the data collection method used. Survey allows revealing general trends and associations between the variables but the details, circumstances and relevant distinctions are not explored. For example, parental status is a complicated demographic variable and caring obligations of parents depend not only on a number of children, but also on their health and behavioral problems, their ages and other factors. Gender is also a complex variable and for future research it might be useful to conduct in-depth interviews to explore how men and women experience interactions between work and home and what are the factors that allow balance these two domains.
In spite of the limitations the current study contributes to the previous research on work-home interactions and may have practical implications for Human Resource Managers and employees. The workers themselves are often unaware about the amount of positive spillover their work and family have on each other and that it significantly overweighs in most cases the negative interactions between two domains. As for work-home culture it is important to have the support from colleagues and responsiveness related to family issues on the organizational level in order to keep the level of negative WH interactions low and increase the level of positive spillover from work to home.

**Conclusion**

To conclude it is important to note that employees in Kyrgyzstan evaluate positive spillover between work and home domain higher than negative spillover. Both spheres are important for social status, identity and survival for men and women. Male and female, single and married employees almost equally assess their level of positive and negative spillover between two domains. Married men had statistically significant higher level of negative home to work spillover comparing to single men. The research also supported that social support from family and significant others positively relate to positive between two domains and protect from negative spillover.

**References**

Работа и дом: взаимодействие двух сфер среди работающих людей в Кыргызстане

Ольга Ярова
Американский университет Центральной Азии, Бишкек, Кыргызстан
yarova_o@auca.kg

Как и в других странах, работающие люди в Кыргызстане испытывают резкое усиление взаимосвязи между двумя сферами - домом и работой - из-за изменений в структуре семьи, повышенных требований на рабочем месте и практики воспитания детей, увеличения числа женщин в рабочей силе в последние несколько десятилетий и т.д. Целью исследования было изучить наиболее распространенные типы взаимодействия между работой и домом среди работающих людей в Кыргызстане, гендерные различия во взаимодействии между двумя сферами, демографические характеристики группы, которая испытывает самый высокий уровень конфликта между работой и семьей, и типы социальной поддержки в организации и семейной жизни, которые наиболее полезны для снижения негативного взаимодействия между работой и домом. В исследовании сравнивалось взаимодействие между домом и работой среди мужчин и женщин, среди сотрудников правительственных, неправительственных и коммерческих организаций, женатых и одиноких сотрудников. Результаты показали, что как социальная поддержка семьи и партнера, так и организационная поддержка на рабочем месте связаны с характером взаимодействия между работой и домом. Исследование обнаружило, что мужчины, и женщины в Кыргызстане оценивают позитивное взаимодействие между домом и работой значительно выше, чем негативное взаимодействие, а гендерные различия в восприятии мужчинами и женщинами уровня конфликта между домом и работой отсутствуют.

Ключевые слова: позитивное взаимодействие работа-дом, позитивное взаимодействие дом-работа, негативное взаимодействие работа-дом, негативное взаимодействие дом-работа, гендер, социальная поддержка, организационная культура

Жұмыс және үй: Қырғызстанда жұмыс істейтін адамдар арасындағы екі саланың өзара арекеттестігі

Ольга Ярова
Орталық Азия Американдық университеті, Бішкек, Қырғызстан
yarova_o@auca.kg

Ярова Ольга, доцент, психология департаменті, Әлеуметтік ғылымдар бөлімі, Орталық Азия Американдық университеті. Мекенжайы: Қырғызстан, 720060, Бішкек қ., Аалы Токombaев к-сі, 7/6: yarova_o@auca.kg

Ярова Ольга, доцент, департамент психологии, подразделение Социальные науки, Американский университет Центральной Азии. Адрес: Кыргызстан, 720060, г. Бишкек, ул. Аалы Токомбаева 7/6; yarova_o@auca.kg

Olga Yarova, Associate Professor, Psychology Department, Division of Social Sciences, American University of Central Asia. Address: 7/6 Aaly Tokombaev Street, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic, 720060; yarova_o@auca.kg

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